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A Strategy for the Use of Videotaped Sermons in a Multi-Church District

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ABSTRACT

A STRATEGY FOR THE USE OF VIDEOTAPED SERMONS

IN A MULTI-CHURCH DISTRICT

by

Lloyd E. Hallock

Advisor: Steven Vitrano

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

Theological Seminary

Title: A STRATEGY FOR THE USE OF VIDEOTAPED SERMONS
       IN A MULTI-CHURCH DISTRICT

Name of researcher: Lloyd E. Hallock

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Steven P. Vitrano,
Ph.D.

Date completed: June 1990

Problem

In smaller churches the quality of the message
delivered during the worship service on weeks the pastor
is absent, is often reported to be weak and lackluster.
Previous testing has determined that video instruction is
as effective in teaching as live instruction. Presently,
some pastors are reported to be using video in small
churches. The purpose of this study was to determine if
the videotaped sermon is a viable alternative worship
form for small churches.

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Method

Biblical, Ellen G. White, and contemporary worship literature were reviewed on the nature of preaching and worship. Five videotaped sermons were shown over a period of weeks in two small churches. Surveys before, during, and after this sequence recorded the responses of members toward the videotaped sermon.

Results

The literature revealed that a variety of methods, other than live preaching, for gospel presentation have been utilized in the past. The surveys indicate a generally favorable response from the members of the experimental churches in response to the occasional use of the video sermon when more desirable alternatives do not exist.

Conclusions

The videotaped sermon may be a legitimate and useful alternative worship form. It should not be regarded as an alternative to quality live preaching. However, it may provide a quality alternative to mediocre preaching or no preaching at all in the context of the worship service.

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A STRATEGY FOR THE USE OF VIDEOTAPED SERMONS

IN A MULTI-CHURCH DISTRICT

A Project Report

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

Lloyd E. Hallock

June 1990

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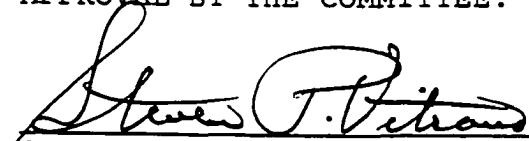
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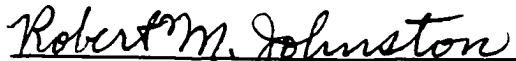
by

Lloyd E. Hallock

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

_____   _____
Steven P. Vitrano, Chairman   Dean, SDA Theological
                                              Seminary

_____
Robert M. Johnston

_____   _____
James J. North, Jr.   4 March 1990
                                       Date approved

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Project

The purpose of this project was to develop a strategy for the use of videotaped sermons in the worship service of two churches in a multi-church district, and to survey the attitudes and responses of members toward this use of sermons.

Justification of the Project

In some smaller churches the quality of message delivered during the worship service on the weeks when the pastor is absent is often reported to be weak and lackluster. This may be due to frequent speaking demands, inadequate preparation time, or lack of training in sermon preparation and public speaking.

Previous testing has determined that video instruction is as effective in teaching as live instruction.[1] Presently, some pastors are reported to

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[1]D. O. Wardwell, "A Study of the Effects of a Trained Television Communicator on Undergraduate Attitudes and Learning" (Dissertation, Nova University, 1975), ERIC ED 134209.

1

be using video in small churches. No literature sources are available that describe the implementation or testing of the attitudes and responses of church members concerning the use of videotaped sermons during the worship hour.

Description of the Project

The Setting

Video-taped sermons were periodically utilized in lieu of a live sermon for the church worship service. This experiment was conducted in a district with three small churches in mid-Nebraska where the pastor met with the two larger churches on an every-other-week basis.

Church 1--The largest church of approximately 120 members had two elders whose sermons were acceptable but who had a hard time preparing adequately for sermons as often as it was their turn to preach.

Church 2--The second largest church had about 85 members. The church had three elders: one did well in sermon presentation, another read quotations for the sermon, and the third played an audio tape when his sermon turn came.

Church 3--The membership in the smallest church was 14. It was not included in the video study.

The project was designed to provide occasional variety and high-quality preaching on some of the Sabbaths when the pastor was absent.

The Process

An investigation of current literature was made to ascertain the possible dynamics present in the development of this program of video use. From preliminary study, it seemed that it had been established that a video presentation is as effective a teaching tool as is the live lecture.

The theological implications of the use of modern media in worship were studied. Careful study was given to Biblical learning and worship patterns to determine if the use of the video media could be found to harmonize with Biblical principles.

The focus of this project was on the process of introducing video and studying the reactions of the participants more than upon the content of the video segments themselves. Change theory was consulted to inform the task of preparing for and implementing the introduction of videotaped sermons.

Instruments for evaluating attitudes and responses of members were prepared in harmony with guidance and instruction found in the literature on testing, and all instruments were submitted to my committee adviser for approval. An attitude/response survey of the membership was utilized to evaluate the pre-experiment attitudes/expectations toward the video sermon. The rationale for video use was then carefully

explained to the congregation prior to the utilization of the first video.

Following the first service where a videotaped sermon was utilized, a survey was again taken to determine the initial reaction to video use. After five services where video sermons were used, the surveys were repeated to see if any attitude modifications had taken place.

The post-experiment analysis focused on:

1. How well the video medium was accepted by the congregation.

2. Ways the video medium may have affected the worship service.

3. How well the videotaped sermons were perceived to contribute to the knowledge and worship of the believer as compared with "live" preaching.

4. What weaknesses were to be avoided in repeating the experiment.

5. Whether or not video should be considered a viable worship form.

6. Suggestions to help overcome resistance when introducing the program to a congregation for the first time.

Expectations

This project was designed to answer the following questions:

1. Are videotaped sermons acceptable/desirable to the church membership?

2. What elements in these presentations enhance their usefulness?

3. What dynamics may be missing in a video presentation?

4. Are there elements in videotaped presentations which could also be applied to "live" sermonizing?

<u>Project Outline</u>

Chapter I

Chapter I delineates the scope and purpose of the project defining the setting of the experiment.

Chapter II

Chapter II briefly explores the dynamics of change which must be kept in mind when introducing something new to a congregation.

Chapter III

Chapter III reviews the Biblical, E. G. White, and contemporary literature to determine if the video sermon is compatible with Christian worship forms.

Chapter IV

Chapter IV describes the churches involved in the experiment and how the project was conducted in those churches.

Chapter V

Chapter V reviews the results of the testing and draws conclusions about the usefulness of the video sermon as an alternative worship format.

CHAPTER II

THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

This chapter reviews some factors to be considered when introducing change in the practice or lifestyle of individuals or groups of individuals. Knowing some of the dynamics of change in the human environment helps to understand and anticipate attitudes that may be negative or perhaps even hostile. The research and analysis of this project seeks to discover those attitudes which indicate the advisability or inadvisability of using video sermons in the worship service of small churches. A short introduction to change theory helps in the interpretation of the research data.

Change Process

Change process has been the theme of many books.[1]

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[1]Ronald Lippitt, Jeannie Watson, and Bruce Westley, _Dynamics of Planned Change: A Comparative Study of Principles and Techniques_ (New York: Harcort, Brace, World, 1958); Gordon A. Walter and Steven E. Marks, _Experimental Learning and Change_ (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981); Warren G. Bennis, Kenneth D. Benne, Robert Chin and Kenneth E. Corey, _The Planning of Change_ (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976); Benjamin S. Bloom, _Stability and Change in Human Characteristics_ (New

The literature on change recognizes the tendencies of individuals, groups, organizations, and entire societies to act so as to ward off change.[1]

The three major concepts to be considered when introducing change into the experience and lifestyle of individuals are as follows: (1) We do not like to be surprised. There is comfort in the status quo, even if we do not like it, because we know what to expect and have some idea of how to plan and regulate our lives. (2) In consequence of the first, resistance is exercised when a new element is first introduced into our lives. (3) Regardless of the nature of the change, we tend to regress to the old way of doing things.

Planned change is a purposefully specific effort to effect improvement in a system under the guidance of a change agent.[2] A change agent is a person who facilitates and guides planned change or innovation.[3]

In the present research, less interest was evidenced in incorporating a permanent change in worship than in testing the viability of using video sermons as a part of a worship service. As with almost all change, there are those who are reluctant.

York: John Wiley and Sons, 1964).

[1]Lippitt et al., 117.

[2]B. Spradley, "Managing Change Creatively," Journal of Nursing Administration (May 1980): 32-37.

[3]R. Havelock, The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publishing, 1975), 37.

Kurt Lewin points out that change is not always permanent.

> A change toward a higher level of group performance is frequently short-lived; after a "shot in the arm," group life soon returns to the previous level. This indicates that it does not suffice to define the objective of planned change in group performance as the reaching of a different level. Permanency of the new level, or permanency for a desired period, should be included in the objective. A successful change includes, therefore, three aspects: <u>unfreezing</u> (if necessary) the present level, <u>moving</u> to the new level; <u>freezing</u> group life on the new level.[1]

Lewin's analysis, according to Lippitt, assumes that effective re-education must affect the person in three ways: (1) The person's "<u>cognitive</u> structure must be altered. . . ." (2) Re-education must "involve the person in modifying his <u>valences</u> and <u>values</u>. . . ." (3) "Re-education finally must affect a person's motoric actions, his repertoire of skills, and the degree of a person's conscious control of his bodily and social movements."[2]

Lippitt expands upon Lewin's analysis with the diagram given in Figure 1.

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[1]Kurt Lewin, "Frontiers in Group Dynamics: Concept, Method, and Reality in Social Science; Social Equilibria and Social Change," <u>Human Relations</u> 1 (June 1947): 34.

[2]Lippitt et al., 37.

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DRIVING FORCES
↓↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑
RESTRAINING FORCES




DRIVING FORCES
↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑→
RESTRAINING FORCES
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REFREEZING: PHASE III

6. Maintenance of the change once it has been started
7. Termination of a helping relationship.

MOVING: PHASE II

4. Selecting progressive change objectives
5. Choosing the appropriate role for the change agent

UNFREEZING: PHASE I

1. Diagnosis of the problem
2. Assessment of the motivation and capacity for change
3. Assessment of the change agent's motivation and resources

Figure 1. Lippitt's diagram showing phases of change.

SOURCE: L. Welch, "Planning Change in Nursing: The Theory," Nursing Clinics of North America 14, no. 2 (1979): 309.

Note that Lippitt's diagram includes a description of the process in terms of Driving forces-- those which indicate the likelihood of moving a system toward a desired goal -- and Restraining forces--those which indicate obstacles that decrease the likelihood of moving toward a desired goal. These elements interact in such a way as to effect change, either toward or away from the goal. Each is dependent upon the other.[1]

Applying the Formula

The formula, represented in the diagram (Fig.1), may be applied to the process of introducing video sermons in the worship service of the church. The three steps involved in unfreezing are: (1) diagnosing the problem, (2) assessing motivation and capacity for

[1]Lippitt et al., 317.

change, and (3) assessing leadership motivation and resources.

Diagnosing the problem. This step calls for identifying possible effects and who will be affected. In the present application of the formula, the goal was to improve the quality and provide a more satisfying worship experience for the members. During this step it was important to gain the support of key leadership in the church.

Assessing the motivation and capacity for change. This step includes identification of driving and restraining forces. Driving forces here included the desire for more consistent attendance by the members and the responsibility on the part of leadership to assure a rewarding worship experience for members when they do attend. Restraining forces included the threat to the status quo, fear of the unknown, general resistance to the intrusion of electronic media into the traditional worship scene, and fear that this change may in some way altar the perceived dignity of the spoken word.

Driving forces can be accentuated by careful communication of the benefits to be expected, first to leadership and then to the church as a whole. Restraining forces can be inhibited by careful explanation of the aims of the experiment, planned orientation, and evaluation of congregational feedback.

<u>Assessing leadership motivation and resources</u>.
In the present experiment the motivation of leadership
was to improve the quality of worship when the pastor was
absent. Resources included videotaped sermons by known-
quality speakers.

     <u>Moving</u> involves two steps: (1) selecting the
progressive change objectives and (2) choosing the
appropriate role for leadership.

     <u>Selecting the progressive change objectives</u>.
This step in the study included (1) the showing of
previously recorded sermons of prominent Seventh-day
Adventist preachers in place of "live" preaching during
the Sabbath morning worship hour, (2) the training of
equipment operators, and (3) making certain all needed
equipment was available and ready for use.

     <u>Choosing the appropriate role for leadership</u>.
This step prevents unrealistic expectations on the part
of leadership or the congregation. In the present
experiment, the leader was an elder or the pastor who
served as communicator, gathering and providing
information.

     <u>Refreezing</u> involves two steps: (1) maintenance
of change and (2) termination of the helping
relationship.

     <u>Maintenance of change</u>. This step involves
keeping the lines of communication open and maintaining a
flexible attitude. In this study, reporting of the

findings of the surveys, letting the congregation know what they were to expect next, and being sensitive to feedback that indicated the need for modification that would improve the permanence and satisfaction of the change.

Termination of the helping relationship. As the change stabilizes, the leading role of the pastor in initiating change should diminish with local leadership assuming the role.

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF MEDIA IN WORSHIP

THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

To make possible a legitimate conclusion in the
matter of the theological implications of the use of
video sermons in the worship service as it relates to
this particular study, one must first find answers to
several "previous questions." Four such questions
explored by way of literature review and summary are:
(1) Is video an effective communication tool? (2) Is the
video sermon compatible with Biblical worship? (3) What
is Ellen G. White's perspective on worship and preaching
--would the video possibilities appeal to her? (4) What
are the contemporary views on worship as they relate to
video in worship?

Is Video an Effective Communication Tool?

Over the educational horizon and right to the
church's doorstep have come two innovative teaching
media: films, earlier. . . and quite recently, video.
Bursting with ministry-expanding opportunities,
dotted with pitfalls, they're exciting any way you
look at them. While in perspective mere points on a
continuum that began probably with hold-up pictures
(which are still effective teaching vehicles, by the
way), films and video are the most sophisticated,

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most powerful instructional tools the world has yet seen.[1]

Video has been used in many different ways in education: self-confrontation, library instruction, lecture, animation, demonstration, nursing instruction, psychology instruction (e.g., case studies, role playing), general instruction, etc. It has been used in remote classrooms, far from the source educator, often to offer information or training that otherwise could not be obtained locally.

The medium of TV instruction by either satellite, educational broadcasts, closed circuit TV, or video recording has received considerable study. In the studies reviewed, the impact of TV classroom instruction was considered positive, so much so that no negative features surfaced.

William Allen, commenting on TV instruction in California Public Schools, states that "While student achievement has not markedly increased, TV is at least as effective as conventional classroom techniques."[2]

In a study done by Jacobson, video tapes of library instruction were offered as a part of a general library orientation course. The students were found to

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[1]Getting the Most from Film/Video (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., n.d.), 2.

[2]William H. Allen, "Television for California Schools," Bulletin of the California State Department of Education 39 (April 1960): 12.

have a distinctly positive response toward the video tapes. Although student enthusiasm for the tapes was not overwhelming, only about 10 percent felt the tapes were not enjoyable or worthwhile.[1]

Tele-University in Quebec, Canada, has used television and videotape recordings since 1973 for "distance education." It has been found to provide an opportunity for individual or group study. The success and durability of this program strengthens the claim that video can be a good teacher.[2]

The U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in one publication states:

> One of the objectives of much teaching is to influence students' attitudes toward ideas or issues in certain desired ways. There have been a few studies of the ability of instructional television presentations to change students' course-related attitudes. Generally they have shown that such attitudes, which can usually be modified by appropriate information, are changed in a favorable direction by televised instruction and to about the same degree as they are changed by direct instruction.[3]

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[1]Gertrude N. Jacobson and Michael J. Albright, "Motivation Via Videotape: Key to Undergraduate Library Instruction in the Research Library," Journal of Academic Librarianship 9 (November 1983): 270-275.

[2]Therese Lamy and France Henri, "Tele-University: Ten Years of Distance Education," Programmed Learning and Educational Technology 20, no.3 (Aug. 1983): 197-201.

[3]U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Research in Instructional Television and Film (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1967), 12, 13.

Indeed, it has been shown that non-verbal expressiveness and a warm therapeutic setting on the part of the teacher or instructor has more to do with learning and attentiveness than the fact that the presentation was live or recorded.

> Immediacy behaviors--such as eye contact, gestures, smiling, body movements, and vocal animation--are directly related to non-verbal expressiveness. Thus immediacy behaviors and their nonverbally expressive components support the link between nonverbal expressiveness and effective instruction.[1]

> It seems logical that nonverbal communication behaviors expressed on instructional TV may have an impact on learning (and attitudes) as they have been shown to have in face-to-face instruction.[2]

"Vocal delivery, eye contact, gestures, body movements, facial expressions, word selections, acceptance of ideas and feelings, and overall energy level of the teacher. . . ."[3] contribute to effective teaching. Communicator style is important.

Assuming that instructional TV is comparable in effectiveness to live teaching for communicating information, an important component must be considered in selecting the content. "All media, print and non-print, must be developed with target audience's entry-level

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[1]Janis F. Andersen and Julie Gardner Withrow, "Impact of Lecturer Nonverbal Expressiveness on Improving Mediated Instruction," Communication Education 30 (1981-1982): 343.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., 344.

knowledge clearly in focus."[1] "Persuasive attempts must

be comprehensible to the audience and initially not too

divergent from the audience's present position."[2] This

concept is true of the live sermon, to be sure, but it is

equally important to keep this in mind when selecting

sermon content which has not been adapted by the video

speaker to meet local needs. The effective use of video

takes technique beyond "showing and telling," also beyond

just plugging in and turning on.

