A Theological Foundation for the Use of Artistic Mediums and Technology in Preaching and Evangelism

Jessica-Robyn Sarah Trevithick
Andrews University

This research is a product of the graduate program in Doctor of Ministry DMin at Andrews University. Find out more about the program.

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/dmin

Recommended Citation
Thank you for your interest in the Andrews University Digital Library of Dissertations and Theses.

Please honor the copyright of this document by not duplicating or distributing additional copies in any form without the author’s express written permission. Thanks for your cooperation.
ABSTRACT

A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE USE OF ARTISTIC MEDIUMS AND TECHNOLOGY IN PREACHING AND EVANGELISM

by

Jessica-Robyn S. Mayne Trevithick

Adviser: Barry Gane
ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Dissertation

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE USE OF ARTISTIC MEDIUMS AND TECHNOLOGY IN PREACHING AND EVANGELISM

Name of researcher: Jessica-Robyn S. Mayne Trevithick

Name and degree of faculty adviser: Barry Gane, PhD

Date completed: December 2012

The Problem

Can artistic forms and technology be utilized in making the biblical truth appear attractive in that it may attract the postmodern culture to Jesus? Postmodern preachers are cautious when it entails the use of interactive artistic mediums. Numerous Pastors choose to preach safe monologue sermons, resulting in bored congregants when it comes to many ineffectual three-point messages. Preaching isn’t just conveying God’s messages; instead it confronts listeners, in the same way Jesus used parables. God has already used these useful and operative techniques consequently; preachers of his word ought to use comparable effective methods in connecting their audiences to God, finishing the work of the Three Angels Message and the Great Commission.
Method

The diverse examples of art forms to humanity throughout the Bible conveyed by God exposes the preacher to a multitude of mediums, allowing them to move ahead boldly recognizing that art forms and technology are within God’s intention for preaching. Jesus dramatic narratives are not easily forgotten as he communicated the daily drama’s relating to his worldview. The message of redemption and love for the people surrounding him would have been lost without these artistic mediums. Therefore, a variety of technological and artistic mediums were presented to various congregations, including the non-use of artistic mediums to evaluate the effectiveness of art forms and technology by the preacher in preaching to the postmodern audience.

Results

Artistic genres and technological methods in preaching were shown to be more effective in connecting the audience to the sermon (p. 189), compared to the non-use of artistic genres and technology (p. 173). Art necessitates action; it is an instrumental element in how we communicate characterizing who the preacher is. The Bible is of itself art, enticing the reader from one artistic medium to the next, beneficially presenting Gods messages.

Conclusions

How should the preacher preach God’s words? Is it through the use of a stringed instrument, poetry or perhaps sculptures, carvings or architecture? Should it be through a song an eloquent speech or stain glass windows? Do we present it through drama, film or multimedia? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). These
artistic expressions involved creative methods in the establishment of the world. “Out of the ground the Lord God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food…” (Gen 2:9 NIV). Not only did he make trees that were good for food, but they where pleasing to the eye. God’s messages to the world have included various art forms and natural technology (lightning, etc.) that are effective, powerful and memorable.

Technology and artistic mediums have become reality in postmodern society. Without these mediums, preaching is far less effective, and fewer people are reached with God’s message, when these methods of communication cease to exist. Through artistic mediums and technological methods further successful preaching can be accomplished, reaching those in the twenty first century.
Andrews University
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE USE OF ARTISTIC MEDIUMS AND TECHNOLOGY IN PREACHING AND EVANGELISM

A Project Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by
Jessica-Robyn Sarah Mayne Trevithick
December 2012
A THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION FOR THE USE OF ARTISTIC MEDIUMS AND TECHNOLOGY IN PREACHING AND EVANGELISM

A project dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Ministry

by

Jessica-Robyn S. Mayne Trevithick

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Adviser, Barry Gane

Director, DMin Program Skip Bell

Kenley Hall

Dean, SDA Theological Seminary Denis Fortin

Skip Bell

Date approved
Dedicated to Jesus—Yeshua who knew who I would be, before I was born. He chose me before the creation of the world; He knows my name. He demonstrated powerful preaching for me to follow, and showed how to love others. To my Heavenly Father, for loving me and giving me His all—Jesus, and the Holy Spirit for guiding me, in the passion of actively, and creatively, Preaching the Word.

I hereby express my heartfelt indebtedness and sincere gratitude to the following people who provided consistent guidance, support and encouragement; Elizabeth Talbot who has been my superior, colleague, sister, friend, and mentor, all rolled into one, who believed in my calling and whose powerful support intrinsically directed me in becoming a Gospel Preacher. Barry Gane my Advisor who has given continual faithful support, encouragement, a resource and friend, who did not for a moment hesitate to assist and monitored this project. Ken Stout whose energetic, sparkling personality and encouragement, first taught me creativity in preaching. Kenley Hall who stepped in at the last minute and provided tools for completion of this project. My Parents, Anita and Richard who trained me in the ways of God and His word, and tearfully let me leave Australia to answer the call of God. My husband Eugene who provided love, and support while having the patience of Job. John Ennen who kept me healthy when I thought I was too sick to finish. Those, which are too many to name, who loved, believed, guided, financially assisted, and were emotionally there for me through its entirety, I love you all.

‘We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord.’ 2 Corinthians 4:5.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................................................................. viii

LIST OF TABLES .......................................................................................................................... x

Chapter
1. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1
   The Problem ......................................................................................................................... 1
   The Purpose of the Dissertation ......................................................................................... 2
   The Justification for the Dissertation ............................................................................. 2
   The Expectations for This Dissertation ........................................................................ 5
   The Methodology of This Dissertation ........................................................................ 6

2. A REFLECTION OF THE USE OF ARTS IN SCRIPTURE AND
   CHURCH HISTORY ........................................................................................................... 10
   The Importance of Imagination ....................................................................................... 15
   Creative Imagination ...................................................................................................... 17
   Why Imagination Is Important ..................................................................................... 18
   The Dramatic in Scriptural Narrative ........................................................................... 22
   The Use of Symbols ....................................................................................................... 26
   Contemporary Challenges: The Mandate for Preaching ............................................ 29
   When Reason Is Not Enough .......................................................................................... 38
   Philosophy of Preaching .............................................................................................. 44
   Implications for Contemporary Preachers ..................................................................... 48
   Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 49

3. A PROCLAMATION OF A HOLY GOD ............................................................................. 51
   Old Testament .................................................................................................................. 51
   The Sanctuary .................................................................................................................. 56
   God the Architect ............................................................................................................. 60
   A Personal Encounter .................................................................................................... 66
   Where God Meets Humanity .......................................................................................... 74
   Counterfeit Pictures and Symbols .................................................................................. 76
   A Message of Hope ......................................................................................................... 79
   Imperishable Wood ......................................................................................................... 82
   The Gold Standard .......................................................................................................... 83
   The Mercy Seat ............................................................................................................... 88
   Guardian Angels ............................................................................................................. 89
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Timeless Throne</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic License in Preaching</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms 23</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form and Structure</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesus, the Good Shepherd</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Amendment B, “If Only”–Psalms 22 CD</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic License</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezekiel</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezekiel: Priest, Prophet, Mimes and Street Theater</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolism in Art</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene One: A Mini-City Under Siege</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act Two: A Future Famine</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Three: From Rubble to Stubble</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Four: Cast Down, Spewed Out</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene Five: A Nation Thirsts for God</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Scene: Moan No More</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. THE ART OF PAINTING WORD PICTURES</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Definitions of Ancient Literature</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Power of Parables</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafting a Mosaic with Words</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaken Inquiry</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secrets Revealed</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preaching with Parables</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of a Parable</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspense</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagery</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectivity</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasts</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warnings</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rewards</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach One, Teach One</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense(s)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature Abounds</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasures in Testimony</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearls of Wisdom</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Results</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Wealth of Knowledge</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plotting Tips from the Prodigal Son</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT........... 166

Inspiration for the Project .................................................. 166
The Desired Outcome .......................................................... 168
Outcome ............................................................................. 169
Sermon—‘To the Ends of the Earth’ without Creative Mediums .... 171
Sermon—‘To the Ends of the Earth’ with Creative Mediums ..... 175
Sermon—‘The Great Conspiracy’ with Creative Mediums ......... 178
Sermon—‘He Is Not Here’ with Creative Mediums ................. 182
Sermon—‘After God’s Own Heart’ with Media ....................... 186
Results .............................................................................. 190

6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......... 192

Summary ............................................................................. 192
Art Enriched ......................................................................... 192
An “Artistic License” to Preach .............................................. 194
Ways to Incorporate Art in Preaching .................................... 197
Broadcasting Beyond Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria ............... 201
How Great Thou Art .............................................................. 203
A Reason to Preach ............................................................... 204
Recommendations for Further Study ....................................... 205
In Touch with Culture ............................................................ 208
Seek and You Will Find .......................................................... 209
Images of the Word—DVDs ................................................... 210
Female versus Male ............................................................... 211
Workshops and Conventions .................................................. 212
Not the End .......................................................................... 213
Epistle .................................................................................. 214

Appendix
A. DVD—ETERNAL GRACE MOVIE ....................................... 217

B. CD—IF ONLY ................................................................. 218
C. DVD—SERMONS ........................................................................................................ 219
D. EVALUATION INSTRUMENT .................................................................................. 220

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................... 222
VITA .................................................................................................................................. 232
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Noah’s Window Chartres Cathedral, France .................................................. 14
2. Bronze Snake ................................................................................................. 26
3. Three Angels’ Message .................................................................................. 47
4. Bronze Sculpture of Moses ........................................................................ 55
5. Layout of the Tabernacle ............................................................................ 57
6. Moses’ Tabernacle ....................................................................................... 61
7. The Wilderness Tabernacle in Sarna ......................................................... 62
8. The Mishkan ................................................................................................ 72
9. Samuel Cousins, Ark of Hope, 2008 .......................................................... 78
10. The Oneness of God .................................................................................... 86
11. The Earthly and Heavenly Tabernacle ..................................................... 92
12. Ahavah Rabbah Mode .............................................................................. 105
13. Music of the Bible ....................................................................................... 106
14. Ezekiel, Laying Siege to Jerusalem (II) ....................................................... 120
15. The Four Kinds of Soil ............................................................................... 136
16. The Emerald Throne Scene in Heaven (Rev 4:2-11) .................................. 162
17. When I am lifted Up ................................................................................... 165
18. Prop, “The Forgiveness Cross” .................................................................. 170
19. Charts Made from Sermon, “To the Ends of the Earth” .......................... 173
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Charts Made from Sermon, “To the Ends of the Earth with Creative Mediums”</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Charts Made from Sermon, “The Great Conspiracy, with Creative Mediums”</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Charts Made from Sermon, “He Is Not Here, with Creative Mediums”</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Charts Made from Sermon, “After God’s Own Heart, with Media”</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

1. “To the Ends of the Earth” ................................................................. 172
2. “To the Ends of the Earth” with Media ........................................... 176
3. “The Great Conspiracy” with Media ................................................. 180
4. “He Is Not Here” with Media ............................................................ 184
5. “After God’s Own Heart” with Media.............................................. 188
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Preachers today are in direct competition with secular Television, Movies, Music Videos, Radio, the Internet, Live Theatre, Concerts, Secular Bands, Social media, Ipad, Ipod and Iphones striving for the attention of the postmodern congregations of churches, and other audiences—especially in North America. Yet sermons presented in many churches appear to be insufficiently participative, relational, innovative and relevant in capturing and sustaining the interest of these fast-paced, post-modern, 21st century audiences. Many pastors do not convey the gospel in a structure or style that resonates with contemporary culture, or that competes well with the many clamoring voices of today’s world.