> Now. What peculiar benefits do motion
> audiovisuals offer?
> To begin with, they have the capacity to add
> mood, drama, color, and action to any teaching
> assignment they get. Nothing else can touch them in
> these areas. They are reproduced reality.
> Next, because they involve both the senses of
> hearing and sight, they make solid contact with the
> learning machinery of the brain. And the remembering
> machinery. Truths learned through motion
> audiovisuals are retained longer. The effect is even
> greater when teaching content is built around "memory
> pegs," sounds and images that evoke and recall ideas.
> Third, because they are reality, and because they
> are moving, motion audiovisuals grab interest almost
> inescapably. It is nearly impossible, for example,
> to walk into a room where a television is on without
> looking at the set. Try it.
> Fourth, motion audiovisuals can transmit the
> total human personality as separate sound (the voice
> of the radio announcer), pictures (a portrait shot in
> a magazine), and words (a quote in an article) simply
> cannot do. The living person of the pastor, teacher,
> or counselor is with us. The power of the presence
> is there. And the message becomes stronger.
> Finally, as a result of all these positive
> features, motion audiovisuals make excellent

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[1]Jacobson and Albright, 270-75.

[2]Walter and Marks, 91.

involvers and discussion starters when used in the
right way.[1]

From the above it would seem that from a strictly
psychological and pedagogical point of view, the video
sermon could be an effective medium of communicating
God's will to His people. This would be especially so if
the purpose of preaching is perceived to be instructional
in nature. There are those, as shall be seen in the
contemporary writers' section, who do not regard
preaching as having an instructional or teaching role.
Rather, they are concerned with the devotional or
inspirational potential for the sermon without imparting
to it a teaching role. It has not been determined on the
basis of this research whether or not the video
presentation is equally effective in the devotional or
inspirational field as it is in the teaching and
instructional field.

<div align="center">

Is the Video Sermon Compatible
with Biblical Worship?
</div>

To answer this question some other questions
about worship must be answered. What is the nature of
worship? What is the role of preaching in the worship
service? The Bible gives a historical reference point.
Many things have changed since Bible times, but
principles and practices found in Scripture guide our

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[1]Getting the Most from Film/Video, 2.

thinking today as to whether or not the video sermon is compatible with contemporary worship.

Worship in the Bible

The Biblical account records few common worship forms that have endured from creation to the present unchanged. Instead, constant development, or evolution of worship, is evident throughout the history of Israel and into New Testament times. At least four foundational beliefs shaped the form of worship through all Biblical times. (1) There is only one God. This was in contrast to most heathen beliefs in many gods. (2) God is a personal God who makes Himself known and reveals His will to human creatures. (3) No idols are to be used in worship. God is to be worshiped personally and directly.[1] (4) Worship is either individual/personal or corporate.

Old Testament Worship

In the Garden of Eden, God talked with Adam and Eve, and they found joy and security in His presence. The Fall brought separation. The face-to-face encounters were suspended. God continued communication through visions and dreams and by patriarchs and prophets. The sacrificial system was instituted in response to God's

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[1]Franklin M. Segler, Christian Worship, Its Theology and Practice (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), 15.

directions. Abel's offering was accepted by God, but Cain's was rejected because it was not a blood sacrifice according to God's instructions.

Enoch experienced such intimate fellowship with God that it is described as a continuous relationship with his Creator. His was not a worship of God only at stated times. He worshiped one God in an intensely personal relationship where no idols were employed. The account points to an individual and personal worship that is not dependent on corporate ceremony or liturgical performances.

Generations later God called Noah to build the ark. Following the flood, Noah left the ark and "built an altar unto the Lord . . . and offered burnt offerings on the altar."[1] God sealed His covenant with the "rainbow of promise."[2]

God commissioned Abraham to leave his own country and go to a land promised to him. God promised to bless and make a great nation of Abraham, who responded by building an altar to worship the Lord.[3] Later Abraham worshiped God by expressing his willingness to sacrifice Isaac to the Lord.[4] He taught Isaac to worship. Isaac,

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[1]Gen 8:20.

[2]Gen 9:11,12.

[3]Gen 12:7.

[4]Gen 22:9,10.

too, built an altar and worshiped the Lord.[1] Jacob
worshiped in numerous ways. His response to the dream of
the ladder that reached to heaven was one of awe. He set
up the stone, which had been his pillow, as an altar and
called the place the "house of God."[2] "Thus, before the
ritual law of Leviticus was given, the Old Testament
stresses the necessity of worship."[3]

It is interesting to note that up to the time of
Moses, worship was primarily a family-based enterprise.
The patriarch led his family in worship. Through Moses
God introduced public worship to the wilderness
congregation even before the giving of the covenant to
the children of Israel and the building of the
tabernacle. Numbers mentions a "tent of meeting . . .
outside the camp."[4]

Ultimately God directed Moses to build a
sanctuary for worship and an ark in which the Ten
Commandments should be kept (Ex. 25:26). With the
building of the Tabernacle, congregational worship
was established as an institution. God then
commanded Moses to consecrate Aaron and his sons to
the office of priesthood (28:2-3). The people were
to bring offerings unto God continually as an act of
worship (29:30).[5]

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[1]Gen 26:24,25.

[2]Gen 28:16,17.

[3]Segler, 16.

[4]Num 11:26.

[5]Segler, 17.

The book of Leviticus describes the rituals and ceremonies utilized to remind the people of their sinfulness and of God's mercy and love. These visual aids were intended to stimulate questions and precipitate discussion and exposition of salvation history and promise. Sacrifices, of many different kinds and purposes, were understood to be a necessary condition of effective worship. Old Testament worship, then, was very action oriented, and the significance of these actions was presumably understood to have soteriological meaning.

The Tabernacle worship forms continued to be consistent with the foundational beliefs mentioned at the beginning of this section--one God, who is a personal God, who is worshiped without idols, in either individual or corporate manner.

Despite the perversions of worship that subsequently intruded into the worship of Jehovah, not all of God's people forgot the true worship. Gilgal was the first place in the land of Canaan where a sanctuary was built for the worship of God. King Saul was crowned there and annual celebrations may have been held there commemorating Israel's crossing into Canaan. Other altars were set up as Israel expanded its holdings in the land during the time of the Judges.

The period of the Kings marked the further formalization of worship and the establishment of the temple services. King David conceived the plan of having

a fixed central temple for Israel. The Lord would not let him build it himself, choosing rather to have Solomon do it. David made elaborate plans and preparations for the temple and turned them over to Solomon. In contrast to the simple wilderness tabernacle, the temple was fitted with elaborate furnishings and vessels. II Chronicles describes the dedication of the temple with Solomon himself giving the dedicatory prayer. The service included the use of musical instruments and singers.

> When the people saw the glory of the Lord upon the Temple, they bowed their faces to the earth and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord. Solomon and the people offered sacrifices before the Lord. Then the priests offered praises and the Levites sounded their trumpets and all Israel stood ([2 Chron.] 7:3-6)."[1]

The Temple at Jerusalem was the central place of worship for the entire land. The yearly feasts were times when people came to Jerusalem to worship and rejoice before God.

> They brought their tithes and sacrificial offerings to the sanctuary. Their acts of worship included music, solos, anthems, shouting, dancing, processions, the playing of instruments, preaching in elementary form, sacred recitations of the stories of Israel--her fathers, heroes, saints, and soldiers-- interspersed with petitions, prayers, vows, promises, sayings of creeds and confessions, sacred meals, and washings.[2]

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[1]Ibid., 19.

[2]Ibid. 20.

Partly because ritual had lost its meaning or had acquired pagan significance, prophets like Amos (5:21-24), Hosea (6:6), and Micah (6:6-8) vigorously protested the empty ritualism of people in their acts of worship. The prophet Jeremiah sought to promote personal experiential worship. Ezekiel called for general reform. Isaiah experienced a personal revelation of the Lord in glory and responded in confession, received cleansing, and committed himself to following God's will. Malachi called for restoration of pure worship and was troubled by the deterioration of worship among the people of God. Their polluted bread, blemished sacrifices, and withheld tithes indicate a loss of respect for the Creator. Malachi encouraged a clear focus upon God. The work of the prophets in reviewing God's historic leadership of Israel and in calling for the restoration of pure worship probably came as close to modern-day preaching as would anything practiced in the Old Testament.

> The Psalms are rich in content for personal and common worship. Indeed, the poetry and song found there not only served the original author for worship, but has formed a core of liturgical food for all forms of Christendom.[1]

The Synagogue

History of the Synagogue

In the Old Testament, worship was centralized and focused in the wilderness Tabernacle and later in the

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[1]Ibid. 23.

Temple constructed for sacrificial and priestly ministry.

This worship was largely of a personal nature.

> The essence of the Temple service was the sacrificial
> ritual, which was performed in silence, without any
> prayers whatever.[1]

In contrast, the synagogue service emphasized a
more experiential and participatory worship for the
believer. The synagogue was a more local phenomenon
where sacrifice was not offered, but where study,
instruction, and prayer were emphasized, and inwardness
and simplicity were characteristic.

The origins of the synagogue are not mentioned in
the Bible or in post-biblical records. It is believed
that its beginnings may have been in Babylonian
captivity. The Babylonians captured Jerusalem in 606
B.C., destroyed the temple, and deported the elite to
Babylon. The sacrificial system with its impressive
ceremonial activities suddenly vanished, leaving a
religious void of wide dimensions. This called for a new
type of religious experience. Though no record exists,
one can conjecture that the synagogue had its beginnings
in spontaneous informal gatherings of Jewish exiles in
Babylon.

> No new form of worship could be deliberately devised;
> this would have implied the abolition of the divinely
> ordained sacrificial ritual of the Temple. What did
> develop was merely the custom of gathering informally

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[1]Abraham E. Millgram, <u>Jewish Worship</u>, 2nd ed.
(Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America,
1975), p. 75.

on Sabbaths and festivals, a custom that is common
wherever there are immigrants from a common homeland.
The Jews would gather periodically for mutual support
in their foreign surroundings. At these gatherings
they would encourage each other in their faith and in
their hope of a speedy restoration. These make-
shift, informal gatherings in small domestic
settings--never planned as worship meetings--
ultimately developed into a permanent religious
institution.[1]

Millgram visualizes the process that gave birth
to the synagogue.

It is not difficult to imagine the confusion among
Jewish captives in Babylonia. What was a Jew in
Babylonia to do on a Sabbath or a festival? It was
quite natural for some of them to visit the home of a
local leader, a prophet or a priest. . . . Now, what
would a religious leader do on a Sabbath or festival
when he was visited by his fellow Jews? It is not
illogical to surmise that he would read to the people
from the prophecies that had forewarned them of the
approaching disaster. It would have been fitting
also to utter some words of comfort and hope or read
some comforting words uttered by other prophets. A
prophet might also read from the Torah about the
Egyptian bondage of their forefathers and about their
delivery. This was especially appropriate on the
festival of Passover. This reading would have been
particularly comforting to the exiles: the God who
redeemed their forefathers would also redeem them if
they prove themselves worthy.
        The prophet or local leader might also expound
the holy text that he had read and apply its message
to the situation at hand. It is also reasonable to
assume that the psalms which the Levites used to sing
at the Temple on the day corresponding to the day of
the gathering would be recited by the leader and that
the people would respond with the traditional
responses. And since it was not unusual for people
when stirred by special occasions to recite personal
prayers, it is not beyond probability that a special
prayer might be composed for the occasion by the
leader or by someone in the group. But such a prayer
recited in the presence of a group would no longer be
purely personal; it would probably be a prayer in
behalf of the group. The first person singular would
then be replaced by the first person plural. The

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[1]Ibid., p. 64.

prayer would say "Help us, O Lord" instead of "Help me, O Lord." Thus came into being the characteristic Jewish prayer which is in the plural.[1]

The development of synagogue tradition could be said to be evolutionary. Starting with the needs of the captive people for structure in the absence of temple services, the informal gatherings gradually became more fixed and eventually institutionalized in the synagogue. Even after the return of the captives to their homeland the synagogue system continued. It provided a corporate worship, fellowship, and instructive environment that was complementary to the temple services. Although in some ways the temple and the synagogue were parallel worship systems they were never in competition and never in conflict with each other.

As the Jews became scattered throughout the surrounding nations the synagogue, usually with an edifice of its own, provided a local focus for Jewish devotion.

> The Talmud states that there were no less than 394 synagogues in Jerusalem before the Temple was destroyed. In the Diaspora, too, every Jewish community had its synagogue, and the larger communities had several places of worship.[2]

The temple, on the other hand, was never abandoned. Even those in foreign lands regularly paid their temple poll tax.

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[1]Ibid., p. 65.

[2]Ibid., p. 76.

While the Temple occupied the center of sanctity and
its ritual was the divinely sanctioned means of
obtaining forgiveness for sins, it was the synagogue
that occupied a position of immediacy in the lives of
the people, because it permitted every worshiper
personally to supplicate God and provided everyone
with the opportunity to hear God's Torah read and
explained by revered and dedicated teachers.[1]

Structure of Synagogue Liturgy

The synagogue service came to include prayers,

the reading and exposition of Scripture, the use of

Psalms, and instruction by the teacher. One early

development in the period following the Babylonian exile

(332 B.C.) was in the area of the liturgy. Though no

written prayers for public worship were created, prayer

outlines and general formulations did develop. Tradition

credits Ezra with founding an organization of religious

leaders called the Men of the Great Assembly. This body

is credited with composing some of the prayers of Jewish

worship. The Talmud also credits that body with fixing

the order of the weekday Tefillah, or the Eighteen

Benedictions. But the specific wording of the prayers

was not composed until much later.

The Pharisees, spiritual successors of the Men of

the Great Assembly,

were the authors of the Jerusalem and Babylonian
Talmuds; they gave rabbinic Judaism its definitive
shape. . . they were the teachers of the synagogue
. . . and their method was to supply interpretive
translations of the Torah readings in the Aramaic

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[1]Ibid., p. 77.

vernacular and edifying expository discourses based on the scriptural readings at the services.[1]

The prophets delivered prophetic orations, some of which, undoubtedly, were delivered on Sabbaths and festivals. They were, in a sense, the forerunners of the synagogue preachers. But it was left to the teachers of the synagogue, the Pharisees,

> to develop the homily and firmly establish it as a characteristic element of Jewish worship. In this way they helped endow Judaism with its essentials of piety--"conformity to the will of God and communion with God [which] are the two outstanding features of a spiritual religion." Exposition of the Torah provided the necessary guidance for "the conformity to the will of God," and prayer provided the means of the Jew's continuing dialogue with God.[2]

By the time of Jesus and the Christian church, synagogue worship included study of the Torah, an exposition of Scripture by the rabbi in the form of a homily, and prescribed prayers. Jesus' discourse in the Nazareth synagogue was illustrative of the practice of the teacher expounding on a Bible passage following its public reading. Though these features were generally present in the synagogue service their order and precise form remained quite flexible.

> By the turn of the first century of the Common Era the essence of the synagogue service was already in a coherent and recognizable state. The general order and contents of the synagogue prayers had already become a tradition, albeit an oral one. But there was no authoritative formulation, and even the

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[1]Ibid., p. 71, 72.

[2]Ibid.

order of the prayers was still in a fluid state. Great variety was the rule.[1]

New Testament Worship

The first Christians in the New Testament were Jews. No doubt these were Jews who had been faithful in their worship at the Temple and in the synagogues. It should not surprise us that to a large extent they followed the Hebrew manner of worship. The practice and symbolism of the Temple and the synagogue were blended with the teachings of Jesus to form a new system of worship not radically different from the old. Christians continued to worship in the Temple and in the synagogue as well as meeting in distinct groups in the homes of believers.[2]

New Testament believers were often found in the Temple, where worship was formal and centered around personal worship and prayer,[3] as well as ritual and ceremonial purposes. The yearly feasts provided opportunities for celebration or ceremonial worship.

The Jewish synagogues had a greater influence than the temple on Christian practice for two reasons: (1) The Temple was destroyed early in the Christian era,

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[1]Ibid., p. 86.

[2]Ibid., 25.

[3]Luke 24:53.

and (2) the synagogue was local and accessible to the

scattered Christians.

> The synagogues were first established as
> institutions for teaching. However, later they
> probably were used as places of worship. . . .[1]

> Worship in the synagogues differed a great deal
> from worship in the Temple. The following
> differences have been pointed out: (1) synagogue
> worship was less formal; (2) the didactic or teaching
> element was foremost in the synagogue; (3) priestly
> functions were not as prominent; (4) the teacher was
> the central figure in the synagogue; and (5) lay
> participation was more prominent.
> The chief elements of synagogue worship have been
> outlined as follows: (1) reading of the Scriptures
> and their interpretation; (2) recitation of the
> Jewish creed, the Shema (Deut. 6:4); (3) the use of
> the Psalms, the Ten Commandments, the Benediction,
> and the Amen; (4) the prayers; (5) and the Jewish
> Kedushah, or prayer of sanctification, which became
> in the Christian tradition the _Ter Sanctus_ ("Holy,
> Holy, Holy").[2]

Early Christians adopted many practices of the

Jewish synagogue. Preaching and teaching were prominent

as was the reading of Scripture. Music and prayer were

included as in the less formal setting of the synagogue.

There are distinct differences, however. "Christians

used the writings of their own leaders, such as the

Epistles of Paul and the Gospel accounts of the life of

Jesus and perhaps verbal recollections concerning them.

These writings soon took precedence over the Law and the

Prophets."[3] They added to their worship new songs by

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[1]Segler, 23.

[2]Ibid. 26.

[3]Ibid. 27.