Despite significant increases in the use of the arts, multi-media, and computer-generated presentation technology in the secular culture, there has been very little audacious expansive, “blended” use of the arts, in these areas when it comes to preaching. Therefore, there is a need, for serious, in-depth research to discover how the arts have been used in previous ages when it comes to portraying God’s messages. How do we as preachers in modern society, use the arts and technology, separately or in combination to enhance preaching, allowing modernity to have an experiential relationship with God?
The Purpose of the Dissertation

The purpose of this project is to carefully study and observe the use of artistic mediums and technology from the Jewish scriptures to current trends, and analyze whether these mediums lead to more effective preaching. Then determine if and how these fields might enlighten preachers making their sermons more powerful and effective in communicating the gospel to this unique, postmodern world of the 21st century.

The Justification for the Dissertation

The unchurched in this postmodern era have specific requirements that previous generations have not needed in reaching them. Therefore, preaching needs to be innovative with new methods, which include the arts and technology so as to reach the unchurched. The Christian church will need to know how to use and deliver these resources if it is going to be successful in doing the Great Commission.

People learn in different ways such as orally, visually, kinesthetically, etc., and have different learning styles being innovative, analytical, commonsense and dynamic. Adding methods, which employ these various methods of learning, will give preachers new and significant tools for reaching their many, varied audiences.

Secular communicators are already adapting and employing knowledge from the fields of technology, multi-media, and the arts to enhance secular communication news reporting, commercials, signs at sporting events, business presentations, shopping malls etc., it is plausible to conclude that Christian communicators may also be able to use them successfully for God’s work and glory. This is especially true since they are in and of themselves, ethically unbiased.
Preaching methods and techniques have shown little innovation over past decades. The results of this research in my opinion could speed up the process of experimentation and, help bring further positive new changes that can benefit Christian preaching. While some limited research and experimentation has been done in the fields of the arts and technology, little appears to have been accomplished to “blend” or “combine” the benefits of today’s technology and arts with past tried-and-true methods, yielding a holistic or comprehensive approach to Christian communication. This study will attempt to propose that these mediums are useful in preaching and that there is a need for them today. The design, strategy, or approach for the modern proclamation of the gospel can be considerably enhanced in using these mediums.

The advances in technology and artistic mediums have made new methods of communication accessible to preachers, which have not been available in the past. Preachers and Evangelists need to know how to best use and apply new technologies and art forms in their preaching of the word.

Few publications address the arts in the Bible and the “how-to” aspect of applying these fields for Christian communication specifically in preaching. Pastors need access to this type of, practical information that this dissertation seeks to bring to light.

Jesus used the literary and visual techniques of his day: story, parable, riddle, and visual aids, such as healing the sick and raising the dead, all of which were relevant to his audiences. Preachers should follow his example in using the best literary, visual and technological means that are currently available to communicate his message to a dying world.
Preaching is deemed to be a vital method of spreading the gospel according to Jesus and the scriptures (Luke 4:18-19; Rom 10:14; 1 Cor 1:18-21; Titus 1:3; Mark 1:14). Also, several recent surveys demonstrate that it is still important today. Anything that can be accomplished to enhance the performance of preaching is valuable. This study intends to significantly advance the practice of preaching in the postmodern world.

Teachers of preaching recognize the potential importance of the arts and technology. In recent years, both the Academy of Homiletics and the Evangelical Homiletics Society have featured the use of artistic media and new technology in preaching as the theme for their annual professional meetings. This study, therefore, is very relevant to preaching professors, as well as to practicing pastors, scholars, and evangelistic preachers.

Seminarians and ministers in the field are frequently asking for assistance in learning how to use the arts, media, and technology in their preaching. The knowledge and experience gained in this project will help address their urgent questions.

Research needs to be done to determine if using the arts and technology can improve preaching and, thereby, increase attendance at Seventh-day Adventist Churches worldwide, as well as in other Christian churches—especially in North America. Some studies indicate that Adventists and other Christians in the West find current preaching notably “un-relational.” It would be helpful to test the idea that using the artistic

---

1Recent surveys by Thom Rainer in S. Rainer’s book Amazing Insights from the Formerly Unchurched and Proven Ways to Reach Them, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2001, 55. Skip Bell and Roger Dudley in Ministry Journal, and the Adventist Theological Seminary indicate that preaching is highly regarded as a pastoral and evangelistic tool.
mediums, and technology in preaching has the potential to make sermons more “relational,” compared to an entire monologue.

**The Expectations for This Dissertation**

This project has extensively assisted in further developing my own preaching skills as a committed Gospel communicator, adding new dynamics to my preaching. This has prevented me from being “one-dimensional” in style, technique, and approach. Specifically, these tools have adjunct my preaching by implementing new strategies—based on the creative use of the arts and technology allowing me to be more effective than previously in the past as I seek to be the most effective Gospel preacher that I can be, given my personal spiritual gifts and talents.

Second, this project will help the pastors of all Christian churches to overcome the numerous obstacles that prevent them from truly reaching the generations who are hindered by today’s pleasure-seeking, media-driven, values-deprived, biblically-illiterate, fast-paced era. In addition, it will provide them with the knowledge and skills to effectively communicate Jesus Christ to the contemporary, “postmodern” culture, and to practice Christianity in a more “experiential” way. I believe that all preachers need to learn the value of artistic mediums.

Third, I am optimistic that the findings from my research project will significantly contribute to the broader field of preaching, by bringing to light and sharing these new and important ideas, concepts, and practical strategies that I have acquired from this study along with other professional preachers, evangelists, and teachers of preaching. I will make these findings available in two ways: (1) by writing professional articles and, possibly, by publishing other written works—such as books and training
manuals, (2) by preaching and offering quality presentations at seminars, workshops, and/or professional meetings for preachers worldwide.

Fourth, I hope that a significant core of full-time and part-time professional pastors and evangelists will become familiar with, and experienced in, my new research and preaching strategies, allowing them to become more effective preachers. I further hope that these pastors will, in turn, be inspired and equipped to train and equip numerous, gifted lay members to become powerful “lay preachers.”

Fifth, the results of this research and the demonstration of these new preaching strategies disclose how weekly and evangelistic sermons can create more interesting and effective messages. They also demonstrate to what extent weekly church worship, in general, can be enhanced since preaching is a central element in the worship services of most traditions.

Sixth, modernity’s preachers are cautious when it comes to the use of interactive techniques. The opinion of being untrained to cope with ever-changing paradigm shifts in society and technology leaves them insecure.

For effective interactive preaching to be successful for both the preacher and their audiences, then re-training and re-orientation must be implemented on both sides over a period of time. This research will help inspire preachers to constantly keep searching for other new and innovative ways of preaching allowing them to more effectively communicate the Gospel, just as God communicates to humanity through the arts.

**The Methodology of This Dissertation**

After the introduction, research focuses on examples of discernible art forms that
can be used by postmodern preachers from the Bible, suggesting the importance of imagination, the effect of visuals, narrative, and drama, and how they are involved with all art forms and technology.

Art forms have been used through the centuries but not without dilemma. The arts and technology have been used successfully in the contemporary world placing special challenges to preachers who desire to effectively communicate the gospel in the 21st Century. I investigated the challenges preachers face, such as the “postmodern” way of thinking, the radical paradigm shift in the arts and preaching, which has taken place in recent years, and the mere fact that technology and societal change is occurring at such an implausible rate.

I evaluated the use of biblical examples in the Old and New Testament to verify the use of the arts when preaching. I reviewed key biblical literature, and made an observational analysis of how effective the use of the arts and technology were in preaching today.

Research was done in each of the above areas to determine their value and usefulness for modern preaching. I looked at the use of imagination, dramatic literature, the importance/mandate of preaching, and the stages of reasoning.

I reiterated the use of the arts and modern technologies and how they could be effective in contemporary preaching.

I studied biblical literature and analyzed the extent to which these communication tools (or their analogous forms) were used by the Old and New Testament prophets and/or by Jesus.

I looked at why there have been obstacles and challenges in an arts-rich,
technology-advanced world when it comes to preaching, and then summarized and analyzed these challenges with the intent of developing a preaching strategy to meet, and even take advantage of them, as needed.

I studied secular communication to determine how the secular world, as a whole, uses these tools. I also studied religious communication to see how the arts and technology are used in those arenas. At the end of each chapter, I summarized and analyzed how these fields inform preaching and what potential—if any—they had in making contemporary preaching more effective.

I also looked at contemporary examples of how the arts and technology are being successfully employed in both the secular and religious areas to see if there were practical lessons that could be applied to the spiritual arena of Christian preaching. For example, there are churches, which serve as helpful “case studies” by demonstrating the overall usefulness of these communication fields in more effective preaching. This study also took time to briefly study the claims that female preachers may be using the arts and technology more naturally—and possibly more effectively—than their male counterparts.

The final chapter provides an overall summary and recommendations considering the possibilities of the futuristic preacher and their audience.

Is the movement towards art-filled preaching and technological worship a poetic license to proclaim God’s message through theatrical means, or merely an expression of the Holy Spirit’s desire to reach a larger and more diverse audience through modern methods?

In a 2009 *Outreach Magazine* article, the author writes,
Presentation technology may be costly, not only in money but in time, in energy, and in the conflict it ignites in many churches. Yet most churches are motivated to use this technology not by its entertainment value but by its strategic effectiveness. One very traditional Baptist church in Indianapolis, for instance, decided that it was not effectively bringing the message of Christ to younger people and that its worship practices would need to be changed. The church’s decision to use multimedia technology in a new alternative worship service was driven not by the desire to appear relevant or up-to-date, but “to find the most effective ways of communicating the gospel.”

Artistic genres and technology have an unequivocal worth in preaching when it comes to expressing God’s messages, enabling visual modernity to engage in the sermon.

---

CHAPTER 2

A REFLECTION OF THE USE OF ARTS IN
SCRIPTURE AND CHURCH HISTORY

The Bible is replete with resources pertaining to the use of the arts in worship and in the proclamation of the gospel; however, scholars and religious practitioners are divided over whether the Bible provides any foundation for contemporary Christian practice in employing the arts. The purpose of this chapter is to determine if a theological foundation can be established for the use of modern arts and technology in Christian worship in general and in preaching specifically.

Not only does the Bible bring to light the use of the arts, but it also provides a unique insight into the creative life of the early church. The message and methodology conveyed God’s messages powerfully, both in the proclamation and worship of Jesus Christ. The early church seems to understand that art forms are appealing and are more readily absorbed into the mind, as well as adding effective dynamics to preaching presentations and worship. The worshipper does not forget the message when looking at visual art in its various styles and forms.

In contrast to the early church, history reveals that the Reformers took a different perspective on the topic of art forms. They believed that Christian tradition had lost its way because of their excessive use of visual art forms and the expressions of biblical appreciation via religious art. Martin Luther’s 1525 tract, in opposition to the heavenly
prophets in the matter of images and sacraments justifies his approach towards religious imagery: “I have allowed and not forbidden the outward removal of images.”¹ Most critics would indicate that the biblical data, on first glance at least, appears to offer little aid in the development of a positive perspective of art and aesthetics. However, on closer inspection a different prospective emerges.

A characteristic example of the reformer’s worldview is depicted in C. S. Lewis’ perspectives on the New Testament and salvation of souls in which he implies that salvation is supreme and any other quest is secondary. Lewis argues that “on the whole, the New Testament seemed, if not hostile, yet unmistakably cold to culture. I think we can still believe culture to be innocent after we have read the New Testament; I cannot see that we are encouraged to think it important.”² Another perspective is found in Derek Kidner’s study, where he admits, “the whole weight of the biblical emphasis is on the dangers, not the advantages, of the leisured conditions in which the arts flourished and in which the Greeks sought to cultivate the good life.”³

Does the Bible contain representations of art forms that could be presented to the church today? Are there procedures, which preachers could use to convey the message of God separate from their audible spoken words? If there are, are these art forms just the illusion of the imaginations of their authors, as the reformers would have the church


²C. S. Lewis, “Christianity and Culture,” in Christian Reflections, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1967), 12-36. In this article, Lewis advances a point of view that reaches back through John Henry Newman to the medieval distinction—even separation, between nature and grace.

believe? Or do they infer an “evil” cultural type and/or symbols with the “sacredness” of the divine, as Kidner seems to imply. He disputes that “the Bible does not support the Greek view of ‘leisured culture’ which, unfortunately, to some extent, still pervades in certain contemporary academic circles.”

While acknowledging the controversy that some biblical resources may not support certain analysis of art that are current today, particularly those that have their roots in the Greek tradition, a complete denunciation of the significance of the arts could be argued to be an unhealthy scholarly opinion and a distortion of the Creator’s intention. The Scripture’s position on this issue is conspicuously unmistakable in the following text: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the sky proclaims His handiwork. Day-to-day makes utterance, night-to-night speaks out. There is no utterance; there are no words, whose sound goes unheard. Their voice carries throughout the earth, their words to the end of the world” (Ps 19:1-5, Jewish Study Bible).

The visual manifestation of the created word is God’s non-verbal declaration of truth. Research has revealed that there were Israelites who believed in the music of the creation sphere. “This belief has continued from generation to generation and given modern application by scholars who have set the Torah to music by giving each letter a musical value. This extraordinary experiment produced a symphonic masterpiece, which strengthens the foundational concept that the arts have intrinsic worth to God and humanity.”

__________________________

4 Derek Kidner, The Christian and the Arts, 5.

5 All scripture references will be from the New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

6 Source unknown.
Further study also specifies that the text demonstrate that the heavens communicate a distinct message; no words are obligatory, it says everything by just being there. Humanity will be “without excuse” on judgment day because of this testimony alone.

For God’s wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who are suppressing the truth in an unrighteous way, because what may be known about God is manifest among them for God made it manifest to them. For his invisible (qualities) are clearly seen from the worlds creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable. Because, although they knew God, the did not glorify him as God nor did they thank him, but they became empty-headed in their reasoning’s and their unintelligent heart became darkened (Rom 1:18-21).

If God himself uses visual representations—a living painting, an ongoing drama—to distribute his truth across all cultures, how can we propose to honor him by discarding these techniques as we pursue the great commission?

“Part of the predicament,” as William Dyrness states, “is the modern habit of dividing up life into tidy little areas—art, morality, or business—each with its own subculture and discourse.”7 In contrast, the Bible imparts life in a holistic perspective where matters of aesthetics and ethics are displayed in a correlated manner. The real issue is that aesthetics, ethics, and economics cannot be regarded in their completeness without their connection to the source—the Creator of all, who intentionally places all in motion for a reason, including man. In Dyrness’ words, “artistic issues are, according to the biblical perspective, profoundly theological from beginning to end.”8

8Ibid. 70.
Christian faith surpasses with unparalleled clarity through the divine symbols given by God in Scripture. The circle, the rainbow, the menorah, the altar, the Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat, the veil, the palm and olive branches, the cross, the dove, the lamb, the crown, and the Alpha and Omega. These signs and terminologies, and many others, are protected and represented in stained glass, frescoes, mosaics, and books. It shows the geometric configuration of text itself throughout the churches of Christendom.

An example is contained in Noah’s window, which is situated within the 13th century Chartres Cathedral. Figure 1 is a segment of the window displaying God making his covenant with Noah. “Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life” (Gen 9:14-15).

History reveals artists of religious and symbolic artwork, for example the medieval period, used story and symbols through experiential means conveying and recording biblical and church history truths. One symbol—the triangular forms, represented the Trinity, which the common person could depict and be encouraged. Germany was one such country that commonly used highly detailed woodcarvings portraying biblical narratives at altars—(St. Jakob’s Church).

Although today the word art usually refers to the visual arts, the concept of what art is has continuously changed over centuries. Perhaps the most concise definition is its broadest—art refers to all creative human endeavors, much of the development of individual artists deals with finding structured principles for how to express certain ideas through various kinds of symbolism.⁹

Structure principles of great artists create a sense of space within their works of art, combining color and saturation, rhythm and movement, drawing viewers into their work.

**The Importance of Imagination**

Everything that exists is a direct result of imagination, whether it was God creating the world or humanity creating something for the world. An idea sparked the creation of everything we see and have. From humanities earliest days they looked up into the heavens to see a vast expanse of stars and experienced a desire to see them up close and personal. Thousands of year’s later men stepped onto the moon making that dream a reality. Today, we can see the universe up close through the astounding accomplishment of the Hubble telescope. Each and every one of these accomplishments began with the first step in the creative process: imagination.

Francis Schaeffer was quoted as saying, “The Christian is the one whose imagination should fly beyond the stars.”¹⁰ When one considers the earth and observes what God has bestowed upon humanity, there is no refuting that our imagination should be nothing less than extraordinary. Once the impulse of imagination is engaged there is little to divert its fulfillment. Albert Edward Bailey once said, “The essence of the art impulse is to impose upon experience certain categories, to arrange the data of life according to some patterns or system. An experience re-created in this manner yields to the spirit of fuller satisfaction than the original.”¹¹

This same action could be said of imagination that without it there is no art, and no creative experience. In all art, according to Bailey, feeling is primary. No masterpiece is born out of cold intellectuality. There must be a fire, which ignites the passions of imagination and produces a definite urge in a person to create. “To represent the great human values of joy, courage, faith, love, and self-sacrifice, the artist must first feel them and out of that feeling, generate the will to give them form.”¹² It is at this critical instance that the intellect comes more definitely into play in the realized world.

Through painstaking observation one discovers how persons in the grip of these emotions betray that fact to the world. Once emotion lords over the intellect, the individual becomes the psychologist and analyst. “It is while in this critical environment that man arrives fully disposed to the imperial truth that he has discovered through imagination a concept, idea, or strategy where he finds himself once and for all in the


¹²Ibid.
full expression of imagery that is bound to the dynamic of that ethereal part of man
which is said to be most like God—Imagination. The individual suddenly finds
imagination “imprisons these emotions through his skill in rendering spiritual states.”

As most postmodern generations have grown up with technology and are
mentally stimulated via visual mediums only, it is important to make good use of one’s
imagination. This stimulus has created several generations, which are now dependent
upon known visuals in order to fully engage in what is presented to them in an effective
and positive way. While these digitized images communicate certain core elements they
often spark and set fire to the viewer to learn more about the topic viewed. Here again
we see the intrinsic value to art.

Einstein said, “Imagination is more important than knowledge.” Perhaps he
ought to have said that knowledge is powerful, but how useful is it, devoid of
imagination? What concepts or imagery can one acquire only through knowledge?
How can the mind manufacture perfect creations of reality devoid of imagination? To
think that one can accomplish this task without the foundation of imagination reveals the
basic fault line in this kind of analysis of the process. The product of imagining,
conceptual or mental creation is a compelling tool in the formation of new images
directed at a precise goal. It is an aid in the solution of dilemmas.

**Creative Imagination**

Many people associate imagination as an immature expression that is used to

---


14 Albert Einstein, Berlin 1929 interview by journalist George Sylvester Viereck. The interview
was published in the Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*, October 26, 1929.
excuse the actions of someone. Imagination is an important and useful tool that is essential for the creative artistic mind, no matter the age of the individual, to augment the work of their innovation. When imagination is introduced lives are often transformed, and people are encouraged to meditate upon the potential of that which is prior to their level of realization and revelation they might not yet have envisioned.

Calvin Miller writes in his book *Market Place Preaching*,

More and more preachers who want to capture an audience and hold them are going to have to use images. They are going to have to transmit those images within the oral medium of the sermon. Preachers are going to need to think in pictures to learn to transmit them. We have the idea that images are born on the screen of the mind. When image and soul are coupled, they bring the kind of communication I am advocating in this chapter. Sermons will become more and more powerful as preaching is born in pictures. Image communication may very well be the key to great preaching in the future.\(^\text{15}\)

Imagery in preaching enables the mind to connect at levels, which are not normally stimulated when the audience only listens. Once the verbal syntax is overdriven with visual stimulus the hearer is suddenly engaged in what could almost be defined as a supernatural environment. These mental pictures are more memorable and lasting than just auditory.

**Why Imagination Is Important**

The arts are the creative medium used by God, to communicate his messages in more effective and successful ways, even from the creation of the world. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1).

Considering the history of the world we coexist in, we are given an extraordinary look into the divine ability of God in humanity. It is in this that God states that we

understand the power, glory, and wonder of God as he imagines, sees, speaks, and creates. Through the created we are given an unobstructed view that allows us to see God who spoke all things into existence. It is at this point of wonder that humanity often seeks to find a reason by asking whether the manifested creations of God were strategy or simply a result of imagination?

Was it strategy or was it imagination? I would envision it was both. The heavens and the earth begin as evocative manifested literary art—spoken, by the master artist. Everything God designed and shaped was an intricate work of art. “It conformed to his nature, reflected His image.”16 God the artist uses imaginative words to enable us to imagine the world’s beginning as he spoke. Here in lies the wonder of artistic literature.

The Sanctuary in the wilderness is a good example of imagination, art, and symbolism, reproduced from the original patterns in heaven. The heavenly original plans had not been revealed to anyone on earth before God gave them to Moses. After God gave the instructions, it could only be imagined what the sanctuary would look like when it was completed. Similarly the temple, kingdoms, and Noah’s Ark are some of the examples that needed imagination and drive. Without imagination numerous objects would cease to exist or become reality.

The Bible provides a proclamation of the Three Angel’s Messages and a variety of images develop in one’s mind. Another image is the narrative description of heaven.

Our imagination can only endeavor to understand and visualize the imagery as the information is examined.

In the preceding centuries we can look at the evolutionary invention of technology from letters to telegraphs, from radio to movies, from TVs to videos and then forward from DVDs to blue rays and 3D, from movies to computers, from Internet to cell phones, and from Kindle to Ipad—these surge of creations all based on one common denominator, imagination. Daily technology is constantly changing, or updating, for example the introduction of Augmented Reality. It is as if electronics and media control our lives. “Technology exists because someone imagined, visualized and then created them—they became reality. Without imagination, one will never have a full experience in their lives. Alberto Posse said, ‘If we can visualize something, then we can take this vision and create reality from it.’”17

Each individual was created in the image of the Creator, and master artist, God. Therefore, we have been given the talent of an artist to imagine and create. This permits us to be liberated in developing into the artist we essentially should become. Whereas certain persons have received greater imagination than others, all have the gift to employ this talent. It is divine intrinsic DNA, which can only be derived from the source, God. That is why in my opinion, preaching without imagination is far less effective, and fewer people will be reached where imagination ceases to exist.

Chris Gruenler in his lecture quotes: “Developing imagination is like slowly

turning up the light, or even better, like a never-completed sunrise.” The British writer from the 19th-century, George MacDonald, writes in a timeless paper called, “The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture,” gives an excellent place to begin when it comes to the explanation of imagination;

It is impossible for the human mind… actually to understand anything except by the use of models in the imagination. . . . This is something that anyone can experience for themselves, namely, the fact that when one tries to understand something, one forms for the purpose some imaginary model to provide examples in which one can, as it were, inspect that which one desires to understand. And thence it is that even when we wish to make someone else understand something, we propose for that person examples on the basis of which he or she can form a model for understanding. (ST I-I.84.7, as quoted in Deely, 659).

Is imagination significant? I believe it is for this reason. It permits each person to become a type of artist schooled in a method that connects to his or her understanding. This is particularly valuable when preaching and teaching the word of God.

In the fourth century Augustine wrote about his struggle, both imaginative and emotional. He found himself struggling against peer pressure, self-indulgent theater, and Gnostic religion. Although his account took place hundreds of years ago things have not changed dramatically, with the one exclusion of technology, particularly multimedia. This medium has engrossed and captivated the minds of people worldwide. It is essential to recognize that our imagination can influence a wide spread cross-section of people. With that in mind, we need to be accountable for what we produce in our messages to others from our imaginations.