Christian writers. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were distinctive additions to Christian worship. A consciousness of the Holy Spirit's power and presence pervaded their worship.

Neither Jesus nor Paul laid down a specific order of worship. Evidence of some kind of order and planning does exist, however. "Let all things be done decently and in order."[1] The following elements of worship are found throughout the New Testament: music, the reading of Scripture, prayers, the people's "Amens", the sermon or exposition of the Scriptures, exhortation, offerings, doxologies, open confession, and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Preaching in the Old Testament

God Himself was evidently the first to give instruction to Adam and Eve in the garden. The picture is of an informal visit or chat as they walked together in the garden. There was no pulpit, but there was communicated content to the conversation.

Preaching in the Old Testament times does not appear to be a routine occurrence. Few public discourses are recorded or mentioned prior to the age of the prophets. Early worship was centered in leadership by the patriarch of the family who gathered his extended family together for periods of devotion and worship.

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[1] 1 Cor 14:40.

Since no written Scripture was available, the traditions and rituals had to be passed on by the old to the young. Presumably this took place in informal settings in connection with the sacrificial process, the patriarch being the officiating individual. Perhaps he explained the meaning of the various acts as they were being performed. A sense of history and significance must have been imparted to the participants in order for meaningful worship to occur.

Examples of patriarchal leadership in worship are mentioned by Ellen White:

> Abraham's household comprised more than a thousand souls. Those who were led by his teachings to worship the one God, found a home in his encampment; and here, as in a school, they received such instruction as would prepare them to be representatives of the true faith. Thus a great responsibility rested upon him. He was training heads of families, and his methods of government would be carried out in the households over which they should preside.
> In early times the father was the ruler and priest of his own family, and he exercised authority over his children, even after they had families of their own. His descendants were taught to look up to him as their head, in both religious and secular matters. This patriarchal system of government Abraham endeavored to perpetuate, as it tended preserve the knowledge of God. It was necessary to bind the members of the household together, in order to build up a barrier against the idolatry that had become so widespread and so deep-seated. Abraham sought by every means in his power to guard the inmates of his encampment against mingling with the heathen and witnessing their idolatrous practices, for he knew that familiarity with evil would insensibly corrupt the principles. The greatest care was exercised to shut out every form of false religion and to impress the mind with the majesty and

glory of the living God as the true object of worship.[1]

In describing the experience of Joseph sold by his brothers and on his way to Egypt, Ellen White says:

> Then his thoughts turned to his father's God. In his childhood he had been taught to love and fear Him. Often in his father's tent he had listened to the story of the vision that Jacob saw as he fled from his home an exile and a fugitive. He had been told of the Lord's promises to Jacob, and how they had been fulfilled--how, in the hour of need, the angels of God had come to instruct, comfort and protect him. And he had learned of the love of God in providing for men a Redeemer. Now all these precious lessons came vividly before him. Joseph believed that the God of his fathers would be his God. He then and there gave himself fully to the Lord, and he prayed that the Keeper of Israel would be with him in the land of his exile.[2]

After the avenging slaughter at Shechem, God instructed Jacob to go to Bethel and dwell there and make an altar. Before beginning his journey, he called his company together and instructed them on the worship of the true God. He then told them to bring their images of other gods which he buried under an oak tree.[3] The instruction he gave would likely be called a sermon today.

Moses communicated to Israel the will of God concerning modes of worship, construction of the Tabernacle, and the establishment of the priesthood. How

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[1]Ellen G. White, <u>Patriarchs and Prophets</u> (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1958), 141.

[2]Ibid., 213, 14.

[3]Gen 35:1-4.

he conveyed this instruction is not described. In his last farewell address to the people about to enter Canaan, we do have a recorded discourse. It shows that Moses did communicate the spoken word utilizing his own previous writings and exhorting to faithfulness the people he had led for 40 years.[1]

The period of the Judges offers glimpses of instructional behavior on the part of the leader of worship. Whether this can be termed preaching is debatable, but it does confirm that verbal messages were delivered by God's chosen servants in Old Testament times. Samuel was recognized by "all Israel" to be a prophet and a Judge of Israel.[2] He also appointed priestly services during his yearly rounds in the country.[3] At least once he "spoke unto all the house of Israel," urging them to put away their idols and return to the Lord.[4] The speech, as it is recorded, is not a long one, but it did result in repentance by the people. Whether this qualifies as a sermon would depend on one's definition. Samuel also established the schools of the prophets. "There were two of these schools, one at

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[1] Deut 31-33.

[2] 1 Sam 3:20,21; 7:15-17.

[3] 1 Chr 9:22; 26:28.

[4] 1 Sam 7:3-6.

Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-

jearim."[1] Ellen White observes:

> In both the school [schools of the prophets] and
> the home much of the teaching was oral; but the youth
> also learned to read the Hebrew writings, and the
> parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were
> open to their study. The chief subjects of study in
> these schools were the law of God, with the
> instruction given to Moses, sacred history, sacred
> music, and poetry. In the records of sacred history
> were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great
> truths set forth by the types in the service of the
> sanctuary were brought to view, and faith grasped the
> central object of all that system—the Lamb of God,
> that was to take away the sin of the world.[2]

The aim of these schools was similar to some

aspects of preaching.

> These schools were intended to serve as a barrier
> against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for
> the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to
> promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it
> with men qualified to act in the fear of God as
> leaders and counselors.[3]

> Not only were the students taught the duty of
> prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to
> approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him,
> and how to understand and obey the teachings of His
> Spirit.[4]

Perhaps the most significant example of the

message of a prophet being mediated by another person is

found in Jer 36. In this story, Jeremiah was imprisoned.

The Lord commanded him to write out his message against

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[1] Ellen G. White, _Education_ (Mountain View, CA:
Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1903/1952), 46.

[2] Ibid., 47.

[3] Ibid., 46.

[4] Ibid., 47.

Israel and against Judah in a "roll of a book." It was to include "all the words that I have spoken . . . from the days of Josiah, even unto this day."[1] Baruch served as the scribe to write down Jeremiah's dictation. Then Jeremiah commanded Baruch to go and read the words of the Lord before the people in the Lord's house and to Judah on the fast day. The intent was to the end that they might repent.

The story continues with Michaiah going and telling the princes what he had heard in the Lord's house. Whereupon the princes requested a reading of the scroll of Jeremiah before their assembly. They were fearful at the reading and desired that the king should hear the word. They suggested that Baruch and Jeremiah hide while they presented the message to the king. They described the content of the book to the king, who demanded that it be read to him. As it was read, he burned the pages in the fire. Jeremiah was commanded to prepare another copy.

Several points of interest in this story impact on our present study of the video sermon. (1) The message of the prophet (author) was delivered by another person via the verbal reading of the word (speaker). (2) The same message was delivered to at least three different groups at different times. (3) At least two

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[1]Jer 36:2.

different readers were employed in reading the message. This confirms that, at least on this occasion, the message was a repeatable one with value to more than one audience. Further, different speakers were involved and the message employed all the then-known media possibilities of the time. It seems, then, that to suggest that a legitimate sermonic message may be repeated to a different audience in a dissimilar setting via the video medium may not be all that foreign to the way God has worked through time.

Biblical prophets offered ringing discourses to the people of God, sometimes in warnings and threats of calamity, sometimes with glowing descriptions of the promises of God if the people were faithful to Him. Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets warned and encouraged the nation. Sometimes they spoke to the king. Other times they preached in the market place. Sometimes these messengers of God were sent to foreign nations, as in the case of Jonah. These prophetic messages, orally delivered, seem to fall into a general category of preaching. However, the delivery of their messages were not usually associated with times of formal congregational worship.

When one looks at the Biblical record in the Old Testament, it is difficult to find the one-way monologues that we have come to associate with preaching today. In fact, any formal weekly assembly where verbal content was

expressed apart from the ritual services seems not to have existed.

Preaching in the New Testament

Preaching in the New Testament is the pre-eminent method of communicating the good news as it is in Christ Jesus. Preaching took place in non-routine, non-weekly, and unstructured settings. Occasionally preaching occurred in the worship setting of the synagogue, but more often it took place in a home, street, or open field. The audience could be one or a multitude. The term preaching is not reserved for formal worship occasions.

Several Greek terms are translated preach, preacher, or preaching in the New Testament--diaggello, to tell or announce thoroughly; dialegomai, to speak throughout; euaggelizo, to tell good news or tidings; kataggello, to tell thoroughly; kerusso, to cry or proclaim as a herald; laleo, to talk, discourse; prokerusso, to cry or proclaim beforehand; proeuaggelizomai, to tell good news beforehand; parrasiazomai, to use boldness, be free in speech; pleroo, to fill, make full; akoe, hearing, what is heard by the ear; kerux, crier, proclaimer, herald; kerugma, a

cry, proclamation. The most commonly used words are euaggelizo and kerusso.[1]

All of the above words have a similar meaning and can easily be used to describe today's preaching in the 11:00 A.M. worship hour. However, their meaning must not be limited to this formal setting. In truth, these terms could be used of anyone with a message to communicate and says nothing about the setting where these messages are delivered.

The Greek word didasko and its derivatives is the primary word for "to teach" in the New Testament. It is also a word that figures prominently in describing the work of Jesus. The New Testament employs a great variety of settings for the vocal proclamation of the Good News.

John the Baptist is the first New Testament personality to make use of preaching to declare the pre-eminence of Jesus. Speaking to multitudes in the wilderness he announced the presence of the Lamb of God.[2] He avoided much of the formalism that entangled the worship strategy of the Jews at the time. His message was simple and direct, without benefit of music or prayers or formal Scripture reading.

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[1]Robert Young, Analytical Concordance to the Bible (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969), 768.

[2]John 1:19-34.

Jesus' preaching

Jesus was skilled at presenting truth. His first recorded act of public dialogue was with the teachers in the temple. The record states he was there "listening to them and asking them questions."[1] This cannot be described as a sermon. However, the record continues by saying, "and all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers."[2] Clearly His dialogue with the teachers had stimulated new thought patterns in His listeners.

In an early encounter with Nicodemus, Jesus shared with him the eternal truths he had missed until then. This visit is not called preaching in the text, but it does resemble exchanges which are later called preaching.[3]

In His dialogue with the woman and people of Sychar, Jesus "stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His word."[4] Not until Jesus began teaching, preaching, and healing in Galilee is this work called preaching. It is most interesting to find that the parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels speak of the same activity but use different terminology to

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[1]Luke 2:46,47.

[2]Luke 2:47.

[3]Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 8:12.

[4]John 4:40,41.

describe it. Matthew and Mark use the term karussein, "to proclaim," to describe Jesus' activity, while Luke says he _edidasken_, "taught," in their synagogues.[1] The choice of words here points up the fact that in the work of Jesus, teaching and preaching were one and the same activity. It cannot be said that at one minute Jesus is preaching and at another moment he is teaching. Communication was at one and the same time a teaching-instructional enterprise as well as an inspirational-motivational activity. It is not uncommon to find the terms teaching and preaching used more or less interchangeably in the description of Christ's ministry.

At Nazareth Jesus stood to read from the scroll and then sat down to begin expounding it.[2] This is in complete harmony with Palestinian synagogal practice. Then He proclaimed that the Scripture had been fulfilled that day.[3] This discourse is not termed preaching, but we would recognize it as such. Later, describing a similar event in the Capernaum synagogue, He "taught" (_didaskon_) them.[4] Leaving Capernaum, "He went about all Galilee, teaching (_didaskon_) in their synagogues and

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[1]Matt 4:17, Mark 1:14, Luke 4:15.

[2]Luke 4:20.

[3]Luke 4:16-27.

[4]Mark 1:21,22,27; Luke 4:31,32,36.

preaching (<u>karusson</u>) the gospel of the kingdom."[1]
Parallel passages use the word "preaching" (<u>karusson</u>)
only.[2] Again, in the story of the paralytic, Mark says
"he was preaching" (<u>elalei</u>), while Luke says "as he was
teaching" (<u>didaskon</u>), to describe the context of the
healing of the paralytic by Jesus.[3] Other examples of
the interchangeable use of the words teaching and
preaching in Jesus' ministry can be given, but the point
is that Jesus' work can be aptly described by either
term. The teaching-instructional intent of Jesus in His
preaching is obvious.

The setting of Jesus' preaching/teaching also
varied. Nicodemus met Him in the garden. He taught in
the synagogues in Galilee and Capernaum. He healed the
paralytic in a home. He fed the thousands on the
hillside. He gave His parables in full view of the
agricultural comparisons He described. He spoke by the
seaside, by the well of Sychar, and in the home of Simon,
and to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany. He ate with
and taught in the home of Zaccheus. He associated with
the drunks and the harlots, the tax collectors and the
lepers. Jesus was confined by no pulpit and constrained
by no traditions regarding place to preach or where to

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[1]Matt 4:23.

[2]Mark 1:38,39; Luke 4:43,44.

[3]Mark 2:2, Luke 5:17.

teach. And yet he taught with such authority that men would follow Him to the wilderness to hear His every word. No formal music graced His gatherings, no formal prayers were required at His services. No order of service is prescribed or modeled by Jesus in His earthly ministry. And yet there was order, power, and motivation for better living as the outcome of His ministry.

His preaching and teaching was designed to call attention to His Father and to Himself as the fulfillment of Scripture regarding the Messiah. The message He bore was meant to captivate, educate, and motivate people for participation in His kingdom both now and for eternity.

Early Christianity

In early Christianity sharing the Good News was often done through preaching.

> The sermon or exposition of the Scriptures seems to have been an important part of early Christian worship. On the day of Pentecost Simon Peter stood up and preached the gospel to the people (Acts 2:40). Paul exhorted Timothy to be faithful in preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:1-4). The kerygma, or the acts of God in history revealed in Jesus Christ was preached wherever Christians went.[1]

Not all early Christian preaching was kerygmatic --evangelistic proclamation. Much was ethical or parainetic (thus didactic), didache--instruction and exhortation, though a rigid distinction cannot be maintained. Some was a combination, like many of Paul's

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[1]Segler, 30.

letters, which contained both indicative and imperative parts. New Testament preaching is often informational or instructional in that the Good News (information) is shared through verbal proclamation. Additionally, one might also be taught correct behavior and lifestyle through preaching.

> Primitive Christians gave primary emphasis to the preaching of the gospel as a means of bringing salvation. They had a dialogue with the unbelieving world.[1]

The only two media for transmission of the Good News in Biblical times were written messages and personal verbal messages. The verbal proclamation, or preaching, was done by any Christian, not just by especially called and ordained men, and is not isolated to worship settings.

> And Saul was consenting unto his [Stephen's] death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.[2]

The "preachers" here are common people. They were not the Apostles who were still in Jerusalem. This proclamation was clearly something every Christian could do. It was not a clergy-based activity. The ordained deacons were also involved.

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[1]Ibid., 74.

[2]Acts 8:1,4.

> Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.[1]

> But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.[2]

Preaching was not always done in the worship setting or to a group as evidenced by the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. Here Philip "preaches" to a one-man audience. Preaching in this case took place in a devotional setting.

> And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."[3]

Here instruction is clearly being given by Philip. That instruction is called preaching. Philip was instructing the eunuch about Jesus Christ, as Messiah, with the result that the eunuch made a commitment to Christ and was baptized.

After Saul received his sight the record states:

> And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the

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[1]Acts 8:5,6.

[2]Acts 8:12.

[3]Acts 8:34-37.

disciples which were at Damascus. And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. But all that heard him were amazed and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests. But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.[1]

Saul's work consisted in proving or offering evidence that Jesus is Christ--a testimony and instructional role.

In Cornelius' vision, the angel said, "He [Peter] shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do."[2] And when Peter arrived, Cornelius told him, "Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."[3] Peter proceeded to "preach" to them Jesus Christ. Definite instructions on what to "do" were given to Cornelius by Peter.

In Jerusalem, when criticized for his mission to Cornelius' household, Peter "rehearsed the matter from the beginning, and expounded it by order unto them."[4] The term preaching is not used here, perhaps because

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[1]Acts 9:19-22.

[2]Acts 10:6.

[3]Acts 10:33.

[4]Acts 11:4.

Peter is making an explanation of events in contrast to proclaiming Christ as the Saviour of the world.

"Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."[1] Evidently the "preaching" here mentioned is not the exclusive role of the clergy or the "elders," but every scattered member is seen "preaching."

In Antioch the word was spread by scattered believers. When word reached Jerusalem, the church sent Barnabas, "Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."[2] Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."[3] This regular gathering suggests the presence of worship structure which includes teaching/preaching.

Paul and Barnabas in Cyprus preached in the synagogue setting. "So they, being sent forth by the

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[1]Acts 11:19.

[2]Acts 11:23.

[3]Acts 11:26.

Holy Ghost, departed unto Selucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews."[1]

One can multiply references in the book of Acts alone that show that preaching, or the proclamation of Christ crucified, is not a formal exercise which took place only in a worship setting. Often preaching took place in the synagogue, but it is also mentioned as taking place in the open air or in the individual home.[2] Preaching is not limited to the clergy or the ordained apostles. Every individual Christian had the opportunity, indeed, the responsibility of sharing the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. But in every case preaching can be viewed as instructional or revelatory. The believer shared with the unbeliever something that he did not know before, or expanded the field of knowledge or understanding about things already partially understood.

The motivation for preaching by the believers was the conviction that they understood a better way. They had good news. The fulfillment of the Gospel commission was but the working out of the great law of "Love your

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[1]Acts 13:4,5.

[2]Acts 10:34.

neighbor as thyself."[1] Jesus was the answer and the believers wanted to share the answer with those who had not yet discovered it. Preaching was the method, Jesus was the reason.