19Ibid.
A teacher once said in class, “Beauty nurtures imagination, and not just giving our attention to beautiful works of art, but taking an aesthetic approach to whatever is the object of our study.” Imagination grows in personal encounters with life and with beauty.

Imagination can be conventional, empathetic, or visionary. Conventional imagination is what we use to evoke traditional emotions, such as singing Silent Night at Christmas. Empathetic imagination is the ability to see ourselves in someone else’s predicament. Visionary imagination is the ability to see what God is doing in the world and how to respond to it.²⁰

**The Dramatic in Scriptural Narrative**

David Buttrick once contended that whatever drama might be, or do, it is not preaching. He contends that “the dramatic monologue almost always ends in Pietism” and that “what is obvious about scriptural narrative is that it seldom enters the inner world of characters.”²¹ Some might question whether or not “Pietism” is inherently, at times, evil. The concern in this piece of the study is set in a different course. Butterick fears that the dramatic monologue might substitute theology with “psychologies of faith” and the preacher might develop into a performer and be realized in the purest Aristotelian rhetoric.²² The three-points-and-joke pulpit pounders are often pietistic. They propose their own trademark of psychology and execute by paradigm. Narrative theology and preaching is undoubtedly not impervious to such lapses.


²²Ibid., 334.
Amos Wilder demonstrated that proclamation, which was canonized into Scripture, involved diverse genre including dialogue, drama, and poetry. Wilder recognizes six necessary characteristics of early Christian rhetoric: novelty in styles, dramatic importance, dialogue, common idiom, narrative, and subordination of the personal role to the Spirit. Media, appropriate to any age, should be correctly labeled preaching and that dramatic arts should be predominantly suitable as it integrates a number of fundamental features.

Erich Auerback has contrasted the method of Homer and the Old Testament and reached different conclusions from Buttrick concerning the nature of the biblical story. The less detailed narrative of the biblical writers necessitates the interpreter of each age to explore the “greater depths of time, fate, and consciousness” in the characters. Auerbach notes that “Abraham’s actions are explained . . . by his previous history; he remembers, he is constantly conscious of what God has promised him and what God had already accomplished for him—his soul is torn between desperate rebellion and hopeful expectation; his silent obedience is multilayered.”

“Religion may well be the intersecting of human psychology and theological revelation. The scriptural narrative may be rooted in the implied inner world of characters, that is, the depth at which they are encountered by the Divine.”


[^25]: Ibid. 12.

appears to dispute Buttrick with regard to the role of the inner world of the biblical cast in his notation that “the great figures of the Old Testament are much more fully developed, more fraught with their own biographical past and much more distinct as individuals, than are the Homeric heroes.”27

Certainly primitive characters, or writers, were not self-conscious of psychology as we are today. A blending of perspectives would invite the investigation of motives, process of decision-making and analysis of thought and feeling. If so, the dramatic monologue can be a powerful form of proclamation.

The drama of redemption is an appropriate description of the literary content of the Bible. The Scriptures meet all the criteria for pristine dramatic literature. There is conflict, suspense, strong characters, and action. The sources of conflict are universal making identification with people of all ages easily applicable. Excellent drama is always about life and that is certainly the core theme of the Bible. Drama is most effective when it demands mental participation on the part of the reader or viewer.28

From Bailey’s perspective, biblical drama is different in that it is viewed as a revelation. God is exposed in his relationship to the world and his interaction with people. The readers or listeners determine they are in the divine and/or human drama and learn about their possibilities for a meaningful life. The Bible is the record of the revelation of God to humanity. He discloses to us knowledge about himself and facts about ourselves. Our attention is directed to dramatic performances once we realize what is actually occurring on the stage of life. We realize what occurs to the characters...
can occur, has occurred, or will occur to us. Who can refute that the truth of Holy Scripture affects us most when we see that it is the truth concerning us and for us? “We do not interpret the Bible; it interprets us.”

One should not be surprised in discovering thespian sermon forms throughout the text of the Bible. This style of sermonizing is increasing in popularity and is significantly effective while impacting both non-believers and believers. Critics of “sermons” and “preachers” are susceptible to the well-told narrative, the stirring musical, the extravagant Easter pageant, and the discourse or the well-performed first person sermon. Dramatic techniques can be powerful tools in overcoming likely resistance to influence favorably common obstacles such as boredom.

The Bible itself provides sufficient evidence of these illustrations for preaching. It would be advantageous to consider the Bible not only as the foundation for authority, but also as the greatest representation of individual and corporate revelation. The Bible contains the greatest and most effective sermons and should be studied for effective communication examples as well as for truth. For centuries the chronicle of Jesus has been retold in poetry, drama, sacred, as well as in the profane. The Written Word has a therapeutic feeling.

In the initial days of American film, Cecil B. DeMille made a career out of biblical spectacles. Biblical literature always tells a story. Its rhetorical objective would not extend the category to express much of the Bible as sermons. Preachers need to consider that the sermons most likely to evoke a response are those, which are strong in form, communicate God’s account, and those, which intersect with our own narratives.

---

Story and drama function well in sermon form for a number of reasons. The inductive character of drama and narrative avoid obstacles that deflect persuasive language. Moses was commanded to create a bronze snake, which provided visible art for repentant believers to be saved from their sins and this was a perceptible drama in itself. John the Baptist used a direct approach to Herod and Herodias. He made his accusation and then passed sentence. There was no subtlety in his words he spoke only the truth. As a consequence of his choice of sermon form, he suffered the fate of numerous “bold” undeviating preachers and lost his life.

The Use of Symbols

The power of symbolic accomplishment demonstrated in the Old Testament, can be viewed from narratives such as the sacrificial lamb—fulfilled in the New Testament in the structure of the Crucifixion. It is one of the greatest and compelling examples of the Old Testament dramatic acts communicating far more than any formal discourse.
Symbolism and true life are combined together in the story of Hosea and Gomer documenting an influential performed parable that captures interest and speaks to the intellect and emotions with equal force. People are more likely to react and respond to appeals by both reason and emotion, rather than to a singular appeal to one or the other.

Stories and actions are recalled more readily rather than statements or carefully paralleled points in a sermon. Jesus preached in his own individual style. He did not use speeches like the Pharisees, but instead used the most effective method for reaching the people of his day. Jesus told narratives that engulfed and seized the attention of all his listeners. As his audience listened they discovered that the stories were about them, or someone they knew. Their identification with the stories demanded self-examination and decision. Jesus’ narratives presented more than abstract rules for pure living. His parables were models, which could be acted out in the arenas of life. The stories of Jesus presented strategies for survival. One example is the temptations of Jesus, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread” (Matt 4:3 NEB). It emphasized the psychological, physical, and emotional picture of a solitary figure facing one of the biggest decisions an individual can encounter. While the name Simon of Cyrene brings a mental image of a man carrying the cross for Christ, one only has to reference Moses, Noah, Peter, Paul, Mary, or Queen Esther to evoke a better-known account or incident versus a psychological analysis or theological dissertation.

The portrait of a praying Jesus in the garden, huge drops of sweaty blood is more picturesque and emotional than vocabulary, or Pilate washing his hands is more dramatic than any words he uttered during the trial of Jesus. Pilate portrays a captivating case study for contemplation of biblical and non-biblical resource for the use
of drama in a sermon. Every Gospel has its own perception on Pilate. Pilate performs
the role of a regal judge in Mark, while Matthew introduces Pilate’s wife into the
narrative and emphasizes the responsibilities of the Jews. Luke incorporates more detail
and adds the judgment of Herod Antipas in confirmation of Pilate’s position. Luke
stresses Pilate’s pronouncement of Jesus’ innocence and endeavors to liberate him.
John’s description deviates from the synoptic Gospels and the philosophical question of
truth is raised and the mob contributes totally throughout the succession of events.

   Pilate is allocated a more prominent position in the Johannine drama. He and
Jesus are the central characters in this dramatic ordeal. John introduces Pilate who
struggles with the perception of justice and political expediency. While Jesus enlightens
Pilate that the governor is not in control of the proceedings causing this powerful man to
realize he is nothing more than a powerless pawn. However, the script provides Pilate
several opportunities to act justifiably. Peter’s triple denial of being connected to Jesus
or the first voice as it shouts to crucify Jesus leads to a dramatic portraying of these
messages. Each of these perspectives have identical biblical authority and create a
compelling basis for non-traditional preaching no matter whether one derives this from
the structure of a play, a dramatic recitation, a scene from a movie, colloquial story, or
an interpretive song or dance.

   There is limited information about Pilate from other reliable extra-biblical
historical resources. In Greco-Roman sources there is but a single reference to Pilate
while Philo and Josephus, both legendary Jewish historians, depict the Roman official as
cruel and inept. Post-biblical sources relay conflicting opinions of Pilate. Some
portrayed him as a hero and a Christian convert while others remember him as a coward.
The name of Pilate’s wife does not appear in the Bible, but is known in literature of the early church where she is identified as Procula. Pilate and his wife are depicted as converts and saints in the Coptic tradition. These unreliable biblical and non-biblical perspectives on just one man highlight the need for discretion in selecting data for dramatic preaching.

**Contemporary Challenges: The Mandate for Preaching**

The twentieth century generation has witnessed an unparalleled assault on preaching. Dr. Frederic S. Fleming, a previous rector of Trinity Church, New York, made the following statement in his parish yearbook: “Why can’t a Christian be permitted to go to Church to worship his God without always being assaulted by a barrage from the pulpit?” He recommended a moratorium on preaching for one or two years, so that the Church might “once again bring salvation to the world, and begin to save its own soul.”

Not only did Fleming’s idea of halting preaching get extensive attention, but it also received widespread approval. Many jumped to his defense, but too often the defense was indefensible, a mere mouthing of traditional attitudes. In Winston Jones’ evaluation, it was an attack “springing from outraged feelings rather than a re-examination of basic principles.” Through the succeeding decades since Fleming, the dispute has continued a fact; which emphasizes the continuation, if not amplifying, the

---


general mutual confusion of the clergy and laity in respect to the essential purpose of preaching.

A year later after the publicity of Fleming in the newspapers, there appeared in the *Forum* magazine an article by Bruce Barton entitled “Must We Have Sermons?” The editors of *The Reader’s Digest*, finding it to be of general interest, carried it immediately to the public in a reduced form. Sermons were effective in their day, according to Barton, but that day had passed. In the early history of Protestantism humanity was just emerging from the Dark Ages. The minds of humanity craved nourishment from the Word of God. The sermon provided that function and people were prepared to sit for hours to hear a clergyman; mainly because he was the only educated person in the community.

Today’s culture is very different and our brains have been packed to overflowing with what the world has to offer. The preacher no longer has domination or the trademark on intellectual stimulus. People can obtain as much mental stimulation as they crave outside of the church. Inside the church they want something out of the ordinary, and that “something else” involves beauty, artistry, music, ritual, and spirituality.

Paul gave this instruction to Timothy: “I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom; preach the word be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction” (2 Tim 4:1, 2).

Preaching that ignores deliberate intention and the plan of God falls short of the divine purpose. J. I. Packer argues that “preaching appears in the Bible as a relaying of
what God has said about Himself and His doings, and about men in relation to him, plus a pressing of His commands, promises, warnings, and assurances, with a view to winning the hearer or hearers . . . to a positive response.”

Using the analogy of an electric current, Bruce Barton made this statement in regard to the divine-human relationship: “Copper and silver are conductors; wood is not. Music is silver, a conductor. One may shut his eyes and listen, and the something within is stirred. Incense too is a conductor, and the dim light of candles. . . . But not logic, not argument—not sermons.”

This trend of criticism has been pervasive through the centuries—it is a typical criticism of preaching—that it is ineffective and useless, a waste of time for both minister and congregation. While on the one hand, we could argue for the justification of the criticism, in part, and should, therefore, be taken seriously; on the other hand, however, it is not properly directed against preaching as such, but against what commonly passes for it.

Barton’s phrase, “not logic, not argument and not sermons,” gives evidence of a common misunderstanding of the fundamental character of preaching. Jones’ analysis of the Barton’s criticism is usually considered that the sermon is not directed to the mind only, but to the entire psycho-physical organism which is more than just the mind. “Mental activity is never absent in any of the higher human responses—nor should this fact be minimized—but special attention must be given to the feelings.”

---


33Bruce Barton, “Must We Have Sermons?” *The Reader’s Digest*, October 1937, 2.


35Ibid.

A fundamental theme in preaching is the drama of redemption. Paul refers to the mystery of salvation as the theme of his preaching. *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* says the word “mystery” in the Scriptures is a hidden or secret thing not obvious to the understanding. “The word is identified as the mystery which is the content of Paul’s preaching” which is in turn “identified with Christ,” with the “Christ-fact” or “saving event.”

Preachers need to remember to not deviate from the divine word, and be aware of substituting their own thoughts and words. Although teaching and clarifying the meaning of scripture is part of the preacher’s task, this is secondary. The primary task of preaching is presenting a glimpse of God, and a savoring of who God is.

Emotions in preaching have the opportunity to influence the minds of the congregation. It is only as a result that it may appropriately be considered as a sacrament. As Herbert Farmer once suggested:

The sermon is not an essay in which you give utterance to your views and impressions of life, though it could hardly fail to contain in some measure your views and impressions of life. It is not a theological lecture, though it will contain theology and the sounder the theology the better. . . . It is not instruction in Christian morals, though that will surely not be absent. It is God’s great activity of redemption in history, in the world of persons, focusing itself in challenge and succor.

Paul Scherer resonates the same note in explaining the distinction between a lecture and a sermon.

The one explains the other at best must fashion. One instructs, the other at best induces. The one points, the other at best provides. The teacher informs; the

---


lecturer may exhort. The preacher does more. What he says does not go hand in hand with worship or break in on it for a while. What he says occasions worship and provokes it. He does not discuss peace; he gives it birth. He does not point the way to strength; he ministers strength.\textsuperscript{38}

An important question then is posed; what makes a sermon develop in effect, as a sacrament, something in which the hearer participates in and commences to draw strength? It is at this point that confusion most usually exists, and that this study will clarify that the vital function of preaching is only fulfilled as it partakes of the nature of the drama. This is not to say that preaching is drama, in the narrow definition of the term, or that the preacher is an actor, far from it. It means that the preacher must employ dramatic techniques if she/he is to be effective in conveying the significance of the message and to influence character.

It is common understanding in the practice of some, that apart from appropriate feelings, the clearest logic and strongest principles are without power to affect human life. Yet it appears that humanity must continually re-learn this lesson. In public school education, the knowledge imparted produces modest fruit in terms of character growth, although certain schools and some teachers have made a genuine effort to resolve this situation. A recent psychological study of 2,523 people is worthy of note here. This group of people was questioned in respect to their societal approaches, and the results were summarized accordingly: “The better educated had more information about social conditions, but no more concerned than the uneducated about protecting the minority rights.”\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{38}Paul Scherer, \textit{For We Have This Treasure} (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944), 136.

The probability of a message exerting real influence is minuscule unless it touches the emotional life of individuals, to whom it is addressed. Those who deal in public speaking should anticipate this even though countless people expound in perfect ignorance. Arthur W. Hewitt acknowledges that he previously doubted the truth of such an unvarying statement of principle. He was inclined to believe that there might be hearers so logical or philosophical, that they would prefer to listen to a well-organized message, even if it were as remote as Orion from their personal lives. “But later,” he conceded, “I know these are not exceptions, for to such a mind the hearing of a well-organized message is in itself an emotional experience” (emphasis added).\(^40\)

The old saying that an individual changed against his or her will is of the same opinion and cannot be accurate here. A clear recognition, that logic and argument have only an interim effect, if any. Robert T. Oliver supports this argument on the foundation of his report in public speaking. “The mind seems to be like a pendulum,” he says, “which can be moved forcibly from its position, but inevitably swings back into it.” Therefore, “a permanent change can be accomplished only by shifting the base or fundamental point of attachment.”\(^41\) This directly involves the emotions and feelings.

According to Charles S. Gardner, “Feeling not only has much to do in controlling the direction of the attention, but also is very influential in determining the attitude which the mind takes.”\(^42\) In other terms, whether or not a concept is accepted or


rejected depends principally on the emotions, which are evoked in respect to it. Therefore a large quantity of the influence in preaching lies in the atmosphere created. A mood, as Gaius Glenn Atkins has argued, is no superficial thing. “In respect to the mind, it helps to inform, in respect to motives, it releases and empowers; and finally, in obedient responses, it wins.”

Additional evidence demonstrates the significance of “atmosphere” in communicating the Word of God was conveyed in an inquiry conducted by graduate students at the University of Edinburgh. Students were sent to listen to a dozen of the greatest preachers of that region and asked to document their impressions. One of the major conclusions of the study was that: “Preaching depends more fully than is generally recognized, on atmosphere and the play of spiritual forces between the preacher and the congregation.” There was no exception to this witness. The report further states that:

The chief factor in creating the atmosphere was the preacher himself. Other things told, such things as the architecture, and decorations of the building, the size of the congregation, and the physical contiguity of the individuals forming it, the quality of the singing and the type of hymns sung, the demeanor and behavior of those present, and the sense of expectancy with which they assembled; but the determinative element was the preacher.

There is a need to illustrate the distinction between influencing behavior and influencing character. The two may or may not be closely connected. “A lawyer, for instance, may influence the behavior of a jury in getting a prisoner acquitted. But if

---


another vote were taken the next day the jury might return a different verdict. This
would be immaterial. However, from the lawyer’s standpoint the case has already been
won and the matter settled. ”

The salesman and the politician may oftentimes content themselves with the
same type of influence, although this is not wise salesmanship or good politics. There
are preachers who have “a bill of goods” to sell and who think of their mission in terms
of getting a verdict. This was especially true of the not-so-long-ago evangelists who
specialized in mass conversions, and it accounts for the wholesale “backsliding” which
invariably followed in their wake.

The preacher who is worthy of their calling is not concerned simply for winning
“decisions,” which in itself are the mark of having influenced behavior and not
necessarily the mark of having influenced character. This is not to imply decisions
are not important. It is simply to regard them as a beginning or a renewing of the
Christian life.

A decision for Christ is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. That end is
Christian living, something which is never finished here on earth. Preaching conceived
of as a means of influencing character, lends itself to no exact measurement and can
claim no immediate or final success. It is but part of a process. It is God ordained and
sustained for ministering to the needs of men and women.

However, to get the kind of results from preaching that is desirable and have a
belief with confidence, the emotions must be stirred. One cannot escape this fact, no
matter how much one may be frightened by the abuses to which the emotions have been

47Ibid., 7.
subjected. The very magnitude of the abuses, argues Jones, from which we rightly recoil, is testimony to the tremendous power; which lies largely untapped by conventional preachers today. It is to their everlasting shame and discredit that instead of studying the legitimate source of emotion in religion and making use of it, they have left it largely to the not-so-serious preachers. It is no secret that some preachers have been so wary of the taint of emotion that they have embraced an intellectualism utterly barren, lacking even the semblance of life.\textsuperscript{48}

It could be deduced from the Apostle Paul’s proposition in (Acts 17:28), that it is in the feelings that “we live, move and have our being,” and that religion either reaches us or it does not reach us at all. We need only this caution, which comes from a timely article by George F. Reynolds on the importance of emotional training in public school education: “We are all set on fire by something; let us be sure that it is something that deserves to kindle the flame.” \textsuperscript{49}

Whether a plea to the emotions is good or bad depends upon the manner in which the appeal is made and the end toward which it is directed. If in the name of true religion we must deplore the “whipping up” of the emotions after the manner of revivalism, it is of no less importance for us to recognize the legitimacy and the necessity of stirring the emotions such as in the manner of great art. Elbert Russell’s conclusion is:

It is the mission of art not only to make the truth look true but also to give it the feel of reality, and it is of more importance in religion to make the truth feel true than to

\textsuperscript{48}Jones, \textit{Preaching and the Dramatic Arts}, 7.

make it look true. Religion must move the will, as the mere apprehension of fact and
the assent of the reason can never move it. Religious truth must have the power
which art gives to stir the imagination and emotions before it becomes spiritually
effective.\(^5\)

**When Reason Is NOT Enough**

The previous section, argued for the primacy of the feelings in touching the
spring of human motivation. It is to be expected that such a position would be proven,
especially due to the fact that it is one that opposes the place commonly agreed to in the
intellect in the study of man. This contradiction, however, holds itself up to contention.
Winston Jones’ opinion on this is that “contradiction is more apparent than real, and that
the difference is largely in terms of definition and emphasis.”\(^5\)

Humanity is usually described as a rational animal, which implies their reasoning
most completely distinguishes them from the rest of the animal kingdom. Yet not so,
says Richard Kroner who argues that “reason, narrowly conceived—and this is the
common usage—is but an element in a larger whole of complex forces which make him
distinctly a personal being. And this larger whole is organized in terms of the ‘will’.”\(^5\)

From the perspectives of ancient philosophers, Socrates represented
“intellectualism” in its purest form when he held, that knowledge brings goodness into
being automatically. The problem with this formulation, however, in my opinion is that
it does not account for the question of freedom of choice, and thereby avoids a difficult,
but fundamental psychological problem that is inherent in the human situation and

\(^{50}\)Elvert Russell, foreword to *Old Testament Dramas*, by H. E. Spence (Durham, NC: Duke
University Press, 1936), 3.


which must be dealt with in coming to grips with life. Plato and Aristotle found the position of Socrates indefensible, as numerous notable thinkers since their time. “Human behavior is exceedingly complex and many factors enter into it. Any single-factor theory will not stand up, either in the light of ordinary human experience or in the light of unbiased investigation.”

To insist upon the limitations of reason—in the restricted sense of the term’s ordinary usage—is not to open oneself to the criticism of irrationality. Arthur E. Murphy, in an earlier book arguing for more reason, made a significant statement accordingly, “It would be folly to claim that we can dispense with faith or that ‘reason alone’ can remedy our spiritual ills. Indeed . . . it is a distinguishing characteristic of reason when it is about its appropriate business that it never works alone, but has its function in the criticism, coordination and redirection of impulses, emotions and beliefs.”

In the centuries-old contention between the defenders of “reason” and its critics, all the merits have not been on the side of the professed defenders, says Murphy. “The champions of the ‘heart,’ against the ‘head,’ of ‘will’ and ‘action’ against a ‘vicious intellectualism’ and of ‘life’ against ‘logic’ have frequently had something sound and important to say, though they have not infrequently chosen a confused and misleading way of saying it.”

Murphy points out that James, upon occasion, argued against reason with the

---


55 Ibid., 12.
best of reasons. He believed that experience plainly indicated that states of consciousness could be compounded, and the ‘logic’ of self-identity denied this. In such a predicament he chose to rely upon experience to the neglect of logic. The misfortune was, says Murphy, that James often failed to distinguish between the two sweeping claims of ‘‘intellectualism’ and its ‘logic,’ and the authority of conclusions reasonably arrived at. His attack on the former was a contribution to the work of rational understanding, but his attack on the latter was a rebellion against all standards of intellectual integrity and responsible inquiry.”

We can recognize the futility of appeals to unaided reason without suggesting any lack of rationality in the sum total of human behavior. The “Gestalt” position in psychology, which has exerted a large influence even upon psychologists who do not subscribe to the system, has hastened the disintegration of false and artificial categories of separateness in regard to the various aspects of personality. The old debate between “heart” and “head” has been “swallowed up in a larger unity of organismic response.”

“Depth” psychology too, has given us a larger frame of reference for rationality—in terms of the unconscious mind. What may not be understandable in terms of the conscious processes of life may be understandable in terms of the unconscious or subconscious. Appeals for actions which touch basic human drives may have a larger reasonableness than can be known, and the “heart” and “head” prove in this way to be but parts of an inclusive idea.