Expanding their ministry

In order to expand their availability and to serve as a resource for future Christians, the Apostles utilized the written media to augment the personal testimony of believers. The Gospels constitute a record of the life and work of Jesus, written from each author's distinct perspective and purpose. Paul wrote letters to individuals and churches when he could not personally deliver the message. In short, the apostles and early Christians used every means available to them to communicate the Gospel to people, Jews and Gentiles alike. They did not share the view that some modern liturgists seem to hold, that worship is an event and preaching is a happening that is so unique that the experience can never be repeated with the same effectiveness under different circumstances. In contrast to this position, the early Christians apparently believed that some truths are timeless and could be expected to lead to predictable response wherever and whenever and however they were communicated.

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[1]Matt 19:19, 22:39; Mark 12:31; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8.

Application

Relating this to the present study of the use of the video sermon in the worship service, it is observed that the "preaching" mentioned in the book of Acts was often not by professionals or full-time workers. It is difficult to conceive that these lay discourses were specifically designed and unique for every encounter, although undoubtedly the presentation was adapted to the situation. More likely these discourses were the spontaneous rehearsal of previously understood truths. Even Paul's preaching and letter-written messages were not always new for each new setting, but the same message retold to a different audience. Some of Paul's letters duplicate substantial sections of others. Quite a bit of duplication appears between Colossians and Ephesians, for example. To be sure, adaptations to the local needs or perspectives were necessary. Perhaps the best proof that the apostolic message is applicable in more than one setting is the use Paul made of letters to the churches. When unable to go in person, he wrote letters to deal with certain needs or misconceptions that existed in some of the congregations he had founded through personal work. These letters were deemed to have value for more than one church. Paul intended that his letters be read by more than one church. For example, Col. 4:16 says, "And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that

you read also the letter from Laodicea." Without doubt

this is an injunction to the public reading of the two

letters. In this way the apostle could multiply his

influence when he could not be personally present.

> One should remember that there were no printing
> presses in the ancient world, so that written
> material was precious. Besides, not everyone was
> literate. So the public reading of such documents as
> Scriptures and sermons was very important.
> There was apparently an office in the early
> church--that of Reader--whose specific responsibility
> was to read these documents to the congregation.
> Thus the RSV appropriately translates Revelation 1:3,
> "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of the
> prophecy, and blessed are those who hear. . . ."
> The point you can make is this: The video
> recorder corresponds to the Amanuensis (cf. 1 Peter
> 5:12), and the video player corresponds to the
> Reader. The only difference is that the visual
> dimension has been added to the audible.[1]

The New Testament does not describe an order of

worship or what proportion of worship was given to

preaching. A strong note of celebration was present

along with a personal commitment on the part of each

member to support the group.[2] Leaders were appointed

and ordained by the apostles for local leadership. No

doubt the preaching portion of their services was

composed of the retelling of the gospel story by those

who knew it best, augmented by the written accounts that

soon began to circulate, and by instructions on church

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[1]Robert M. Johnston, Professor of New Testament
in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary,
Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan, letter to
the author, June 3, 1986, 2.

[2]Acts 2:41-47.

order, doctrine, and organization sent by the apostles and church leaders. No doubt the days the apostles or eyewitnesses spoke were highly cherished. But at other times they had to rely on second-hand sources which they did not disdain to utilize. This "preaching in absentia" could be understood to parallel the use of the video-taped sermon in the church today. The preferred sermon, of course, would be one preached by a live and present speaker. However, in his absence a "canned" or "pre-recorded" version could still serve a useful purpose. So the modern church which lacks first-hand preachers might still gain life through media messages at church by inspired speakers who hold Christ before their gaze.

What Is Ellen G. White's View of Worship and Preaching?

Another important perspective on worship for Seventh-day Adventists must be found in the writings of Ellen G. White. What is Ellen White's view of worship and preaching--would the video possibilities appeal to her? While White never wrote a book on worship or systematically addressed the question in depth, she had definite convictions about many features of worship. The experience of worship is described by her in colorful terms, many times in the negative. That is to say, she points out wrong ways of worship to give clues to the correct ways.

The role of preaching and the role of the minister in worship is a subject often addressed by Ellen White, but never in the systematic way one might expect if the mechanics of worship were of primary concern. Meetings in which she participated were often quite informal, without much structure, but full of meaning. Only the flagrant misapplication of worship seems to call for her attention and corrective efforts.

What Is Ellen White's View of Worship?

Though Ellen White's comments on the subject of worship are limited, there can be little doubt that she had experienced both uplifting and meaningful services, and services which were elaborate but empty of spiritual power. She comments that "the evil of formal worship cannot be too strongly depicted, but no words can properly set forth the deep blessedness of genuine worship."[1] This statement comes from a context in which "worldly" singers and theatrical display were utilized in the service. She labels these "worldly methods."

When Ellen White uses the term "forms," "formal," or "formalism," her meaning is not the opposite of informal. Rather, she uses it to describe a mechanical performance that is devoid of true piety and heart religion. She uses words like cold, frozen, dead,

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[1]Ellen G. White, _Testimonies to the Church_, 9 vols. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1948), 9: 143.

lifeless, dry, to depict formalism. It is contrasted

with warmth, the spirit of Christ, earnest zeal, and

energy. She says formality must be removed. This view

of formality does not rule out a well-ordered service, it

simply demands that in its formality worship must not

loose its vitality.[1]

On another occasion she declared:

> The most profitable meetings for spiritual
> advancement are those which are characterized with
> solemnity and deep searching of heart; each seeking
> to know himself, and earnestly, and in deep humility,
> seeking to learn of Christ.[2]

This statement was made in the context of services

reflecting fanaticism and a disorderly speaking in

tongues, which was condemned and corrected.

It is interesting to observe that in the majority

of her statements on the subject of worship, Ellen White

says much more about the behavior and attitudes of the

worshipers than about the content or structure of the

service itself. "The services of the church should be

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[1]Ibid, 5: 72; idem, Selected Messages, 3 vols.,
(Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing
Association, 1958), 1: 357; idem, Great Controversy
(Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing
Association, 1939), 316; idem, Patriarchs and Prophets,
p. 166; idem, Christian Service (Washington DC: Home
Missionary Department of the General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists, 1947), 40; Testimonies, 9: 155;
idem, Counsels on Sabbath School Work, 152; Early
Writings (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing
Association, 1945), 97; Testimonies, 5: 538.

[2]Testimonies, 1: 412.

carried forward with an eye single to the glory of God."[1] "All the service should be conducted with solemnity and awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of assemblies."[2]

Nowhere in her writings do I find a description of an order of service which she recommended. Instead, the proper experience for the believer is the point of concern.

> To the humble, believing soul, the house of God on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise, the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's representatives, are God's appointed agencies to prepare a people for the church above, for that loftier worship into which there can enter nothing that defileth.[3]

Speaking more directly to the content she says:

> Our meetings should be made intensely interesting. They should be pervaded with the very atmosphere of heaven. Let there be no long, dry speeches and formal prayers merely for the sake of occupying the time. All should be ready to act their part with promptness, and when their duty is done, the meeting should be closed. Thus the interest will be kept up to the last. This is offering to God acceptable worship. His services should be made interesting and attractive and not be allowed to degenerate into a dry form.[4]

In defining worship she says:

> The religion that comes from God is the only religion that can lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will lead to watchfulness. It will purify the heart

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[1]Ibid., 4: 489.

[2]Ibid., 5: 493.

[3]Ibid., 491.

[4]Ibid., 609.

and renew the mind, and give us a new capacity for knowing and loving God. It will give us willing obedience to all His requirements. This is true worship.[1]

True worship is not passive. The following passage indicates clearly that the people should take an active part in corporate worship.

> Should we not praise God with heart and soul and voice "for His wonderful works to the children of men?"
> Praise the Lord in the congregation of His people. When the word of the Lord was spoken to the Hebrews anciently, and the command was; "And let all the people say, Amen." When the ark of the covenant was brought into the city of David, and a Psalm of joy and triumph was chanted, "all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord." This fervent response was an evidence that they understood the word spoken and joined in the worship of God.
> There is too much formality in our religious services. The Lord would have His ministers who preach the word energized by His Holy Spirit; and the people who hear should not sit in drowsy indifference, or stare vacantly about, making no response to what is said. . . .[2]

Worship is something we experience as well as something we watch or a ritual in which we participate. Ellen White's definition of corporate worship involves active thinking and verbal response to the worship elements of the service. Over and over again she reminds her readers that true worship is a heartfelt response to the conscious understanding and acceptance of what Christ has done.

> Then as you meet from Sabbath to Sabbath, sing praises to Him who has called you out of darkness

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[1] Ibid., 9: 156.

[2] White, _Testimonies_, 5: 318.

into His marvelous light. "Unto Him that loved us,
and washed us from our sins in His own blood" let the
heart's adoration be given. Let the love of Christ
be the burden of the speaker's utterance. Let it be
expressed in simple language in every song of praise.
Let the inspiration of the Spirit of God dictate your
prayers. As the word of life is spoken, let your
heartfelt response testify that you receive the
message as from heaven. This is very old-fashioned,
I know; but it will be a thank offering to God for
the bread of life given to the hungry soul. This
response to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit will
be a strength to your own soul and an encouragement
to others. It will give some evidence that there are
in God's building living stones that emit light.[1]

The sincerity and obedience of the worshiper is
more important to her than the formalities of worship.
She says quite a lot about behavior in church, i.e.,
reverence, awe, respect, no common talk, etc.

When a church has been raised up and left
uninstructed on these points [reverence and behavior
in church], the minister has neglected his duty and
will have to give an account to God for the
impressions he allowed to prevail. Unless correct
ideas of true worship and true reverence are
impressed upon the people, there will be a growing
tendency to place the sacred and eternal on a level
with common things, and those professing the truth
will be an offense to God and a disgrace to
religion.[2]

To the humble, believing soul, the house of God
on earth is the gate of heaven. The song of praise,
the prayer, the words spoken by Christ's
representatives, are God's appointed agencies to
prepare a people for the church above, for that
loftier worship into which there can enter nothing
that defileth.
From the sacredness which was attached to the
earthly sanctuary, Christians may learn how they
should regard the place where the Lord meets with His
people. . . .

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[1]Ibid., 6: 367.

[2]Ibid., 5: 500.

. . . Nothing that is sacred, nothing that
pertains to the worship of God, should be treated
with carelessness or indifference. In order that men
may do their best work in showing forth the praises
of God, their associations must be such as will keep
the sacred distinct from the common, in their
minds. . . .

When the worshipers enter the place of meeting,
they should do so with decorum, passing quietly to
their seats. If there is a stove in the room, it is
not proper to crowd about it in an indolent, careless
attitude. Common talking, whispering, and laughing
should not be permitted in the house of wŏrship,
either before or after the service. Ardent, active
piety should characterize the worshipers.[1]

When the minister enters, it should be with
dignified solemn mien. He should bow down in silent
prayer as soon as he steps into the pulpit, and
earnestly ask help of God. . . . Every one of the
congregation also, who fears God should with bowed
head unite in silent prayer with him that God may
grace the meeting with His presence and give power to
His truth proclaimed from human lips. When the
meeting is opened by prayer, every knee should bow in
the presence of the Holy One, and every heart should
ascend to God in silent devotion. . . . The lifeless
attitude of the worshipers in the house of God is one
great reason why the ministry is not more productive
of good. The melody of song, poured forth from many
hearts in clear, distinct utterance, is one of God's
instrumentalities in the work of saving souls. All
the service should be conducted with solemnity and
awe, as if in the visible presence of the Master of
assemblies.

When the word is spoken, you should remember,
brethren that you are listening to the voice of God
through His delegated servant. Listen
attentively. . . .

When the benediction is pronounced, all should
still be quiet, as if fearful of losing the peace of
Christ. Let all pass out without jostling or loud
talking, feeling that they are in the presence of
God, that His eye is resting upon them, and that they
must act as in His visible presence. Let there be no
stopping in the aisles to visit or gossip, thus
blocking them up so that others cannot pass
out. . . .[2]

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[1]Ibid., 5: 491-92.

[2]Ibid., 5: 492-93.

The above passages focus on behavior and expectations in worship. This "heart preparation" seems to be of greater concern to Ellen White than the content or form the worship service might take. However, four elements in worship are mentioned specifically--silent prayer as the minister enters the pulpit, songs by the congregation, the word spoken by God's delegated servant, and the benediction.

In the prayer meeting, or social meeting, as she often calls it, one discovers less formality, less preaching, and more participation by the members present. "From the light which I have received, our meetings should be spiritual and social, and not too long."[1] She indicates that the purpose of these meetings is for "brothers and sisters who meet to be refreshed and invigorated by bringing their lights together."[2] She is critical of the way they are frequently managed, but states that "prayer meeting should be the most interesting gatherings that are held."[3] Then she enumerates four elements that should be included: music, testimonies, prayer, and sharing.[4]

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[1]Ibid., 2: 579.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., 4: 71.

[4]Ibid.

Summary

Formal worship, that which was cold and mechanical and devoid of the spirit of Christ, did not impress Ellen White. She was far more concerned that the drawing power of Christ be felt in the life of the believer than whether the reading of the Scripture came before or after the singing of the song. She reminds her readers that Jesus often taught the multitudes in the open air, suggesting that formality, in her special use of the term, was detrimental to the message Jesus communicated. Her focus is always upon the experience of being drawn into an understanding relationship with our Saviour. Whenever and however this is accomplished, there true worship is being enjoyed.

What Is Ellen White's View of Preaching in Worship

Is Preaching Instructional?

In the opening section of this chapter, it was established that in teaching or instructional situations the video presentation was just as effective as live instruction. In this present study, I have attempted to discover how the video sermon might rate in terms of effectiveness or usefulness in the worship service in the absence of the live preacher. Since I found no studies that evaluated the inspirational/motivational properties of the video presentation as contrasted with live presentation, I focused my attention on whether or not

the sermon has instructional elements incorporated in it
or whether it is only inspirational/motivational.
Therefore, the following review is targeted around the
question, What is Ellen White's view of preaching--is it
primarily instructional? If it could be established that
preaching is primarily instructional in nature, a good
case for using video sermons would be established for
they have been proven effective in the instructional
domain. If, on the other hand, it were found that
preaching cannot embrace the instructional design, it
could not be determined from previous research whether
the video sermon would accomplish the purpose or not.

If it were found that preaching in the worship
service were primarily instructional in nature, it could
easily be observed that video sermons could satisfy this
function. If there were more to preaching, and it is
suspected that there is, then what might those added
elements be and how would they be influenced in the case
of a video sermon in contrast to a sermon preached live?

Ellen White has much to say about the spoken word
through preaching. Basic to her concern is that Christ
be lifted up. Preaching and Bible instruction must
always do this.

> The very first and most important thing is to
> melt and subdue the soul by presenting our Lord Jesus
> Christ as the sin-pardoning Saviour. Never should a
> sermon be preached, or Bible instruction in any line
> be given, without pointing the hearers to "the Lamb
> of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John
> 1:29. Every true doctrine makes Christ the center,

every precept receives force from His words.[1] (emphasis added)

Not only must the sin-pardoning Saviour be central in the proclamation, but the proclaimer himself must be in contact with the divine, before the listeners can be benefitted.

> A vital connection with the chief Shepherd will make the undershepherd a living representative of Christ, a light indeed to the world. An understanding of all points of our faith is indeed essential, but it is of greater importance that the minister be sanctified through the truth which he presents for the purpose of enlightening the conscience of his hearers.[2] (emphasis added)

Beyond the presentation of truth and the appeal of the presentation, the individual in the pulpit must reach the hearts of the listeners. This is where the video sermon may be deficient.

> If they are true men of God, they will know that the object of preaching is not to entertain. It is not merely to convey information, nor to convince the intellect.
> The preaching of the word should appeal to the intellect and should impart knowledge, but it should do more than this. The minister's utterances, to be effectual, must reach the hearts of his hearers. . . .[3]

In speaking of Jesus' ministry, Ellen White makes little distinction in her use of the terms teaching, preaching, and instruction. These terms can be found more or less interchangeably throughout her writings.

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[1] White, Testimonies, 6: 55.

[2] Ibid., 4: 315.

[3] Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1948), 152.

This is of special interest in this paper in seeking answers to the question, Is preaching primarily instructional?

The word _instruction_ is highlighted in the following quotations. The words "teaching" or "preaching" may also be used in the same quote to refer to Jesus' method of communication.

> The prince of teachers, He sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His _instruction_ was so direct, His illustrations were so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. The simplicity and earnestness with which He addressed the needy, hallowed every word.[1] (emphasis added)

> The Redeemer of the world sought to make His lessons of _instruction_ plain and simple that all might comprehend them. He generally chose open air for his discourses. No walls could enclose the multitude which followed Him; but He had special reasons for resorting to the groves and the seaside to give His lessons of _instruction_. He could there have a commanding view of the landscape and make use of objects and scenes with which those in humble life were familiar, to illustrate the important truths He made known to them. He connected the works of God's finger in the heavens and upon the earth with the words of life He wished to impress upon their minds, that, as they should look upon the wonderful works of God in nature, His lessons might be fresh in their memories.[2] (emphasis added)

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[1]Ellen G. White, _Ministry of Healing_ (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1937), 23-24.

[2]Idem, _Testimonies_, 2: 579.

Christ's manner of _teaching_ was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterized by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through use of figures and symbols with which His hearers were familiar; and the common people heard him gladly, for they could comprehend His words.[1] (emphasis added)

The preaching referred to in the above passages is certainly on the informal side of gospel proclamation as compared with today's formal services in a formal worship setting. These words are written concerning the Master Teacher who should be the model for preaching, teaching, and instruction; though admittedly circumstances are vastly different today.