_____________________

56Murphy, The Uses of Reason, 15.
57Ibid.
58Jones, Preaching and the Dramatic Arts, 11.
C. J. Jung conceives of the totality of the psyche in terms of four basic functions, which are constitutionally present in every individual, namely: thinking, feeling, intuition, and sensation. “Thinking,” argues Jung’s interpreter, Jolan Jacobi, “is that function which seeks to reach an understanding of the world and an adjustment to it by means of an act of thought.” The feeling function apprehends the world on the basis of “audience or avoidance.” Both functions are characterized as rational because they work with values: thinking evaluating in terms of the viewpoint “true—false,” and feeling evaluating in terms of the viewpoint “agreeable—disagreeable.”

The other two functions, sensation and intuition, work not with judgment but with perceptions, and do not involve evaluation or interpretation. Sensation perceives things as they are. Intuition “perceives” likewise, but less through the mechanism of the senses then through an unconscious “inner perception.” Jung’s break with the older psychology may be regarded as paralleling the break, which such thinkers as Whitehead and Eddington have made with the older system of physics. Their conclusion, says Jacobi, point to “primary, formative, spiritual forces,” which are “mystic” in character.

The word “mystic” is not to be confused with the word irrationalism; for “it is precisely reason that here presses forward to its own limits, as modern logic likewise honestly attempts to determine its own boundaries.”

Jones argues that Fritz Kunkel called, “the cross-roads of religion and psychology,” has erected a definite psychology of religion upon the foundation of the

60 Ibid., 10.
61 Ibid., 63.
Jungian school of thought. “It’s essence,” asserts Jones, “is the ‘We experience,’” and it is described as “a psychological reality which everyone can find within himself and which he may regard as his membership in the group, his sympathy, love or responsibility for his fellowmen—or, in more general terms, as his humanity.”

This psychology has been criticized because the “We experience” does not lend itself to a clear-cut “scientific” definition, and cannot be verified in laboratory experiments. Kunkel admits that proof of this type is impossible, but maintains that only the deviations and diseases of the human mind are proper objects of exact scientific research. “The positive side of the human mind, its creativity, love, courage and faith, cannot be described, and—even more important—can neither be invoked nor controlled by scientific methods.”

In this respect, argues Kunkel, the “We-psychology” is nearer to art than to science, but we must include the religious life and the life of the unconscious. These fields of experience are intimately related, and spiritual growth may be thought of in terms of the integration of unconscious energies into the conscious personality. It would seem that the psychology of preaching, then, involves these three problems: “How to break down the egocentric shell, how to release the collective (unconscious) powers, and how to lead them into new creative channels,” or, in other words, how to replace ego-controlled imagery with imagery which is more powerful and creative.

Kunkel illustrates the power of images to awaken unconscious energies by

---

62 Kunkel, In Search of Maturity (New Haven, CT: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1943), vii.
63 Jones, Preaching and the Dramatic Arts, 13.
64 Kunkel, In Search of Maturity, viii.
means of a hypothetical teacher who, in speaking of courage and patriotism, stepped on an accelerator of which she had not been aware. She touched off collective power, within her own unconscious mind and the unconscious minds of her students; there was an enthusiasm in her voice and a flame in her eyes when she described the heroic fighter. The image of the hero arose, charged with the courage of her unconscious instincts. “It conjured up the corresponding images within the students. And for a short time she was Joan of Arc and they were her knights.”  

This power can make for good or evil, both from the standpoint of the individual and from the standpoint of society, depending upon the direction it is given. Kunkel places too much reliance in what he calls an emerging “real self,” which brings with it “a new clarity and certainty, and an new and deeper consciousness.” His “clarity and certainty” are too exclusively unconscious, to the neglect of processes consciously rational and thoroughly dependable. But he has rendered a great service in emphasizing the role of religion in utilizing the basic energies of the person and in emphasizing the function of imagery in tapping into these energies.

This bit of practical instruction is provided for the preacher. “Words are ignition-devices,” says Kunkel. “They should start movement in our imaginations.” But if the ignition does not ignite, and if the images do not come to life, thereby releasing underlying collective power, then the people “watch the time, some yawn, and some begin to whisper about their next bridge parties. Oh, yes, they recognize that it is a

65Kunkel, In Search of Maturity, 103.
66Ibid. 103
67Ibid. 103
wonderful speech, but they whisper nevertheless.”

**Philosophy of Preaching**

*Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation* (Mark 16:15).

As preachers, speakers of the word, it would be a good idea to ask ourselves if preaching is solely for reaching those you are talking to, or is the purpose of preaching to communicate the truth that God has given us to speak for him? Campbell Morgan of Westminster Chapel and Stuart Holden of St. Paul’s, Portman Square have both said, “The standard of preaching in the modern world is deplorable. There are few great preachers. Many clergy do not seem to believe in it any more as a powerful way in which to proclaim the gospel and change life. This is the age of the sermonette: and sermonettes make Christianettes.”

Today, there seems to be many preachers who want to do quick, almost “drive through” sermons. The fact is that there are, “drive through churches” and one wonders how effective these are in reaching people at a personal and spiritual level. For a sermon to be powerful and effective, the preacher needs to believe in the power of the word of God in which they are proclaiming. This would also include not only the spoken word, but also any art form or technology.

Artistic forms have been used for many years in reaching people, even in past centuries. There have been storytelling, music, stain glass windows, woodcarvings, paintings, sculptures, stage plays, orchestras, poetry, and other readings. In more recent

---


69Source unknown.
centuries, the addition of photo’s, movies—silent and audible, radio, television, and computers, and augmented reality to name a few.

In striving to make preaching more powerful and effective it seems that there are numerous methods, not only in the arts, and media but also in modern technology, which was not available in reaching people and all societies previously, because preaching was usually only oral. Current culture seems to indicate the most effective way to reach people in this busy postmodern 21st century is by using artistry and modern technology. This is also true when it comes to preaching. The combination is slowly taking place and is a very effective method in my opinion. As the Apostle Paul writes, “be all things to all peoples” (1 Cor 9:22).

In looking at today’s society, you can find many places filled with large groups of people wanting to be entertained by the arts and modern mediums of technology. Sometimes it is hard to even find a seat at a performance whether it is a movie, film festival, stage play, music concert, ballet, poetry reading, or art show and many other forms of entertainment.

The fact is art forms and technologies are needed in preaching—for the audience and in communicating the truth. The Bible is God’s written revelation of himself to humanity so that we can know who he is. The Bible itself also communicates to humanity the expectations of God and his love for creation. Many times it is revealed through art forms, for example, poetry, symbols, and signs.

If we look at Jesus’ preaching method, we can see that he frequently used the arts to enhance what he was trying to get across to the people. One example is the story of the sower found in Matthew 13 and Luke 8. Today’s society reveals that it does not
exist without some type of art, whether it is sculpture, entertainment, or even as simple as a billboard or paper flyer.

One art form that is often overlooked is preaching. The foundation of great preaching is ensuring that it is Christ-centered. If it is always Christ-centered then there is no possibility that the audience will be at fault in thinking that the message is for someone else. I believe that biblical preaching is for all humanity and it is an essential way for God to reveal himself to us. Therefore, we as preachers—God’s instruments, should recognize and thoroughly understand the passages from scripture that we preach to our audiences.

Alger Fitch gives the reader a deeper understanding of the core of preaching:

Preaching is love in action. Because of love, man’s Creator communicated with His creatures. Because of love, God has given us his Spirit to enable His messengers to have both the story and the strength to tell it. . . . Who goes forth to preach, but one who loves the world and with God’s help hungers to get heaven’s saving message to the perishing earth? What is the loving truth delivered, but that revelation regarding Jesus, that is so carefully recorded and preserved in the Holy Scriptures? Love demands that only the message be preached that guides men to glory and never the false gospels that mislead men down roads that dead-end in destruction. . . . Preaching that is Christ centered, people-concerned and love-compelled cannot be stopped. 70

There are many instances in the Bible where God has said to go and speak/preach this message to others. These are both in the Old Testament and the New Testament and this is still true today. Noah had a message for his day. Isaiah had a message of the coming Messiah. Jesus spoke of truth and love; many had the message of the risen Savior, while others like John had the message of faith and the signs and return of Jesus.

Russian writer Leo Tolstoy said, “Art is not a handicraft, it is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced.” That is what we should feel when listening and looking at preaching and the arts. Preaching is a feeling of what the Holy Spirit has revealed to the preacher and the preacher then uses the art form of preaching, whether it is oral, an artistic medium or technology, revealing what has been given to them through the scriptures to the audience.

The arts and preaching are a justifiable and advantageous pursuit for any minister of the gospel of Jesus Christ. History shows numerous examples of art forms throughout history. One example of imagination used by God was in creation. The gift of imagination has been given to humanity to use in this twenty first century, which can be used to glorify God. I believe that the use of the arts and technology are effective tools in preaching to today’s culture, because certain and future generations will presumably relate to merely visuals as part of a preacher’s delivery.

Art forms whether manual or technological are a necessary and important part of the survival of preaching, especially if we are to reach people in today’s society with the

Figure 3. Three Angels’ Message. Escondido SDA church window.

---

71Leo Tolstoy, http://msabhiquotes.blogspot.com/2008/05/art-is-not-handicraft-leo-tolstoy.html
‘great commission’ and ‘the three angels’ messages.’ These expressions define who we are, and allow us to use technology for the future as global Christians.

**Implications for Contemporary Preachers**

How then can we as preachers use the arts and technology through preaching, so that it will improve and provide better understanding for people in our congregations and local churches? How can these methods help the congregation respond to an enhanced understanding of God? It is by research, knowledge of these mediums, experience, examples, and training. In using these art forms and technology in preaching, we can stimulate audience and speaker participation. It provides visuals to the audience, similarly as Jesus presented visual examples, which most people remember compared to oral that is more readily forgotten.

With immediate Global Messaging, E-mails, YouTube, My-Space, Facebook, Twitter updates and News on demand, we can see how important technological usage is. The arts deal with life and visuals that surround us moment-by-moment, daily, and yearly, in our busy fast pace lives. Therefore we can see why visual forms are a necessary part of preaching.

To be effective preachers need to reclaim the biblical art forms and images. For example, using storytelling, imagination, live drama, poetry, film, and symbols allowing communication through the arts to attract the postmodern generation. Media should be included in communicating as it shows the past, the future, and the now.

Artistic media should not be stifled when preaching. These mediums can and are an important and effective part of the preacher’s sermon. It allows the preacher to say this is who I am, this is who God created me to be, and this is his message that he wants
me to portray so all can comprehend. If the arts are not used in preaching, then preachers will not survive in the current culture and will not be seen as globally relevant.

We need to look at the examples of Jesus, and the many times he used story as a genre in preaching. One such example is the lost sheep,

Then Jesus told them this parable: Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.” I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent (Luke 15:37 NIV).

God has created us to be either poets, singers, storytellers, artists, designers, craftsmen, creators, or one of the many other artistic talents. We as preachers are able to live the lives of others through the presentation of stories and characters from the Bible.

Preachers and Evangelists need to look at the scriptures which include art in the form of symbols, narrative, poetry and song, to name a few and employ them similarly to those in the bible including Jesus examples. This creatively direct manner in portraying the message to the congregation will help them to understand scriptures in a more relevant way. The other method is to view the scriptures as merely facts, losing the concentration of the majority of the congregation.

**Conclusion**

Over the years we have faced the fear of heresy—since the period of Martin Luther. This factor has been an issue for the arts being denied and hidden in the area of preaching, even though there is evidence that it was used throughout the Bible. Creative preaching allows people to respond in their own ways, engaging their imagination.