There are lessons that preachers must learn today about what constitutes the primary aim of preaching. Apparently some in Ellen White's day gave little thought to preaching, who consequently served up dull, dry fare that tried devotion and induced boredom. To them, and to us, she advises:

> The one appointed to conduct Sabbath services should study how to interest his hearers in the truths of the Word. He should not always give so long a discourse that there will be no opportunity for those present to confess Christ. The sermon should frequently be short so that the people may express their thanksgiving to God.[2]

She goes on to say in this same passage that there should be time for praise testimonies, to which,

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[1] Ellen G. White, _Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students Regarding Education_ (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1943), 240.

[2] White, _Gospel Workers_, 171.

she says, "the angels love to listen." She concludes by saying that "everyone should have something to say."[1] "As the word of life is spoken, let your heartfelt response testify that you receive the message as from heaven."[2]

In the context of how to keep the Sabbath, she advised:

It is necessary that the people of God assemble to talk of Him, to interchange thoughts and ideas in regard to the truths contained in His word, and to devote a portion of time to appropriate prayer. But these seasons, even upon the Sabbath, should not be made tedious by their length and lack of interest.[3]

It should be noted that this interchange does not necessarily include a sermon--though it could well include one. In the context of the social meetings she says, "The worship of God should be both interesting and instructive to those who have any love for divine and heavenly things."[4]

Some ministers think that it is not necessary to preach repentance and faith; they take it for granted that their hearers are acquainted with the gospel, and that matters of a different nature must be presented in order to hold their attention. But many people are sadly ignorant in regard to the plan of salvation; they need more instruction upon this all-important subject than upon any other.[5] (emphasis added)

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Idem., Testimonies, 6: 367.

[3]Ibid., 2: 583.

[4]Ibid., 2: 579.

[5]Idem, Gospel Workers, 158.

Never should he preach a sermon that does not help his hearer's to see more plainly what they must do to be saved.[1]

A familiarity with the truths of the scripture will give the teacher of truth qualifications that will make him a representative of Christ. The spirit of the Saviour's teaching will give force and directness to his _instruction_ and to his prayers. His will not be a narrow, lifeless testimony; he will not preach over and over the same set discourses; for his mind will be open to the constant illumination of the Holy Spirit.[2] (emphasis added)

When a minister feels that he cannot vary from a set discourse, the effect is little better than that produced by reading a sermon.[3]

Of all men upon the face of the earth, those who are proclaiming the message for this time should understand their Bible, and be thoroughly acquainted with the evidences of their faith. One who does not possess a knowledge of the Word of Life, has no right to try to _instruct_ others in the way to heaven.[4] (emphasis added)

In the following quote, teaching and preaching are contrasted, teaching being favored.

There should be less preaching and more teaching--teaching the people, and also teaching young men how to labor successfully. Ministers should become efficient in teaching others how to study the Bible, and in training the minds and manners of those who would become workers in the cause of God. And they should be ready to council and _instruct_ those who give promise of possessing ability to work for the Master.[5] (emphasis added)

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[1]Ibid., 153.

[2]Ibid., 252.

[3]Ibid., 165.

[4]Ibid., 249.

[5]Ibid., 76.

Dwell upon practical godliness, weaving the same into doctrinal discourses.[1]

To the listener, Ellen White says,

When the word is spoken, you should remember, brethren, that you are listening to the voice of God through His delegated servant. Listen attentively.[2]

The sermon, for Ellen White, had a decided purpose. Repeatedly the admonition is that the sermon should give practical help to people needing to know how to be saved.

Never should he preach a sermon that does not help his hearers to see more plainly what they must do to be saved.

The immediate requirements, the present trials—for these, men and women need present help. The minister may take a high range into the heavens by poetical descriptions and fanciful presentations, which please the senses and feed the imagination, but which do not touch the life experience, the daily necessities. He may think that by his fanciful eloquence he has fed the flock of God; his hearers may think that they never before saw the truth clothed in language so beautiful. But trace, from cause to effect, the ecstacy of feeling caused by these fanciful representations, and it will be seen that although some truths may have been presented, such sermons do not fortify the hearers for the daily battles of life.

He who in his preaching makes eloquence his highest aim, causes the people to forget the truth that is mingled with his oratory. When the emotion has passed away, it will be found that the word of God has not been fastened upon the mind, nor have the hearers gained in understanding. They speak in terms of admiration of the minister's eloquence, but they are not brought any nearer to the point of decision. They speak of the sermon as they would of a play, and of the minister as they would of an actor. They may come again to listen to the same kind of discourse, but they will go away unimpressed and unfed.

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[1]Ellen G. White, _Evangelism_ (Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 142.

[2]Idem, _Gospel Workers_, 493.

It is not flowery discourses that are needed, not a flood of words without meaning. Our ministers are to preach in a way that will help people to grasp vital truth. My brethren, do not soar where the common people cannot follow you, and if they could, would be neither benefitted nor blessed. Teach the simple lessons given by Christ. Tell the story of His life of self-denial and sacrifice, His humiliation and death, His resurrection and ascension, His intercession for sinners in the courts above. In every congregation there are souls upon whom the Spirit of the Lord is moving. Help them to understand what is truth; break the bread of life to them; call their attention to vital questions.[1]

The sermon must address practical questions of living and growing if it is to be of worth. "It is a sad fact that the reason why many dwell so much on theory and so little on practical godliness is that Christ is not abiding in their hearts. They do not have a living connection with God."[2] White further says that "The work of the minister has just commenced when truth is opened to the understanding of the people."[3] Teaching repentance and faith in Jesus must follow so that the people see the force of truth and its claims are brought home upon the conscience of the listener. The aim is to have religious beliefs and theories become translated into Christ-likeness in the home. The discourse, then, is not a presentation of theory only, but practical

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[1]Ibid., 153-155.

[2]Ibid., 4: 395.

[3]Ibid.

truths which may be lived out in the everyday life of the believer in the home and community.[1]

A long sermon is not always necessary in order to communicate Christ's message effectively. "Many sermons given would, if cut short one half, be far more beneficial to the hearers."[2] While the sermon may be short, the minister is to take time to teach, to hold Bible readings, and get the texts fastened in the minds of the hearers."[3] She reminds that Christ preached few sermons."[4] But when He did, His "favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world."[5]

Speaking specifically of the content of the sermon, Ellen White had this to say. "The science of salvation is to be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication."[6] The inspiration for sermon building comes from Christ and must focus on Christ.

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[1]Ibid., 4: 395-397.

[2]Idem, *Evangelism*, 441.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Idem, *Testimonies*, 6: 55.

[6]Idem, *Evangelism*, 502.

> If we are making the life and teachings of Christ
> our study, every passing event will furnish a text
> for an impressive discourse. It was thus the Saviour
> preached the gospel in the highways and the byways;
> and as he spoke the little group that listened to Him
> swelled to a great company.[1]

Sermons That May Be Repeated

The preacher may find inspiration for preaching

not only in current events but also repeat the sermons of

Christ.

> The sermons of Christ furnish ministers believing
> present truth with discourses which will be
> appropriate on almost any occasion. Here is a field
> of study for the Bible student, in which he cannot be
> interested without having the spirit of the heavenly
> Teacher in his own heart. Here are subjects which
> Christ presented to all classes. Thousands of people
> of every stamp of character and every grade of
> society were attracted and charmed with the matter
> brought before them.[2] (emphasis added).

> Throughout all time the words that Christ spoke
> from the mount of Beatitudes will retain their power.
> Every sentence is a jewel from the treasure house of
> truth. The principles enunciated in this discourse
> are for all ages and for all classes of men.[3]
> (emphasis added).

Here is evidence, then, that not all sermons need

to be original, nor must they always be tailored to a

specific congregation or group. Some themes are timeless

and enduring and are "appropriate on almost any

occasion." In the context of this present study, this

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[1]Idem, Testimonies, 9: 63.

[2]Ibid., 3: 214,215.

[3]Ibid., 7: 270.

would seem to suggest that some sermons could well bear
repeating, regardless of the circumstances.

In the book <u>Evangelism</u>, Ellen White instructs
ministers on the presentation of the message in the
evangelistic setting. Among the great themes that should
<u>always be presented</u>, she includes:

> Christ crucified, Christ risen, Christ our
> intercessor; His preexistence, His second coming,
> His personal dignity, His holy law, His
> righteousness.[1]

The three angels messages.[2]

Prophecy.[3]

There are universal messages, then, that everyone
should have the opportunity to hear.

Ellen White on several occasions read manuscripts
for her sermon presentations.[4] On another occasion she
read the majority of her sermon, not from her own
writings but from the Bible.

> Her second Sabbath sermon [1909 General
> Conference], "A Risen Saviour," was unique in that
> she opened her Bible and read not just a verse or two
> as an introduction to her message but three long
> chapters from the book of Matthew and fifty verses of
> a fourth, interspersing her reading with an

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[1]Idem, <u>Evangelism</u>, 187.

[2]Ibid., 190.

[3]Ibid., 193.

[4]Arthur L. White, <u>Ellen G. White</u>, vol. 6: <u>The
Later Elmshaven Years</u>, ed. Raymond H. Woolsey
(Washington, DC: Review and Herald Publishing
Association, 1982), 194.

occasional comment. It is said that she read "in an most solemn and impressive manner."[1]

This quote suggests that Ellen White often borrowed the material she shared from the pulpit, as we are conscious she did in her writings. She freely used the Bible as well as contemporary and historical writers.

Expanding the Work with the Printed Page

The limitations of the live preacher were apparent. To augment her work, Ellen White made abundant use of the resources available to her generation. The printed page was the medium of the day. She exhorted preachers and evangelists:

> Very much more can be accomplished by the living preacher with the circulation of papers and tracts than by preaching of the Word alone without the publications. . . . Let a synopsis of the discourse be printed and widely circulated.[2]

No doubt if the tape recorder and video recorder of today had been available to her, Ellen White would have included them, too, in her urgency to extend the reach of the gospel minister.

> Very much more can be accomplished by the living preacher with the circulation of papers and tracts than by the preaching of the word alone without publications. The press is a powerful instrumentality which God has ordained to be combined with the energies of the living preacher to bring the truth before all nations, kindreds, tongues, and

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[1]Ibid., 195.

[2]White, Evangelism, 160.

peoples. Many minds can be reached in no other way.[1]

Clearly this is not in the worship context but reveals the print media to be valid as a proclamation tool.

> The press is an instrumentality by which many are reached whom it would be impossible to reach by ministerial effort.[2]

> By the printed page the light reaches the isolated ones, who have no opportunity to hear the living preachers.[3]

This speaks to the same issue as the video sermon. Congregations who would not otherwise see a living preacher, may none-the-less be fed through the printed page or, today, the video sermon.

> Our publications are now sowing the gospel seed, and are instrumental in bringing as many souls to Christ as the preached word. Whole churches have been raised up as the result of their circulation. In this work every disciple of Christ can act a part.[4]

> Canvassers must go into various parts of the country. The importance of this work is fully equal to that of the ministry. The living preacher and the silent messenger are both required for the accomplishment of the great work before us.[5]

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[1] Ellen G. White, _Life Sketches_, (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1915, 1943). 217.

[2] Idem, _Testimonies_, 5: 388.

[3] Ellen G. White, _Colporteur Ministry_ (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1953), 20.

[4] Idem, _Christian Service_, 146.

[5] Idem, _Colporteur Ministry_, 8.

More decided efforts should be made to carry our important religious books to the people. Our publications can go to places where meetings cannot be held. In such places the faithful evangelistic canvasser takes the place of the living preacher.[1]

Calls are coming in from all direction, not only from persons of our faith, but from those who have become interested by reading our publications; they say, Send us a minister to preach to us the truth. But there is no man to send among you. Many are obliged to be content with the silent messenger. Let all our brethren take this to heart, and by personal effort in faith and hope contribute to the Signs of the Times; for in sending matter that is alive, in speaking by the pen words bearing the holy unction, they are preaching to thousands. Long, dry articles are not wanted for this paper. The great lack of men to go from place to place and preach the word may be in a great degree supplied by tracts and papers, and by intelligent correspondence.[2]

In the above quote White urges sending Signs, "for in sending matter that is alive, in speaking by the pen words bearing the holy unction, they are preaching to thousands." She declares that this paper is "preaching" and is "alive." It is possible for the printed page, which does not visually portray the preacher nor generate the tones or gestures or "presence" of the preacher, to be "alive" and "preaching." If this one-dimensional media approach, the "silent messenger," is this powerful, then surely video, with its ability to reproduce reality through multiple senses, could be even more powerful. The printed page may not totally fill the need, she says. But "in a great degree" it may.

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[1]Ibid., 141.

[2]Ibid., 111.

> The press is an instrumentality by which many are reached whom it would be impossible to reach by ministerial effort.[1]

Application

It is apparent from the above quotations that no substitute for the living preacher should be made where one is available, and when he is empowered by the Holy Spirit with a message intended to meet the needs of the congregation. However, Ellen White does concede that the live preacher may not always be available and recognizes the potential of media for being available in the absence of the live speaker.

She visualized small groups of people in scattered locations reading and accepting the messages and truths first discovered by living messengers and now published in tracts. Perhaps she saw some lay preacher reading truth-filled literature to the gathered flock or heard with the ear of faith the minister of a large church in the city sharing from his pulpit the truths he discovered in the printed page from a humble Bible student he had never met. She knew that giving of the message must not be limited to the living presence of the speaker, but must be wafted to the ends of the earth for all to hear. Every means must be employed toward that end.

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[1]Idem, _Evangelism_, 434.

It seems entirely likely that were Ellen White alive today, she would employ the broadcast media, the tape-recorded media, the video-taped media, etc. The medium of communication was not important to her, but the message was. The truth was vital. So long as the correct message was conveyed, she would use every available means to communicate it. No doubt she would consider the audiovisual representation of the original speaker quite superior to the recital of the printed page.

Ellen White stood, not on tradition, not on formality, but on the power of the Word to change lives wherever it was presented with clarity. Perhaps, then, she would endorse the use of video, too, where this seemed to be the best way to communicate truth, in the absence of the living preacher—be it in the worship service or the isolated home.

If one could not accept this reality, the Seventh-day Adventist Church would not likely be in the media broadcast business. The fact that it is, and that Adventist speakers often approach the message in a sermonic mode, suggests that today's Adventists are in tune with the Ellen White concept of using every available means to teach the gospel.

All of the elements necessary for the presentation and reception of truth seem potentially to be present in the medium of video except one, the

personal presence of the speaker. That could be a
disadvantage, primarily when it comes time for a response
to the message. The response to the call or invitation
on video could seem awkward at first, since the hearer
cannot interact with the speaker. But that, too, within
the context of worship, could probably be reduced by
having an elder or layman accept response to the
invitation if one were given. This would be much in the
line of what Ellen White envisioned of laymen ministering
the word through the printed page.

Is the Video Sermon Compatible with Contemporary Views of Worship and Preaching?

Views of recent writers on worship also relate
to the issue of the video sermon--specifically whether or
not the video sermon would be compatible with worship as
seen from their perspective.

Clarice Bowman, in the book Restoring Worship,
creatively makes a distinction between the sermon and
worship. He says:

> Distinction should be made between instructional
> material (often stories, talks, etc.), belonging in
> this category [sermons], and that which bids to
> worship. Instructional material belongs in a
> learning experience, not in a worship service. After
> an instructional period, worship may follow; or
> worship may precede; or worship may come part way
> through. Instruction should follow the laws of
> learning. Worship has its own laws. We worship only
> when we focus Godward."[1]

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[1](New York--Nashville: Abingdon--Cokesbury Press,
1951), 149.

So, according to Bowman, the sermon is instructional material and therefore cannot _be_ worship; but the sermon must be considered and prepared with the worship setting in mind.

> The sermon cannot be considered apart from the worship movement of the service, nor can the minister consider himself apart from the other worshipers. If all the worshipers are "chief actors" before Almighty God as audience, then ministers and choir function as "prompters from the wings." The sermon, however, can give powerful prompting.[1]

For Bowman, worship can only be an act on the part of the worshiper. It is not the liturgy or sermon itself. It would seem, then, that the video sermon would not be compatible with his view of worship because the sermon and the response of the people were not composed together. He declares: "Worship is not like a television show where scenes and sound-tracks were made long before and now played over. It is 'alive' in all the thrilling senses of that word."[2] One senses an interaction between speaker and congregation that could only happen when a live preacher and an awakened congregation share a response to God together.

> When we join in worship together sincerely, before God, there is a "plus" somehow, something happening beyond the sum total of what each individual worshiper brings. . . . Never are we nearer one another than when we are with God. Never are we nearer God than when we are in fellowship with one another. We are most truly ourselves when we are in brotherly relation before God. Only in this

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[1]Ibid., 156.

[2]Ibid., 83.

relation do we help others to be more truly and fully themselves.[1]

Specifically addressing the sermon itself, Bowman outlines the role of the sermon as a means of moving the believer to some new course of action.

> The sermon message can be the means of helping them [worshipers] make new affirmation of faith, or to accept new challenge, or dedicate to action. It is surrounded with a worship climate and should be prepared in that light. It should begin at the point where the people are in their worship movement, and lead them on.[2]

The last phrase strongly suggests that the speaker should know his audience. "A minister . . . will know their needs" is a statement found on the same page as the above quote--"Every sermon should lead somewhere. . . ." Bowman clearly has in mind that the sermon should be both inspiring and lead to action. But he views worship as the worshipers' response to whatever they have perceived as the action of God in their behalf.

In speaking of the congregation's response to the worship message, Bowman says: "Through what outward means may inward dedication be expressed? Moments of silence may be given after the sermon or message (which may be in film, drama, through discussion)."[3] He here acknowledges that the sermon or message may come from a source other than the verbal address of a living

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[1]Ibid., 78.

[2]Ibid., 156.

[3]Ibid., 91.

preacher. However, he would no doubt insist that the content of the sermon or message be planned with the needs of the congregation in mind, beginning where they are and moving them on. This, of course, is the same aim that every living preacher would have in preparing and presenting a sermon.

James Robertson asserts: "Surely, preaching at its highest occurs when God's presence becomes so real that the preacher himself almost drops from the consciousness of the people."[1]

Wilhelm Hahn further develops this thought of the preacher fading from view. Jesus becomes the real teacher.

> Thus by listening to the word of proclamation the congregation becomes contemporary with the Jesus Christ to whom the Gospels bear witness, and not merely with the Teacher before His death and resurrection, for in all these stories Jesus comes into the midst of the community as the Crucified and Risen Lord. . . . Through the preaching of the Word the Exalted Christ comes into the midst of worshiping congregations as a living and authentic figure, with all the clear-cut features of the historical Jesus.[2]

Ninian Smart makes four assertions with respect to worship.

> First, worship is a relational activity: one cannot worship oneself, as in the famous joke about the typical Englishman, who is a self-made man who worships his maker. Second, the ritual of worship

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[1]James D. Robertson, <u>Minister's Worship Handbook</u> (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1974), 56.

[2]Wilhelm Hahn, <u>Worship and Congregation</u>, trans. Geoffrey Buswell. Ecumenical Studies in Worship, no. 12 (Richmond VA: John Knox Press, 1963), 22.

expresses the superiority of the Focus to the
worshiper(s). Third, the ritual also performatively
sustains or is part of the power of the Focus.
Fourth, the experience which worship expresses is
that of the numinous, and the object of worship is
thus perceived as awe-inspiring.[1]

Smart expects that the sermon, when included as a
part of the worship service, will contribute to the above
criteria for worship. The sermon, then, points the
worshiper to the superiority of the Focus. This, one may
assume, gives the sermon an instructional role as well as
an inspirational role; at least when one defines
"instruction" as sharing with someone something they
might not already have known. In this case, then, the
sermon's objective would be to aid the worshiper in more
perfectly beholding Jesus and God, with the response that
the worshiper would be drawn to that Focus and offer
worship, a response of praise and awe.

William Nicholls contends that "the sermon should
be seen as complementary to the sacrament, as being, like
the sacrament, a form of Christ's gracious activity
toward us."[2] He further asserts that "the liturgy has
always been seen as the proclamation of the Word of
God."[3] At first impression, he seems to be equating

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[1]Ninian Smart, <u>The Concept of Worship</u> (New York:
St. Martin's Press, 1972), 37.

[2]William Nicholls, <u>Jacob's Ladder: The Meaning of
Worship</u>. Ecumenical Studies in Worship, no. 4 (Richmond,
VA: John Knox Press, 1958) 42.

[3]Ibid., 41.

liturgy and the sermon as both proclaimers of the Word.
Perhaps these other references will serve to modify that
impression.

> The preacher is the servant of the Word. His
> sermon puts at Christ's disposal the living language
> of the present day, with its associations with the
> everyday life of the congregation. It permits Christ
> to preach His Word through the mouth of the
> contemporary church, as He has already through the
> Apostolic Church.[1]

> The revelation of God takes place in His acts in
> history, and above all in Christ. His life and
> teaching, and His death and resurrection.[2]

> That fullness is present in every true
> proclamation of Christ, remaining one and the same in
> every new utterance of the eternal Word.[3]

Nicholls suggests a sort of reincarnation of
Christ at each proclamation, whether that is through the
sermon or through the liturgy of the service. In this
view, the preacher becomes the mouthpiece, Christ is the
real speaker. Nicholls says little about the involvement
or interaction of the congregation in the worship
setting. Rather, he focuses on the role of the preacher
in making the Word contemporary. If this connection is
made, however, and the congregation hears the voice of
God in the service, worship will no doubt result.

John Groenfeldt, in commenting on the relevancy
of preaching, declares: "Preaching is the celebration of

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[1]Ibid., 42.

[2]Ibid., 38.

[3]Ibid., 40.

God's presence in the living Jesus Christ. There is no true preaching where God's presence is not celebrated, where Christ is not acknowledged."[1] Further he states:

> Preaching is an activity which involves the whole church assembled at worship. He who speaks and those who listen are involved in the celebration of God's presence. . . . This understanding of preaching eliminates the popular concept that the sermon is a solo performance of the clergyman. While the speaking of the sermon does require one voice, the hearing of the Word of God is the activity of all who are present.[2]

That which is important to the above authors seems to be that it is the experience, feeling, encounter, event, that results from the sermon and the worship which is the objective rather than the content. Information as might be delivered in a sermon has as its main benefit that the worshiper may understand that

> in Jesus Christ God has indissolubly linked Himself with man in one great action of love. . . . Understood in this manner, preaching is the declaration of the fact of God's love, and is literally an appeal: "Be reconciled to God." (2 Cor. 5:20). In preaching, God confronts us in the man Jesus Christ.[3]

The above view is set in contrast to two major views which Groenfeldt says prevail in the minds of both the clergy and the laity. "The first is that the sermon is intended to show the pertinence of divine truth

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[1]John S. Groenfeldt, <u>We Gather Together: The Church Worships God</u> (Richmond, VA: CLC Press, Box 1176, 1972), 43.

[2]Ibid., 46.

[3]Ibid., 44.

relevant to the human condition and situation."
Groenfeldt says "Preaching is aimed at creating belief in
God's willingness to work with and for man."[1]

The second view he challenges is that preaching
is to lift from the human level to proximity with the
divine. In contrast, he declares: "The good news is
that man need not spend his life in futile, self-
justifying activity before God; rather, as one who lives
in the world God loves, man is free to live the new life
God has given in Christ."[2]

Greek rational thinking and sermons designed to
fit this style have been the dominant teaching mode for
centuries. But Don Wardlaw believes this cannot go
unchallenged today. In Scripture, the Word comes through
a wealth of literary forms: metaphors, parables,
allegories, myths, visions, hymns, doxologies, oracles,
correspondence, tropes, poetry, sagas, proverbs, diaries,
biographies, autobiographies, and history. Wardlaw
challenges the preacher to take advantage of the variety
of modes of literary style by using different forms. The
authors of the book he edited[3] explore varied ways of
handling the Bible texts.

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[1]Ibid., 44.

[2]Ibid., 45.

[3]Don M. Wardlaw, ed., <u>Preaching Biblically</u>,
(Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1983).

> The controlling question, what does it mean for sermon form to embody and express God's Word in Scripture? If preaching intends to reenact in the lives of preacher and hearers the saving acts of God in Christ as witnessed in Scripture, how does the preacher shape that reenactment so that it approximates as closely as possible Scripture's reality?[1]

One problem with a message that seeks to "reenact" the acts of God is that too often the message becomes terribly subjective. The divine authority is lost. It contains so much of the human and so little of the divine.

Wardlaw believes the narrative mode of preaching is most effective in reaching people in the twentieth century when so many other influences have changed human thought processes. He believes that reason and logic are no longer cherished modes of thinking. Truth is not valued as it once was. Therefore, he believes other methods must replace these time-honored methods.

James Massey also shows a particular fancy for the Narrative/Story Sermon,[2] believing it to be more in line with the typical learning habits of God's people today. He asserts that the preacher is the connecting link between God and man. A generation raised on TV certainly identifies more readily with a real-life illustration than with abstract concepts of truth and

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[1]Ibid., 22.

[2]James Earl Massey, _Designing the Sermon: Order and Movement in Preaching_, Abingdon Preacher's Library, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), 35.

virtue. Massey suggests that the preacher must immerse himself in the story until its basic issues are understood and its living thrust is felt. He must identify the divine action which reveals the importance of the narrative. Then he needs to be certain that he, the speaker, does not attract attention to himself, but rather lets the story make its own point.

In relating the sermon to the rest of the service, Massey says "there is a new wave of concern these days to relate the sermon more dynamically to other elements in the experience of worship."[1] He suggests the use of a church year or liturgical calendar to help focus and relate the sermon to the rest of the worship service. This could be accomplished by the video sermon by selecting sermons to be replayed that would fit the season or event in the church year.

In Celebration of the Gospel[2], Hardin, Quillian, and White speak of worship as Celebration. They liken the worship service to the "old-fashioned Fourth of July festivities." ·

> Backing off and taking a look, what went on?
> What were the essential aspects of this celebration?
> It seems clear that there were three major
> ones: . . . Remembrance, thanksgiving, and

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[1]Ibid., 26.

[2]H. Grady Hardin, Joseph D. Quillian, Jr., and James F. White, Celebration of the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964), 21.

rededication--these are the essential aspects of celebration.[1]

The motivation for worship must come as a response for what we comprehend Jesus Christ has done for humankind. The elements of remembrance, thanksgiving, and rededication are all present in worship. The Fourth of July only makes sense as it is placed in the historical context of what that celebration is all about: that the American forefathers did something for us as today's Americans that we can and do appreciate and celebrate. They fought for our independence at great personal sacrifice, and we enjoy the results today.

Just so today, in Christian worship, we adore God, confess our sins to Him, affirm our faith in Him, and dedicate our lives to Him. We depend upon Jesus Christ for the very meaning of ourselves: we depend upon the Holy Spirit for the power to think, will, and respond. The church is made up of those who are grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. This is the common ingredient in all Christians who come together for worship, according to Hardin et al. This is the common experience that makes corporate worship possible. This common worship experience involves three means, which we may call structure, words, and actions. Perhaps it is in the "words" area where the sermon comes in. In order for this worship to progress, the word must get out

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[1]Ibid., 22.

about the good news. This is the job of the preacher, to articulate the message in a way that constrains the congregation to worship. Hardin et al. consider the sermon as a part of the celebration, but not necessarily the most important element--just as the speeches were important to the Fourth-of-July celebration but did not constitute the focal point of the activities.

Worship, then, according to Hardin et al., is the responsive, participatory spirit of the believer who senses that something important has been done in his/her behalf and who in turn responds to that event with gratitude, commitment, and awe. Segler, too, defines worship by saying,

> Worship is not a human invention; rather, it is a divine offer. God offers himself in a personal relationship, and man responds. God's offer of love elicits man's response in worship.
> A vision of God demands a worship response because God is worthy of worship.[1]

A statement by Floyd Bresee reminds us that

> Though dialogue is an ideal way to learn, preaching is often a better way to motivate. And important as learning is, most Christians need to be motivated even more than they need to be taught. Worshipers do not come to church so much to learn what they never knew as to be motivated to do what they already know they should. Preaching is still needed--especially the kind of preaching that's based on the dialogic principle.
> . . . Dialogic preaching occurs when preachers talk to their people only after they have listened to them. When they have heard their hurts, felt their frustrations, and attempted to walk in their shoes,

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[1]Segler, <u>Christian Worship</u>, 4.

then their sermons ask those questions and seek those answers that meet their listeners' needs.[1]

According to this model of preaching, the video preachers would certainly not be dialogical in the sense that they are aware of individual circumstances of those in their congregation. Yet even in this we all should be able to agree. There are some universal needs and universal messages that a campmeeting speaker, for instance, may address. He may never have met his audience before and may yet speak to the needs and concerns of the congregation. Dialogical? Perhaps not. Timely? Definitely.

Steven Vitrano reminds us that one must

> Above all give attention to the question, "So what?" There must be an urgent reason why this particular sermon is being preached at this particular time to this particular audience. The gospel today must have a biting relevance. We preach as dying persons to dying people not as puffed up sophists to a ship of fools.[2]

Conclusions

The authors quoted above essentially agree that the sermon is instructional and that it is not in and of itself an act of worship. Instead, it is viewed as a part of the progression that leads to worship. As such, it points toward the Focus of worship, which invokes a

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[1]Floyd Bresee, "Dialogic Preaching," Ministry, March, 1988, 22.

[2]Steven P. Vitrano, "Structural Analysis for Textual Preaching," paper issued to extension class on preaching, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1985, 14.

response toward God on the part of the listening worshipers. This response is viewed as worship, the speaker and the listener alike sharing in response.

Admittedly, the video sermon could not recreate the original mood or the original worship environment, but perhaps it could help lead the current worshipers to a fresh response, one that is appropriate to that congregation at the time the message is replayed. Assuredly, the speaker could not share in the worshiper's current response. Nonetheless, some practical and responsive value could be expected as a result of playing an appropriate video message to a congregation who would otherwise be improvising in the absence of a trained worship leader.

It should be possible for the pastor who selects the video message to match a message of vital importance and relevancy to the needs of the congregation.

Bowman, Nicholls, Groenfeldt, Wardlaw, Massey, Hardin et al, and Segler agree on the instructional nature of the sermon. The video-recorded medium has already been established as an excellent instructor. Therefore, while the video-recorded sermon may not be as desirable a worship prompter as a live preacher, it should make a viable substitute for one.

CHAPTER IV

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

My pastoral district included three churches. Often no qualified speaker could be found to fill the pulpit for Sabbath morning worship service. I was available only on an every-other-week basis. The churches had become accustomed to a preaching service at the 11:00 a.m. hour, and they were too far apart for the pastor himself to preach in three churches each Sabbath. As a result, the issue often arose that an appropriate speaker was not available. The local elders were ill-prepared to develop sermons as often as needed. Some of their sermons consisted of a series of quotations by E. G. White strung together, the reading of an article from an Adventist periodical, or the playing of an audio-taped sermon some member recommended. Even with training in sermon preparation, the local elders could not fill every absence of the pastor.

A search for alternatives revealed that many pastors utilized video-taped sermons recorded in other settings. In an attempt to improve the consistent

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quality of the worship message on the Sabbath, I decided
to experiment with the video sermon. This experiment
became the subject of this project.

A project proposal was written, surveys were
developed, and approval was obtained from my project
advisor before the membership became involved in the
experiment.

Description of the Churches Involved

Church One

Church One had 120 members. Attendance averaged
between fifth and sixty. The church had two elders whose
sermons were acceptable, but the elders found it
difficult prepare adequately for sermons as often as
their turn came to preach. As a consequence, some
sermons were poorly developed. The pastor met with this
church every other week. Guest speakers were available
only occasionally.

The congregation was composed primarily of
retired people and housewives. The few young people in
the congregation were inconsistent in their attendance.
One of the elders, dubbed "the weeping prophet" because
of his emotional behavior in the pulpit, was not
universally respected by the members of the church. The
other, a retired railroad conductor, was a good person
but lacked the force of character to confront problems.
Consequently, the sermon quality sometimes lacked

persuasive power. The members often expressed the wish that they could have a full-time pastor who could preach to them every week.

Church Two

Church two, the second largest church, had about eighty-five members. Attendance averaged between thirty-five and forty-five. This church had three elders. One, a school teacher, did well in presenting a sermon if his turn did not come too often. The other two elders clearly did not have the gift of oral presentation. One read quotations for the sermon time when his turn came to preach. The third always played an audio-taped sermon. This congregation was primarily composed of farm people with limited levels of education and formal religious practices. These members complained about the sermons consisting of read quotations and of audio tapes. Some felt that they should always have an interesting and living preacher. The pastor served them on an every-other-Sabbath basis.

Church Three

Church Three, the smallest in the district, was not included in the experiment for two reasons. First, at the time of the experiment, it was temporarily under the full time speakership of a retired pastor. Secondly, in the pastor's absence the church had previously utilized the audio-visual medium for their worship

service using a Dukane machine with Bible study filmstrips. It was felt that they would already be biased by their own experience.

Description of Video Introduction Strategy

One of the requirements of this project was to take an attitude survey of members to assess their attitude toward the experiment. The purpose of the survey was to determine if any attitude modifications took place during the course of the project. Three surveys, identical except for verb tense, were administered. One was administered before the first video was shown or any rationale was provided for using the video sermon during the worship service. The second survey was completed by members following the first showing of a video sermon and after explanation of the project. The third survey was administered following the showing of five video sermons.

In the research done to evaluate video communication as a teaching agent, it was discovered that video-recorded presentations are just as effective a communicator as the live teacher in a teaching setting. This indicated that video was a plausible alternative to the live sermon presentation. In some cases, the prevailing alternative was to have no sermon at all.

I found it very complicated to know how to introduce the video sermon to the two churches in a way

that would raise the least resistance and would engender the most understanding on the part of the congregation. The respective church boards approved the project in advance, but for the surveys to have the most value, they had to be introduced to the congregation without any explanation. That is, with the exception of the board members, the first survey was administered before the congregation knew the scope of the experiment or had any understanding of its purpose. Ultimately, two different techniques were determined, neither of which could precede the survey, but would precede the showing of the first videotape.

In the largest church, the survey was distributed the week before the first video sermon was to be shown. The members were asked to fill out the survey and were told that the next week a visiting speaker, via video, would preach the sermon.

In Church Two the survey was filled in on the same day as the showing of the first video sermon. The first elder introduced the survey. In both churches the surveys were filled out in church during the announcement period prior to the worship service.

An Integral Part

In this experiment the video sermon was designed as an integral part of the worship service. The songs and scripture and the entire service was conducted

exactly as when a live speaker was present. At the time for the sermon, the video was turned on and the sermon was delivered. Following the sermon, the local elder lead in the closing song and gave a benediction. The video was not intended to substitute for the other worship elements, just for the sermon.