In doing research, I believe that the preachers’ mindset desires the community to
connect and relate to the church, instead of viewing it as an irrelevant and unimaginative institution. Preachers want people to walk away having had an experiential and imaginative experience, allowing them to meet a creative God who meets their needs daily through biblical art.

The future of preaching, the arts and technology, is for advancing ‘the great commission’ in congregations, allowing them to be in an environment that allows interactive capabilities that will long remain in their memories.
CHAPTER 3

A PROCLAMATION OF A HOLY GOD

Is the use of the arts simply an expression of the artist wanting to communicate his/her message in a unique way, or an essential medium for expressing the divinity of God in an experiential and effective method? A major focus of this chapter will revolve around the various art forms found in the Mosaic Sanctuary. Artifacts have helped articulate faith throughout the Bible. There is an exhaustive list of symbols that point to Christ, found in Exodus, Psalms, and Ezekiel, and various books from the Major and Minor Prophets. Also exhibited is evidence for the importance and relevance of Old Testament art as a means of proclaiming God’s Word. God ordained art as a voice, when he called Bezalel and Oholiab as artistic craftsman, in the building of the beauty and splendor of the Sanctuary. God relays artistic symbols to communicate his message of redemption through the coming Messiah.

Old Testament

In the years preceding the Ark of the Covenant, art and ceremonial objects were used in religious settings by particular cultures to worship unknown gods. God’s people wandered not only in deserts, but spiritually dry wastelands and yet God continued to speak to humanity through nature, story, and art. Sprinkled throughout the Bible we find artistic elements used as creative expressions of God’s love and teachings. For
example, early in the creation story we see the hand of God sculpting and shaping. “In
the beginning God (Elohim) created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1). According to
Ned Bustard, “It conformed to his nature, reflected his image.”\(^1\) This expressive nature
of God’s imagination enables us to visualize a world created through the master’s
spoken word, not devolving into chaos from random chance. “The opening chapters of
the Bible might be likened to a modern computer software program . . . in a compressed
format. We must unzip or unpack the opening chapters of Genesis as we would a
computer program before we can understand all the content.”\(^2\)

We see a God who is both deeply absorbed in the details and the creative
process, which is the same creative urge found in all great artists. Through art, humanity
has always strived to construct and thus, leave a legacy. After all, we are made in the
likeness of our Creator. “[Father, Son, Holy Spirit] labor simultaneously by divine
counsel, constructed the entire universe.”\(^3\) God the artist uses imaginative and
expressive words to enable us to imagine the world’s beginning as he spoke—artistic
literature enabling humanity to see his creative imagination and the creation narrative as
it took shape.

Holy of a Jewish text inheres both in the form and the content of the text. . . . The
pre-eminent sacred text, is considered perfect. Each and every letter . . . is invested
with meaning, and that meaning is attributed to its Author. . . . Holiness comes from
this perception that the presence or absence of apparently inconsequential words can
bear meaning. Sacred texts aren’t “read,” they are studied . . . uncovering the

\(^1\)Ned Bustard, *It was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God* (Baltimore, MD: Square Halo

\(^2\)Lambert Dolphin, *The Uniqueness of Creation Week*, March 6, 2003, CV 032009,

\(^3\)Ibid.
sanctity that the texts carry in their words and ideas . . . and uncover the sanctity of
God’s own speech in the text.⁴

Everything God designs and shapes reflect his intrinsic glory in his works of art,
allowing greater understanding for those who seek to know him. “God created man in
his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them”
(Gen 1:27). Through the sculpting of male and female God infused life into the canvas
of creation. The account of man’s conception begins in Gen 1:27 with

*bara*’ man. Man was created, but also molded and fashioned. *Bara* is a word used
in the Bible only for the creative activity of God. It implies something new has been
brought into existence by divine command. Yatsar tells us how God formed and
sculpted man . . . Man as created by God is the highest of all of God’s artistic
works, and God made man very much like Himself. God’s creation of the first man
was “hands-on.” ⁵

God, the sovereign sculpture and potter, tenderly molds a living figurine
reflecting the holy qualities of *Yahweh*—a perfect piece of art. Yet the gallery is not
complete the menagerie lacks balance. God the artist, with skillful hands gently closes
the eyes of his workmanship, reaches into that one piece of perfect art, and carves
another piece of sculpture out of man’s rib—woman. These prize designs made from
dust and breathed alive by God, would be the regents over God’s creation, and the
narrative begins—humanity and art.

The early accounts in Genesis are rich with God’s literary art forms in
communicating his messages including the dramatic. Symbols and narratives abound in
Exodus and Leviticus. Metal is heated; stones are cut. Iconic objects become part of the

⁴Sacred Texts (Kitvei Kodesh), Jewish Texts as Sacred Texts, http://www.myjewishlearning.com

November 20, 2011).
religious experience. Music and Poetry unite worship and prayer, teaching, and preaching. Through the Psalms and Song of Solomon humanity lifts its voice to God in worship.

During the Old Testament epoch, God and/or his prophets and leaders fashioned all manner of art for religious intent. Following the exodus from Egypt, we find God summoning Moses to the mountaintop. The earth shakes, clouds billows, thunder rumbles, and lightning splits the sky, which is greater than any sound or smoke technology. The mountain shudders in the presence of God. Even though the Israelites witness the power of God blowing across the waters, which surpassed any 3D movie and his daily provision falling from the sky, they still refused to worship the great I AM. Leaderless the Children of Israel revert back to their pagan worship practices, cast, and kneel before a man-made idol shaped in the image of a gold calf a visible art design. Art-filled worship becomes perverted.

The climax of this sad covenant narrative shows the patience of God, and man’s intrinsic need to control the worship experience. Moses returns carrying a holy artifact; tables of stone with the Ten Commandments incised with God’s writing. Artful preaching is born.

This memorable occasion was certainly the most outstanding Sabbath morning service ever held on this Earth. It certainly did not take a longtime for God to speak the Ten Commandments—His “ten words,” as Rotherham has literally translated Deut. 4:13 from the Hebrew, . . . But the fiery display on the mountain, the roaring of thunder, the Majesty of God’s voice . . . so terrified the people that they urgently requested Moses: “Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak to us lest we die” (Exodus 20:19). When He “had made an end of communing with Moses upon Mount Sinai.” He gave unto him these “two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (Exodus 31:18).  

With the tablets of commands the Children of Israel now possess a piece of heaven and tangible evidence that God’s artistic nature demands reverence and love.

God reveals himself to be a God of art and oral tradition.

Deuteronomy, *deutero nomos*, means the second giving of the law, because Deuteronomy 5 again contains the Ten Commandments, *these Ten Words*. The theme is very clear. Israel, in terms of its elect status, is the chosen nation of God. The Torah serves as a constant reminder of their special status. In these Ten Words, the central truth is that the Lord God spoke to His people, they heard, and they survived. Looking backward to (Deut 4:10-11). We must remind ourselves that the giving of the Ten Commandments cannot be separated from the narrative context from which it comes. The propositional truth so clearly there is the law, comes in the midst of a history of a people and God’s dealing with the people. *It is a relational revelation*, and it is a dramatic revelation. Israel is reminded not only of why they heard, but of the context in which they heard it. God allowing Israel at
Horeb, and thereafter, to hear and to survive, was a part of His work of redemption (emphasis added).  

God not only wanted the children of Israel to have the traditional oral passing on of this important covenant, he made sure it was imbedded in their minds through a visible art form.

Holiness of a Jewish text inheres both in the form and the content of the text. . . . The pre-eminent sacred text, is considered perfect. Each and every letter . . . is invested with meaning, and that meaning is attributed to its author. . . . Holiness comes from this perception that the presence or absence of apparently inconsequential words can bear meaning. Sacred texts aren’t “read,” they are studied . . . uncovering the sanctity that the texts carry in their words and ideas . . . and uncover the sanctity of God’s own speech in the text.  

The Sanctuary

The Old and New Testaments both convey God’s messages powerfully, through his word, symbols, art forms, and worship. One such example is seen in the Sanctuary/Tabernacle of the Exodus generation. “And let them construct a sanctuary [v'D.qim—Mishkan] for Me that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it” (Exod 25:8-9, Hebrew emphasis added). The sanctuary was in all of its form a visual aid for the Children of Israel.

The outer pillars (60 total) were used as guides and reference points. As the first pillar was set, the other 59 could be placed with great accuracy given the physical components. As you can see in the diagram, as one looked across from one pillar to the appropriate pillar on the opposing side of the tabernacle, a line would be formed. This line would be crossed by another lining providing the exact spot upon which a holy vessel would be placed. This method would provide the same results each time.

---


8 Sacred Texts (Kitvei Kodesh).

Exactness is a characteristic of the Lord.⁹

The very structure that God is telling them to build from their heart is the very structure that He will become. This is why it is imperative that they build it according to all the pattern that God has shown Moshe. The word pattern here is ... *tav’niyt*. This word is translated as pattern, form, likeness, or figure (Isa 44:13, Ezek 10:8, Deut 4:16). It’s action or verbal root is *banah*, to build, or a building plan. *Banah* is also the root for son. A son is in the pattern or likeness of the father. . . .

God has a “plan” constructed in the heavenlies that is to be expressed or duplicated in the earth. It will be a picture of heavenly things, but particularly His son.\(^{10}\)

The Tabernacle, a central point for the Israelites becomes a place of spirituality, replacing the various religious symbols containing the Israelites worship experience. Previously visual images of idols in the forms of various gods had surrounded them in their Egyptian culture.

The word Mishkan comes from the root word meaning ‘to dwell’ in Hebrew. The purpose of building the sanctuary was for God to have fellowship with his people, in a manner unknown in other cultures. The God of the universe would now dwell with his people. He would reintroduce himself to the Children of Israel through a personal encounter steeped in symbols, art forms, and the accessories of a Holy Tabernacle. This Sanctuary would represent God’s presence with his people during the exodus, allowing communication between humanity and divinity, with an understanding that there is a price to be paid. “The series of instructions for the components of the Tabernacle is made up of seven subsections, each of which is introduced by the formula, ‘The Lord spoke/said to Moses.’ Six of them deal with creativity and the seventh features the Sabbath law. This is explicitly grounded in creation.”\(^{11}\)

The seventh day Sabbath commemorating creation, the completion of his work, and incorporating the creation of humanity by God as described in Genesis 2:2-3, demanding not only observance of the Sabbath, but reverence. “Remember the seventh


day to keep it holy, six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath to the Lord your God.” God’s emphasis is for the Israelites to not only observe the Sabbath, but to be committed to its observance in the future. “Between Me and between the Children of Israel it is an everlasting sign” (Exod 31:17). 12 A narrative played out every seventh day.

Shabbat is called a “sign” in verse 13, to indicate its exalted stature. This is similar to a craftsman or a merchant who hangs a sign on his house or shop so that people will know what kind of service or business he operates. A shoemaker’s shingle is a picture of a shoe. As long as a man has his sign hanging outside his store, everyone knows that his business operates there; but if he takes down his sign, people know that the craftsman, or merchant is no longer in business (Chofetz Chaim on the Torah). This is an adage, “more than Jews have kept the Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews.” The Jewish day of rest affirms our belief in the creator of the world, and in his mastery over every aspect of creation. When we adhere to the principles and laws of Shabbat, we reinforce these basic tenets of our faith. Sadly, when we disregard Shabbat’s inherent beauty and majestic laws, we have taken down the sign that designates us as God’s special children. 13

The Sabbath is not only linked to creation, but it reveals restorative qualities of God as told in the Exodus story, allowing us today the same Sabbath blessings.