Planning Ahead

Getting the process to work took planning. Sermons were carefully chosen from among those I had recorded of prominent SDA speakers at campmeeting the previous summer. Unfortunately, none of the members from these churches attended campmeeting. The equipment had to be supplied and set up in the church prior to the service. Since the showings took place in my absence, I had to make sure that the people who were to operate the equipment knew how everything worked and when to start it. The elder in charge was instructed how to introduce the survey and see that each member completed one. He was given a very brief speech to describe for the congregation what would be happening at the service.[1]

Following the first survey, the members were told that the experiment would consist of five video-taped sermons played at the sermon time in the worship service. These were to be spaced over a period of several weeks.

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[1]Exact instructions as given to the elder are found in Appendix B, 133.

The intention was to average about once per month per church. The members were assured that this was only an experiment and that the video sermons would be discontinued if they were not to their liking. They were told that their feedback was desired on the survey and, if they chose, through personal communication to the pastor. The members were also invited to share ways to make the video sermon a more effective part of their service.

Description of Attitudes/Beliefs Surveys

The three surveys were the same except that the verb tense was different in each. The first referred to the video that would be shown. The second was a response to having seen the first video. The third was a response after having been exposed to the use of the video sermon in five services over a period of months.

It was thought important to keep the survey anonymous so no name was required of the respondents. Four categorical questions were factual rather than a matter of opinion. The first asked which age group the respondent belonged to. The second asked if the family owned a TV. The third asked if the respondent had a video system in the home. The fourth asked if the respondent had ever watched a religious program on video.

The purpose of these questions was to allow groupings of these variables that might affect the

attitudes expressed later in the survey.[1] When the survey was created, it was expected, for instance, that those of different age groups might respond differently to the video. The analysis of the survey results is considered in the next section.

Question Groupings

The survey was designed to ascertain the members' feelings related to the video sermon in the areas of quality of worship, attendance, appropriateness, and effectiveness. The survey questions fell generally into four groups. Questions 7 and 12 sought to evaluate the video sermon's effect on worship quality. Questions 4 and 5 sought to identify how the video sermon might affect church attendance. There was a concern that if videotapes became standard procedure at church, members would stay home. Questions 1, 3, 11, 12 addressed the appropriateness of the video sermon. Should it even be considered an option in worship? Questions 2, 6, 8, 9, 10 dealt with the effectiveness of the video sermon as compared with live preaching. The last two unnumbered questions were open-ended, asking the respondent to express best- and least-liked features of the experiment. This gave respondents the opportunity to express their

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[1]Samples of the three surveys may be found in Appendix A on page 126.

attitudes which may not have been addressed in the other questions.

Description of Analytical Procedures

Since the three surveys were given on three different Sabbaths, it must be noted that the sample makeup of the respondents is not identical for the three successive surveys. However, church attendance is generally stable and, therefore, the results should be reliable. Since two churches participated in the survey, and the two exhibit some differences in attitudes, it was thought best to consider the survey results separately.

It should be noted here that the purpose of the survey was not to evaluate the content of the sermon, but to record participants reaction to the medium of the video sermon. Therefore, the fact that each church was not shown the same sermons in sequence should not be of consequence.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS,

RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS

What the Statistics Represent

Not every respondent filled in an answer to every question. Therefore the number of responses to each question is used to calculate percentages. Occasionally, an individual attempted to modify the question to more accurately reflect his/her feelings. In such cases the response was placed in the category closest to the perceived intentions. Included here are the questions as well as the response percentages, though the format differs slightly from the survey form that was distributed.[1]

Total number of respondents from both churches completing Survey 1 was 67. Total number filling in Survey 2 was 70. Total number filling in Survey 3 was 56.

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[1]For a sample of the survey as it was presented to the members see Appendix A, 126.

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Because all three surveys were virtually the same except for the tense of the questions, the results of all three surveys are listed at the same time. Because the results from the two churches differ slightly, percentages for the two churches are listed separately. Attitude modifications were detected by comparing the relative percentages on each survey.

The analysis of these surveys no doubt reveals many things one might already have suspected, but they also exposed surprises as well. The analysis of these surveys undoubtedly shaped the future of any use of the video sermon in church.

See Table 1 for a complete summary of the three surveys.

TABLE 1

RESULTS OF SURVEYS IN THE TWO CHURCHES

Question of the Survey	Percentages in Church 1 Survey			Percentages in Church 2 Survey		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Age range						
15-30	18	21	23	42	41	24
31-55	33	24	30	16	18	24
56 and above	48	56	47	42	41	52
Church attendance						
Attend most weeks	94	97	100	86	88	100
Attend at least once a month	3	0	0	11	4	0
Attend occasionally	3	3	0	3	8	0
Does your family own a TV?						
Yes	100	100	100	79	80	68
No	0	0	0	21	20	32

Question of the Survey	Percentages in Church 1 Survey			Percentages in Church 2 Survey		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
Do you use a video system in your home?						
Yes	47	38	45	35	32	16
No	53	62	55	65	68	84
Have you watched religious programs on videotape before?						
Yes	50	74	47	40	53	50
No	50	26	53	60	47	50
1. A videotaped sermon was appropriate for our worship.						
a) agree	36	49	60	47	69	68
b) not sure	39	23	10	34	17	25
c) disagree	25	29	30	19	14	12
2. I believe videotaped sermon contributed to my worship experience.						
a) agree	42	57	55	59	71	64
b) not sure	39	12	13	28	12	24
c) disagree	19	31	32	13	18	12
3. I like having a videotaped sermon when the pastor is away.						
a) agree	40	37	40	58	67	79
b) not sure	31	37	20	26	24	4
c) disagree	29	26	40	16	9	17
4. I could worship at home via videotape as effectively as at church.						
a) agree	23	23	29	6	11	16
b) not sure	14	14	10	13	6	20
c) disagree	63	63	61	81	83	64
5. I will be tempted to worship at home when a video sermon is scheduled.						
a) agree	11	14	33	12	11	4
b) not sure	26	14	10	19	3	4
c) disagree	63	72	57	69	86	92

TABLE 1--<u>Continued</u>

Question of the Survey	Percentages in Church 1 Survey			Percentages in Church 2 Survey		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
6. My worship experience has been as meaningful with today's video sermon as on Sabbaths we have a "live" speaker.						
a) agree	25	23	39	31	28	40
b) not sure	28	23	16	25	26	20
c) disagree	47	54	45	44	46	40
7. I prefer having a sermon preached "live" even if the video sermon was better quality.						
a) agree	51	60	68	34	57	58
b) not sure	29	23	10	25	29	17
c) disagree	20	17	22	41	14	25
8. I was able to see and hear the video speaker adequately.						
a) agree	46	54	58	59	91	83
b) not sure	34	11	7	31	3	4
c) disagree	20	35	35	10	6	13
9. I was inspired to be a better Christian by the videotaped sermon as well as by a sermon preached "live."						
a) agree	31	50	45	38	56	58
b) not sure	25	15	14	31	18	25
c) disagree	44	35	41	31	26	17
10. I have been instructed as well with the video presentation as with a "live" preacher.						
a) agree	42	38	48	56	51	54
b) not sure	28	18	17	13	23	25
c) disagree	30	44	35	31	26	21

TABLE 1--Continued

Question of the Survey	Percentages in Church 1 Survey			Percentages in Church 2 Survey		
	1	2	3	1	2	3
11. It is possible that if Jesus or the apostles were living now that they might send a videotaped sermon or letter instead of a written one to be read in the churches in their absence.						
a) agree	37	33	56	45	61	71
b) not sure	37	33	26	32	21	8
c) disagree	26	33	18	23	18	21
12. That having video sermons occasionally is a good idea for our church.						
a) agree	46	50	62	57	74	76
b) not sure	31	29	17	33	18	8
c) disagree	23	21	21	10	8	16

Open-ended Questions

The last two questions on the survey were not numbered. They gave the respondent the opportunity to comment on their feelings about the project. The first question asked, "In two sentences or less please tell what you liked BEST about the videotaped sermon." The second open-ended question asked what they liked LEAST about the videotaped sermon. Many of the surveys were returned with no comment, however, several did. Some comments are as follows:

<u>Survey 1</u>

What they liked best (Survey 1)

*   "Would be different and interesting."

*   "Having a change of pace and face. An opportunity to hear really excellent speakers and material."

*   "Opportunity to hear ministers I might otherwise not get to hear."

*   "It will be all right if I can see it--if it's large enough."

*   "Maybe you could replay it and find something you missed."

*   "Haven't seen it yet."

*   "Ability to hear ministers or speakers who are conference leaders that may not be heard as often or in person."

*   "Maybe I will hear some real preaching. I might be able to gain a real learning experience from it. I think that's what a sermon should be."

*   "If the speaker is bringing us the truth we need."

*   "Not sure."

*   "I don't care for them."

*   "Hearing someone like Vandeman, someone you probably wouldn't get to hear personally. I have Jack Dubosque tapes. However, the real-life seminar beats the videos."

*   "Done by a professional minister and not a layman."

*   "Clear understandability."

*   "Might get some professional speakers we otherwise would not have access to."

*   "I suppose the videos would be choice speakers with a vital sermon."

*   "I need to see the sermon first. Can't answer until I've seen it. May not like it."

*   "One can learn a great deal by video."

* "We would get to hear sermons we wouldn't get to hear if we didn't hear them on video. All of our people are unable to attend campmeeting."

* "We may be able to listen to ministers that we might not have the opportunity to see and hear otherwise."

* "We need a minister to preach a live sermon."

* "I think we would have the privilege to hear some good speakers we may not be privileged to hear otherwise."

* "Have a change."

* "I feel we would get to hear and see some very good speakers plus have some ideas that may be at a different angle, and etc."

* "Don't know."

* "It has been my experience in the past to enjoy all the videotaped sermons presented."

* "When I'm supposed to be the speaker." (elder)

* "You are hearing and seeing as with a speaker. We could have special sermons from speakers who would not be able to come to small churches such as this."

* "They are usually good."

* "Good quality preaching."

* "Don't know."

* "I think it keeps people's attention better, sometimes."

* "I will just like the change of pace and variety from a live speaker to a video-taped one. It's better than just listening to a cassette-taped sermon with sound only."

* "You can turn it off when you want. Its portable."

* "Will allow the preacher to use a modern medium to reach more people. Also allow 'visiting' preachers that otherwise would not be able to come."

* "It can bring good speakers with good messages to more people."

* "It will be a well-delivered professional sermon."

* "It can have better preachers on it."

* "It probably will be a good speaker and good quality message."

What they liked least (Survey 1)

* "Audio (sound) not being able to see as good as a live speaker."

* "I think that with a videotaped sermon I won't listen as closely as I would if we had a preacher giving the sermon to us live."

* "Entertainment on Sabbath."

* "I don't think I will be able to pay as close attention to it as a live speaker."

* "Some people don't like it and that destroys a portion of the unity essential to fellowship--which is important to church worship. Got all that?"

* "They might be a little less personal, and more easily put aside the teaching."

* "You can't ask questions, its the same thing."

* "I don't like it."

* "If people talk or kids are noisy and I'm not able to hear what's being said. Also, if we are going to continue with the video tapes we might want to think about purchasing a larger screen or TV for better viewing. Many people in our church have poor hearing and eyesight and may not be able to receive as much of the benefit of the sermon."

* "I think it's best to have a good "live" speaker, but if there isn't one then its OK!"

* "Don't know"

* "It depends on the content of the sermon."

* "Would miss the "live" part of the sermon."

* "No problem"

* "Not personal"

* "When some one else is supposed to have the sermon."
  (elder)

* "It is hard to find an answer to this question for me
  because when I see a videotape I am there with the
  person speaking. They are alive to me."

* "Don't know"

* "Not able to comment until afterward."

* "Can't think of any."

* "We need our members involved not just spectators."

* "Impersonal as far as local congregation is
  concerned. The Holy Spirit not as shared as with
  live speaker appeal."

* "Lack of personal experience and contact."

* "Too small a screen. You need a big screen instead
  of a small TV."

* "Lack of personal contribution.

* "The absence of a live speaker (in person)"

* "Who knows?"

* "Couldn't have the same inspiration as with a live
  person speaking."

* "Possible loss of reverence for Sabbath, church
  become more lax in attitude."

* "I feel it's not fair to draw a conclusion before I
  try it."

* "Sometimes it is difficult to see or hear as well.
  The griping of others who are completely negative on
  anything different."

* "Not too personal."

* "Hardly anything takes the place of a personal good
  presentation. It caused much contention and
  dissatisfaction a year ago when there were videotaped
  talks for weeks and weeks in our church."

* "I like my sermon 'live'."

The above answers were given on the first survey which was given before any videos sermons had been shown.

<u>Survey 3</u>

The responses to the open-ended questions on Surveys 2 and 3 were quite similar. In the interest of brevity only responses to Survey 3 are included here. These were the responses after five video sermons were shown in church.

What they liked BEST (Survey 3)

* "They had a special message for us. We could see the speaker which helps."

* "I liked the videotaped sermons of our speakers from campmeeting. Those speakers are our conference members from the General Conference, etc. They are very able speakers, no one should be ashamed to listen to them."

* "Some I think are very good and others are not, like not all sermons from (alive) are well presented."

* "I don't have to do it." (elder)

* "We get to hear sermons from campmeeting that many of us don't have the privilege of hearing. I enjoy them very much, even if I hear them over many times."

* "I got to hear good sermons which I couldn't have heard otherwise."

* "They are good for a change and to catch our interest, however like Mission Spotlight it can lose its effectiveness as they are used often."

* "One can get many ideas from video and be quite impressed with whatever the speaker's topic is."

* "A chance to see a part of campmeeting, since I was unable to go in June."

* "Can see the speaker vs. audio" (only).

* "Good speakers more readily available to ALL."

* "You can take it home."

* "Having a meaningful service in the absence of a pastor."

* "We got a chance to see high ranking church pastors that we wouldn't have been able to see any other way."

* "They were interesting and I learned from them."

* "The quality of most of the speakers was very good."

* "They held my interest more."

* "I liked the sermons."

* "It brings ministers to us that could not be here."

* "I do think they are proper for Sabbath morning and the sermons are excellent. Bigger screen would help."

* "Some are better than other of the speakers, and I enjoy some of them."

* "They are from trained professionals. They are not read out of a book--like some of our elders do for a sermon. They are very interesting and stimulating. Just like having Elder Hallock here to speak!!"

* "The opportunity to hear some I would not get to hear otherwise."

* "Speakers were outstanding with a timely message."

* "Usually a good message."

* "I liked some of the good messages that were presented."

* "I liked their sermons."

* "Like campmeeting--choice speakers."

* "Variety of ministers speaking."

What they liked LEAST (Survey 3)

* "Could be hard to see--not quite as personal."

* "I liked the pastor's talking" (on video).

* "They're just fine."

* "Sometimes its hard to see."

* "We should have a live speaker. Plus they say we should not have a TV in our homes much less in church."

* "I hate to see a television brought into God's Holy Sanctuary."

* "They were quality speakers with a good message."

* "When its someone else turn to do it" (preach).

* "They didn't hold your attention like a live speaker."

* "Some of our members were dissatisfied with some videotapes that were not by Adventist speakers as they showed Sunday meetings, coffee drinking etc." (this person makes reference to an earlier 16mm "Dynamic Laity" film series showed at an earlier time).

* "Sometimes a lapse in attention span if audio is not right or hearing impaired."

* "Lack of eye contact, personal warmth, and knowledge of membership needs. Worship is fellowship, not only listening."

* "I think we feel more like listening to a live speaker. There is a place for a TV but it's not in church services."

* "Sometimes hard to understand. TV screen too small-- older people cannot see or hear. Children don't seem interested."

* "Could not understand it. I prefer a live speaker."

* "Small TV screen."

* "Absence of feel of response of live speaker to audience."

* "1. The screen is too small. 2. I can't think of anything else bad. I LOVE THEM!!!!"

* "I wonder some times who will decide if the video is better than a specific person what one person or who one person likes another might not like."

* "The sound was poor and the small screen was hard on the eyes. If the speaker spoke slowly and clearly it was fine. The noise of the congregation both on the tape and in the sanctuary made it difficult to understand."

* "The picture was small but I like them."

* "Couldn't see the pastor even if you were sitting in front. The camera was too far away."

* "Getting used to the idea."

* "Screen could be larger. I like communicating with live people."

* "It wasn't "live" and my eyes got tired of looking at the same spot. 'Contacts burned.'"

* "It's not as exciting."

* "I thought it was a positive experience nothing negative to write."

* I just don't care for them."

Evaluation of Survey Results

Attitude Changes

Because of its three stages, it is possible to trace some patterns that seem significant as one ponders the appropriateness of the video sermon. Those who were not sure of their answers in the beginning tended to move to favor or reject the concept, thus reducing the unsure answers and increasing the polarization of the results.

Because the two churches were kept separate in the tally, it is possible to track the different attitudes exhibited in the two congregations. Church 2

exhibited a much greater initial uncertainty about the answers than did Church 1. As a result Church 2 shows a more dramatic shift in response to the experiment, usually in the direction favoring the use of video sermons. Questions 1, 11, and 12 showed the greatest change for both churches. Question 1 asks if the video sermon is an appropriate worship. form. To Question 1 Church 1 shows a 24-point gain and Church 2 a 21-point gain in agreement with this question between Survey 1 and Survey 3. Those giving a negative answer to Question 1 were generally negative throughout the rest of the questionnaire. Their opinion changed little over the course of the experiment. However, those who were uncertain about the appropriateness of the video sermon in Survey 1 tended to move toward agreement in Survey 3.

Questions 11 and 12 showed significant movement in favor of video as a ministry from Survey 1 to Survey 3. Question 7 for Church 2 saw a significant move toward the preference of a "live" preacher.

One of the concerns about this project revolved around the question of whether the video sermon would contribute to the tendency of people to stay home from church because they could listen to a video at home. Questions 4 and 5 address this issue. In Question 4 of Survey 3, 60 to 80 percent disagreed that the video sermon would make them stay home to watch a video sermon. Little movement from preceding surveys was detected.

Question 5, however, shows the two churches going in opposite directions. Church 1 shows a 22-point gain in the temptation to stay home from church on a day a video sermon was scheduled. Church 2 shows a 22-point gain in disagreeing they would be tempted to stay home on a video Sabbath.

What does all this mean? While the surveys indicate a generally favorable attitude toward an occasional video sermon, there does not seem to be too great a concern that the church would experience reduced attendance because of it. Indeed, in the open-ended questions at the end of the survey, many expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to hear quality denominational speakers on video that would not have been heard live.

The response to Question 7 assured all that the video machine is not about to take over our pulpits. It asked if a "live" preacher would be preferred even if a video sermon was of superior quality. The answer was a resounding yes. So the question is not so much whether a machine will replace a live minister as it is having the machine take over when there is no alternative.

Significant variables in the groups were examined to determine the effect on responses to the surveys. Originally it was intended to determine if a difference existed between those who had TVs and those who did not. Only three families, representing seven or eight

individuals, were without TVs. Age categories were
examined. The older category had the fewest VCRs and the
middle group the most (about one in three). The age
variable did not significantly affect the other
percentages. One interesting observation was that those
who had no VCRs had a greater exposure to religious
programming on videotape than did those who owned VCRs.

Overall Attitudes

Analysis has focused so far on changes in
attitude discernable between successive surveys. Now an
assessment of over-all attitudes at the end of the
experiment, as reflected in Survey 3, is appropriate.

A majority agreed that the video sermon is an
appropriate worship form. A majority felt the video
sermon contributed to their worship experience. Church 2
favored having a video sermon when the pastor was away,
while Church 1 was equally split between agreeing and
disagreeing. The majority said they did not think they
could worship equally well at home with a video sermon.
The majority would not be tempted to stay home from
church on video days. The majority said their worship
was not equally enhanced by videos as compared with live
preaching. The majority preferred live preaching even if
the video sermon were of superior quality. Most said
they could see and hear adequately. While Church 1
experienced less inspiration to be better Christians, the

majority in Church 2 said they were inspired.
Surprisingly, the majority thought Jesus and the apostles
might have used video instead of letters to communicate
with their churches had video been available. More than
two-thirds (the largest margin in the survey) felt having
video sermons occasionally in the worship service was a
good idea.

Given the opportunity to criticize or praise the
video sermon in the open-ended questions, the vast
majority were positive toward the experience and far less
critical than expected. Despite the fact that many were
reserved in their answers to the multiple-choice
questions, most seemed to appreciate the opportunity to
view the video sermons in church. The two greatest
objections to the video sermon was difficulty in seeing
the small screen of the video monitor and difficulty by
some to hear clearly.

Church 1 registered the greatest number of
complaints about seeing and hearing. The auditorium was
large (seating 250) and the attendance was small. Most
members refused to sit closer to the monitor and had
difficulty seeing. Although the sound was piped through
the PA system, the acoustics of the building were poor
and the hard of hearing suffered confusion (as some of
them do with a live preacher).

A few objected to the presence of the TV screen
in church. A minority openly objected to the video

sermon idea and this prompted some to say that the spirit
of unity was marred, affecting the worship fellowship.
But overall the open-ended answers were unexpectedly
favorable to the concept of the video sermon.

Conclusions

From the research of the Bible, the writings of
Ellen G. White, and video-communications theory, little
was discovered that would discourage the concept of the
video sermon as an occasional change of pace in the
worship environment. In fact, it was found that wise
spiritual leaders have always availed themselves of every
means of communicating the gospel to people.
Contemporary authors on worship strategy seem less
inclined to venture into media as a worship form but
admit that film, drama, etc., may serve as a preparation
for worship, but would classify worship itself to be a
happening within the congregation. Indeed, even the live
sermon is not considered by them to be a part of worship.

The survey revealed that the people in the pew of
these two small churches felt that the video sermon has a
place as an alternative to the sermon that is read from a
book by an elder, or to the playing of an audio tape.
Indeed, many respondents of the survey forms expressed
appreciation for the opportunity to experience preaching
by denominational leaders they never expected to be able

to hear in their small church. For them the video sermon
is a welcome addition to their worship.

The objection was raised that the minister gives
up his control of sermon content to the "visiting"
speaker. This is a weak argument. The pastor, knowing
the needs of the congregation, has the unique opportunity
in the video sermon to select EXACTLY what the
congregation will hear on Sabbath morning. He may
preview the sermon and be certain it is targeted to the
needs of his people.

The strongest objection is that the feedback
process between speaker and congregation is impossible.
The interaction therefore is limited to members
interacting with each other.

If preaching is the verbal proclamation of the
Word and the will of God, one would have to ask, "Would
the video sermon be able to speak to needs in the current
congregation?" Though the original message would not be
specifically tailored to the present group listening, the
pastor, who knows the needs of his congregation, will
have determined that it DOES meet his congregations'
needs as well. The Word of God has timeless and eternal
truths to communicate. To say that the video sermon
cannot have practical value for its hearers in this
church because it was originally presented in a different
setting would be similar to saying that Scripture cannot
speak to us because it was given to people in a different

age and culture. The universal needs of forgiveness, love, belonging, and assurance, exist in the heart of every listener. The universal answers to these needs in the plan of salvation are described in Scripture. God speaks to needs in every heart. Needs of individuals in one congregation are often strikingly similar to those of individuals in another.

To say that God cannot speak through electronic media would be an admission that present Adventist media programs are useless. And yet people sense that part of the corporate worship could be missed if all were to sit in isolation and receive the Word through video at home instead of in the company of Christian community. One current book on Christian use of media makes this observation.

> Wonderful as they are, motion audiovisuals have one basic limitation. It's an important one to remember for anyone contemplating their use. Let's state it as a rule: Films and video materials cannot replace other valid elements of a Christian education program. The implications of this are far-reaching.
> They cannot take the place of church leadership: no pastor, DCE or other leader should abdicate to an "outside" teaching series, no matter how authoritative, no matter how skillfully presented. Motion audiovisuals must always be considered as means only (highly valued ones!) to be used at the discretion of those in charge of a larger overall church plan.[1]

Under the above conditions, I believe the video sermon is useful and should not be ignored as a

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[1]Getting the Most from Film/Video in Your Christian Education Program, 2.

legitimate alternative to live preaching in the worship
service.

Recommendations

Strategy

Future use of the video sermon should insure that
the congregation is informed about the use of video
sermons in advance. It would be well to introduce the
concept as an experiment which need only be continued if
it is helpful. This should allay some of the initial
fear members feel when confronting something new.

The correct and smooth operation of the equipment
at the appropriate time is crucial. Nothing is so
distracting to the worship continuity as a malfunction in
the hardware or personnel.

Every effort should be made to maintain the
worship continuity as usual, including songs, prayers,
offering, special music, reading of the Word, up until
the time of the sermon. At that time the leaders on the
platform should quietly move to the audience and the
sermon begins. A closing song and benediction may follow
as in the traditional service. This format has proved
most satisfying, as the surveys suggest, where local
leadership has followed it.

A feature which was not incorporated in this
project, but which has been recommended, is a discussion
time. This would be a time following the sermon where

the members would be encouraged to interact with each other over the message. The pastor could prepare questions related to the sermon which would stimulate discussion. It is felt that this might partially compensate for the inability to interact with the speaker himself.

The feedback received on the surveys found the video sermons were timely and helpful. Two cautions should be exercised. First, the quality of every sermon should be outstanding. This raises the prospect of limited usage because of limited available videos. Second, the video sermon should not be used to excess. There is a danger, hinted at in the survey results, that frequent use could dull the effectiveness and freshness of this approach to worship.

Because the video sermons would most likely be utilized in the pastor's absence, a way must be devised for the pastor to keep in touch with the members and their feelings in this connection. It is possible that an undesirable direction could be averted if alerted in time. If negative opinion builds, it could doom the usefulness of this resource.

Not every church may accept the video sermon as desirable or even acceptable. Therefore, careful consultation is important to determine the spirit of the congregation. For change to be permanent and the change

to be valuable, it must be deemed as appropriate, worthwhile, and acceptable.

Equipment

Perhaps the greatest complaint registered was that the picture was hard to see. A rule of thumb in the media industry is that one 19-inch monitor should be satisfactory for every 10 to 20 people. Our church attendance exceeded that number. Members continued to sit in scattered locations in the large sanctuary. They were an unacceptable distance from the viewing screen. Video sermons in larger sanctuaries would require a large screen monitor or multiple monitors to display the video sermon to provide visual as well as audio clarity.

In another district I experimented with recording my own sermons on videotape. These were played in church on a Sabbath I was not able to be present. The response to "having our own pastor" speak was encouraging. They suggested that it be done more often. Though they appreciate hearing denominational leaders from time to time, the sense that "our pastor knows us" even on video was evident. With planning, practice, and today's technology, simple productions are possible for most pastors.

Limitations

The survey results in this project reflect only the attitudes expressed by the two midwest churches which

participated in the survey. Generalizations which would suggest that these findings would be true of all churches are unwarranted.

The project sought to focus on the attitudes toward the video sermon and on the degree of change observed in the congregations. Recommendations have been made that may prove helpful to others who would like to introduce the video as an alternative to no sermon in a small church. No attempt has been made to evaluate sermon content. It is not possible for the video sermon to equal the effectiveness of the living preacher, for the sermon must motivate as well as educate. But, in the absence of a preacher, or when only very mediocre preaching is available, the video sermon seems to offer some options. Churches who have a pastor every week would not likely benefit from the results of this project.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of this project has been to remind me of the complexity of the communication process and the multiple factors which combine to make worship what it should be. This is one journey toward clearer understanding and greater precision in the communication of the Good News in the most effective way possible.

APPENDIX A

The surveys on the following pages were completed
by members of the two churches surveyed in this study.
The first survey was given before any explanation and
before the showing of the first video sermon during the
worship hour.

The second survey was given following the showing
of the first video sermon and after brief explanation of
the scope of the project. The third survey was completed
following the showing of the fifth video sermon in the
church during the worship hour.

All surveys were completed by the members in
church during the announcement period on the respective
Sabbaths mentioned above.

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MEMBER SURVEY #1

Next Sabbath you will be viewing a video taped sermon during the worship service. Please react to the questions below about how you feel (attitude) toward the prospects of video taped sermons. Place an X (X) beside the answer which most accurate.

Age range 15-30 ( ) 31-55 ( ) 56 and above ( )

Church Attendance: Attend most weeks ( ) Attend at least once a month ( ) Attend occasionally ( )

Does your family own a T.V. Yes ( ) No ( )

Do you use a video system in your home? Yes ( ) No ( )

Have you watched religious programs on videotape? Yes( ) No ( )

Please circle the answer following each question that best describes your feeling toward the idea of the videotaped sermon.

1. Having a videotaped sermon is an appropriate worship form for our worship service.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

2. I believe a videotaped sermon could contribute to my worship experience. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

3. I like the idea of having a videotaped sermon when the pastor is away. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

4. I think I could worship at home via videotape just as effectively as at church.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

5. I think I will be tempted to worship at home when a video sermon is scheduled.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

6. I believe my worship experience will be just as meaningful on Sabbaths when a video sermon is given as on weeks we have a live speaker.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

7. I think I would prefer having a sermon preached "live," even if the video sermon is of better quality. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

8. I think I will be able to see and hear a video speaker adequately. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

9. I believe I could be inspired to be a better Christian by a videotaped sermon just as well as by a sermon preached "live."
a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

10. I think I could learn (be instructed) as well with a video presentation as with a "live" presentation.
a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

11. I think it is possible that if Jesus or his apostles were living now that they might send a videotaped sermon or letter instead of a written one to be read in the churches in their absence.
a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

12. I feel that having video sermons occasionally is a good idea for our church.
a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

In two sentences or less please tell what you think you will like BEST about the videotaped sermon.

In two sentences or less please tell what you think you will like LEAST about the videotaped sermon.

MEMBER SURVEY #2

After having watched one video sermon today please respond to the following questions. You will notice that the questions are similar to the ones you were asked before seeing the video. The purpose of repeating this survey is to determine your attitudes after seeing the videotaped sermon. Place an X (X) beside the answer which most accurate.

Age range 15-30 ( )   31-55 ( )   56 and above ( )

Church Attendance: Attend most weeks ( )   Attend at least once a month ( )   Attend occasionally ( )

Does your family own a T.V. Yes ( )   No ( )

Do you use a video system in your home? Yes ( ) No ( )

Have you watched religious programs on videotape? Yes( ) No ( )

Please circle the answer following each question that best describes your feeling toward the idea of the videotaped sermon.

1. Having a videotaped sermon is an appropriate worship form for our worship service.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

2. I believe the videotaped sermon has contributed to my worship experience. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

3. I like the idea of having a videotaped sermon when the pastor is away. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

4. I think I could worship at home via videotape just as effectively as at church.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

5. I think I will be tempted to worship at home when a video sermon is scheduled.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

6. I believe my worship experience has been just as meaningful with todays video sermon as on Sabbaths we have a live speaker. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

7. I think I would prefer having a sermon preached "live," even if the video sermon was of better quality. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

8. I was able to see and hear a video speaker adequately. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

9. I was inspired to be a better Christian by the videotaped sermon just as well as by a sermon preached "live."
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

10. I think I have learned (been instructed) as well with a video presentation as with a "live" presentation.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

11. I think it is possible that if Jesus or his apostles were living now that they might send a videotaped sermon or letter instead of a written one to be read in the churches in their absence.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

12. I feel that having video sermons occasionally is a good idea for our church.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

In two sentences or less please tell what you think you will like BEST about the videotaped sermon.

In two sentences or less please tell what you think you will like LEAST about the videotaped sermon.

MEMBER SURVEY #3

Now that 5 video sermons have been shown in this church, would you please respond once more to the questions on this sheet. Your input is important to the success and effectiveness of the Doctoral Studies project undertaken by your pastor. The purpose of repeating this survey is to determine your attitudes after seeing the videotaped sermons. Place an X (X) beside the answer which most accurate.

Age range 15-30 ( ) 31-55 ( ) 56 and above ( )

Church Attendance: Attend most weeks ( ) Attend at least once a month ( ) Attend occasionally ( )

Does your family own a T.V. Yes ( ) No ( )

Do you use a video system in your home? Yes ( ) No ( )

Have you watched religious programs on videotape? Yes( ) No ( )

Please circle the answer following each question that best describes your feeling toward the idea of the videotaped sermon.

1. Having a videotaped sermons is an appropriate worship form for our worship service.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

2. I believe the videotaped sermons have contributed to my worship experience. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

3. I like the idea of having a videotaped sermon when the pastor is away. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

4. I think I could worship at home via videotape just as effectively as at church.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

5. I am tempted to worship at home when a video sermon is scheduled. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

6. I believe my worship experience has been just as meaningful on Sabbaths when a video sermon is given as on weeks we have a live speaker.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

7. I think I would prefer having a sermon preached "live," even if the video sermon was of better quality. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

8. I was able to see and hear a video speaker
   adequately. a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

9. I was inspired to be a better Christian by the
   videotaped sermon just as well as by a sermon
   preached "live."
   a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

10. I think I have learned (been instructed) as well with
    the video presentation as with a "live" presentation.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

11. I think it is possible that if Jesus or his apostles
    were living now that they might send a videotaped
    sermon or letter instead of a written one to be read
    in the churches in their absence.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

12. I feel that having video sermons occasionally is a
    good idea for our church.
    a) agree b) not sure c) disagree

In two sentences or less please tell what you think you
will like BEST about the videotaped sermon.

In two sentences or less please tell what you think you
will like LEAST about the videotaped sermon.

APPENDIX B

[The following shows the instructions which were given to the elder who introduced the survey and the video equipment operator].

Elder

Introducing Member Survey

At the announcement period tell the congregation that the sermon this morning will be video-recorded. Have the survey sheets distributed one per member. Give them 5 minutes to fill it out. Ask the ushers to collect them. See that they get to me.

Then proceed with the service as usual until time for the sermon, at which time Douglas will start the video. When it is over, announce that a second survey must be filled out. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. It is similar to the first survey but is designed to test the initial reaction to the video presentation. Please encourage full participation in both surveys. This is very important to a project your pastor is working on. It must be carried out just this way in order to properly reflect the feelings and attitudes of the members to this experiment.

Introducing the Video

The speaker on the film is James Londis. This sermon was preached at last year's campmeeting in the evening meeting. James Londis is the former pastor of the Takoma Park, Washington, church. At the time of this sermon he is Director of the Washington Institute of Contemporary Issues.

Instructions for Video Operator

The video is all set up and ready to go. But the following steps must be taken.

1. Turn on TV by pulling volume switch. Keep volume low until picture appears.

2. Turn on VCR by pushing last button on the right of the machine.

3. Push PLAY button. After a few seconds the picture will appear.

4. Adjust volume on the TV to comfortable level.

Next Showing Instructions

The sermon this week will be on video and features Elder Des Cummings as the worship speaker. This sermon was the first in a series of presentations with the title "Creative Sabbath Celebrations." This sermon was presented at the 11:00 AM sermon this year at the Lincoln campmeeting. He very aptly describes the dilemma of many of us when it comes to our Sabbath preparation. You will be blessed as you evaluate your Sabbath-keeping practices and determine to incorporate some of the suggestions Des makes about Sabbath readiness.

[Each of the video sermons had a similar short introduction given by the elder before it was shown during the worship service].

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