For about 250 years the book of creation was man’s only lesson book. During this time, he gradually failed to discern the spiritual lessons in nature, until at last the Creator was lost sight of. Then he deified and worshiped the things of nature—the sun, moon, stars, water, earth and even the animals that God had made for his use. He “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator,” and as a result, his “foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:25, 21). . . . He would teach them through the most marvelous object lesson ever conceived and ever used—the sanctuary. He who knew that nearly ninety percent of what we remember comes through the eyes and the hands, while only about ten percent comes through the ears, emphasized the importance of clearly understanding His plan by appealing first to the ear in giving the most minute and explicit direction for the construction of the sanctuary, next to the eye by showing Moses the pattern, and finally to the hand by instructing the people to unite in the construction. In this masterpiece of true Christian education,


13Ibid.
this comprehensive textbook of visual education, God demonstrated in perfect detail all the various stages of the plan of redemption, not only for the world as a whole, but for each individual for whom the Lamb of God has given His precious life.\textsuperscript{14}

The Sanctuary, was not only a proclamation of whom God was, but it was intertwined with worship; revealing that God alone deserves to be worshiped, forming a powerful message. The Children of Israel viewed the arts not as a performance; instead it was responsive worship in the perception of understanding God. Shofar blowing was and is a musical art form. Constructed from a ram’s horn, the Israelites used the Shofar to proclaim a time of celebration. Thus, the Shofar became an essential part of the worship services. This art form brought not only music to the ear, but was effective in acquiring every person’s attention, revealing to the Israelites that an important event was to occur. The Israelites broke out in song for liberation, for identification, and in the knowledge that God loved them. One such occasion—their escape through the Red Sea. The passion and use of artistic gifts were evident among the Children of Israel; in their experience of worshipping God—‘I am that I am,’ as they stood on the banks of the sea.

\textbf{God the Architect}

Through the Sanctuary symbols and visible representations, we can understand the message God had for his people. These involved color, craftsmanship, drama, the senses, and visualization. Aromas, taste, and sounds, were a daily part of the worship experience in the beauty of the Sanctuary services. This Tabernacle was to be the central place of gathering for the Children of Israel with the benefits of portability. Modeled after the heavenly Sanctuary, detailed precise, artistic typology reflected the

\textsuperscript{14}Peck, \textit{The Path to the Throne of God}, 3-4.
exactness of God’s perfection. God, the creator and master artist, ordained the Sanctuary to be a replica of the heavenly in every aspect. The Sanctuary—a visualization in symbolism and art—illustrated the plan of salvation by pointing to the perfect sinless sacrifice of the Messiah.

Figure 6. Moses’ tabernacle. Norbert McNulty artist, who has faithfully researched the authenticity of this setting for his stunning painting. ©1954. Adapted by Jessica Trevithick.

“They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘see to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain’” (Heb 8:5 NIV).

The wilderness Sanctuary reveals how the arts can be effectively used in proclamation and worship. The worshipper did not forget the message when viewing these art forms, while the worship service proclaimed powerful testimony to a Holy God’s redemptive authority. As Moses embarks on the construction of the sanctuary
God gives him precise visual blueprints, which were more effectual than any instructional dvd. The accuracy, specifics, and beauty used when the heavens and the earth were formed by God’s creative skills and his astuteness at creation were also in the plans of the sanctuary and its furnishings.

The structure oriented longitudinally on an east-west axis with the most sacred zone in the west. An outer perimeter demarcates the sacred area. This is divided into two equal squares. The first two zones lie in one square and the court constitutes the other square. From the Ark in the Holy of Holies, God reaches out to Israel; from the altar of sacrifice, the Israelites reach out to God. Each seems to be located exactly at the point of intersection of the diagonals of the squares.  

Figure 7. The Wilderness Tabernacle in Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus*, 155.

The central location of the Holy of Holies in the precise architectural plans illustrate the cost of sin at the altar of burnt offering, and then points to the redemption

---

15Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary Exodus*, 155-156.
and forgiveness of sins at the *kapporeth* (from the root “to pardon/ate for”) in the Holy of Holies.

The many figurative art forms found in the Tabernacle provide a graphic visualization of theological truths and realism—God. Through art, symbolism, and worship, the Israelites come to view the Tabernacle as a representation of a living, Holy, and redemptive God—Yahweh. In addition to the Bible/Torah, scholars, and sages verify the repetitious accounts found in exodus involving the construction of the Sanctuary. God’s presence dwelt among the children of Israel without consuming them. “Holiness was the key word, for the Tabernacle representing the presence of God in Israel’s midst. When in his vision Moses saw the *Mishkan*, he saw it, so to speak, as a reflection of God himself.”

In the instructions for building the Sanctuary, God taught visible lessons, allowing humanity to move closer to himself. Every person had to offer a sacrifice as a part of the worship experience. Through the forfeiture of gold, brass, and linen, an animal, personal property, or time, the Israelites contributed to the price of redemption. The outer courtyard contained the brazen altar, perfectly crafted by the hands of carpenters and metalworkers. This art form taught the importance of substitutionary sacrifice. It showed the horror, the consequences, and the price of sin—the shedding of blood and death by the innocent. The ceremony on this wooden furniture overlaid with copper symbolized and foreshadowed the death of the Messiah on the cross for the sins of the world. There was/is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood.

---

Before entering the Holy Place—Mikdash, the Priest was required to wash in the copper laver made from the looking mirrors of the Israelite women. The Laver also acted as a mirror allowing the priests to look at themselves and permitting them to remove every hint of dirt from the defilement of the day. If this requirement was not performed it led to death. Possibly, these artistically designed mirrors allowed the individuals to look at themselves and see the impure and unworthy person that they were and their need for purification. This is symbolic of baptism today, and the need to wash away sins. “The Laver’s symbol of cleansing is another illustration of the impartation of death—if self is washed away and buried, it is dead.”

After washing in the Laver the Priest enters the Holy Place barefoot, no doubt pointing to the narrative of the burning bush; “of God’s command to Moses to bare his feet (Exod 3:5) is a literary foreshadowing of priestly customs in the Tent of Meeting.”

The priest’s garments were perfectly woven with brilliant colors of red, blue, purple, gold, and finely twisted linen, colors any textile dyer or draper would envy. “Every strand consisted of four threads (three woolen and one linen), a combination of materials called sha-atnez. The Hebrew word for linen also means six, this was interpreted to mean that each thread was wound twenty-four (six x four) times.”

The Breastplate, worn by the High Priest, was an ornate piece of jewelry constructed of gold and adorned with twelve precious stones representing the twelve

---


19 Plaut, The Torah: A Modern Commentary, 607.
tribes of Israel. This is a similar composition to the twelve foundations of the city of God. It encompassed four rows, with three stones in each row encased in gold, each stone engraved with one of the names of the twelve tribes. Aaron the High Priest would go before God once a year transporting the names of the tribes of Israel, just as Christ today goes before God the Father bearing our names.

No chisel was to touch the stones, nor was it permitted to mark the names of the twelve patriarchs on the stones by means of paint or ink. The engraving was done by means of the Shamir, which was placed on the stone, and had the marvelous power of cutting it along the lines of the letters of the proper names . . . (Susah 48b). In addition to the names of the twelve tribes, the stones also contained, at the head, the names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and at the end the words: “(all these are) the tribes of Jeshurun” (Yoma 73b, where the first two words are not found, while Yer. Yoma vii., end, 44c has them, and also instead of Maimonides, I.c. 7, seems to have used a source differing both from Bab. and Yer., as his version has the words = “tribes of God”). These words could not be omitted from the breastplate, since the whole Hebrew alphabet had to be included, in order that, on consulting the Urim and Thummim, the high priest might be enabled to form words from the different colors of the individual letters on the stones of the breastplate, and hence might be able to answer questions put to him (Yoma, l.c.). The shamir was followed, significantly enough, by the creation of writing, the stylus, and the two tables of stone. Nothing was sufficiently hard to withstand it; when it was placed on stones they split in the manner in which the leaves of a book open. . . . With the help of this stone Moses engraved the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate of the high priest, . . . holding the shamir over them, whereupon the writing sank into the stones. The shamir was expressly created for this latter purpose, since it ceased to exist after the destruction of the Temple (Soṭah ix., 10; Tosef. xv. 1). 20

The High Priest Breastplate served as both a symbol of beauty and testified to the royalty of God. This piece of jewelry used by God was an affective means of communicating his messages. Similarly many Christians through the ages have worn the cross, as a piece of jewelry, signifying the redemptive message of Jesus the Son of God.

The King James Authorized Version of the Bible (1769) translated the Hebrew work “chosen” as breastplate, but this obscures some of its meaning. In the Septuagint it is written by the Greek word “logeion,” which means a speaking-place. This describes exactly what the breastplate really was—the oracle or means by which God spoke to, i.e., answered the inquires of the high-priest.21

A Personal Encounter

Entering the Holy place (Kodesh) revealed a luminous compartment allocated for food, prayer, and life, by comparison to the courtyard, which brought death, and cleansing. The inner walls in the Holy Place were made of acacia wood covered in gold. A large veil hung from the door, separating the Holy of Holies from the outer sanctuary.

Casting a glow from the oil lamps, the gold Menorah illuminated the windowless chamber, its reflection throughout the Holy Place, was a stark contrast to the natural light of the courtyard.

And you shall make a menorah of pure gold; it shall be made of beaten work: Its base, stem, and cups, spheres and flowers must all be hammered out of a single piece of gold. And six branches shall extend from its sides, three branches of the menorah out of one side, and three branches out of the other side (i.e., of its central branch). There shall be three cups made like almonds, as well as a sphere and a flower, on each and every one of the branches. All six branches extending from the menorah's stem must be this way. And in the menorah shall be four cups made like almonds, with their bulbs and flowers. And there shall be a bulb under two branches of the same piece . . . their bulbs and their branches shall be made of the same piece . . . all shall be one beaten work of pure gold. And you shall make its seven lamps: and they shall light its lamps, that they may give light over against it (Exod 25:31-37, Stone Edition Torah).

The Menorah was a symbolic piece of metal art made of solid gold and embellished with flowers, buds, and bowls, modeled in the manner of Repoussé sculpture.

Sculpture is the art, which represents beauty in bodily form . . . therefore depicts the beauty of the corporeal world . . . . Sculpture . . . a more effective and powerful manner, particularly so because it is usually raised above its surroundings by means of a pedestal, and is placed in the most advantageous light by a suitable background. Sculpture in metals, which not only creates the most lasting works, but allows greater freedom in the treatment of the material.  

The Menorah shed its light night and day giving luminosity to the Holy place and spilling over to the most Holy place, enabling the priests to complete their tasks. “The Menorah used pure olive oil as fuel. It was the job of the priests to daily trim the wicks (which were made of old priestly garments) and refill the bowls of oil, so that the Menorah would constantly be a source of light for first apartment or Holy Place.” The Menorah containing the purest of beaten olive oil perhaps symbolized the purity of Jesus who was beaten for the sins of the world. The Menorah had seven branches with three on either side of a central stem. The six outer lamps were positioned allowing their flames to point inwards toward the central stem. This symbolically was a picture of Jesus the light of the world, and the Tree of Life, who likened himself to a vine and his followers to branches. This art form incorporated was in itself a replica of the beauty of nature.

The Menorah’s light reflected and mirrored off each piece of ornate furniture. The beautiful colors of the tapestry curtains, embroidered with Cherubim made from threads of gold, were undeniably a work of art. The different colors reflected as in a rainbow off the golden walls. This reflective rainbow may have reminded the priests of the covenant promise given to Noah by God. Surrounding the Priest where symbols of

---


promises in the form of the architecture and beauty, more complete than any magnificent architectural building.

Directly opposite the golden Menorah stood the table of showbread, a piece of furniture more beautiful than any carpenters table. It was made from acacia wood overlaid with gold, and trimmed with a double crown around it. Acacia wood was used in the construction of the Sanctuary including its furniture. The usage of this hard wood was due to the fact it was least likely to deteriorate and was known for its long lasting qualities. This table held twelve loaves of bread, representing the twelve tribes of Israel and symbolized God’s provision for the Israelites. It also demonstrated that Jesus, who is the living bread continually, meets his people’s needs. “Over the table of the bread of the presence they shall also spread a cloth of blue and put on it the dishes and the pans and the sacrificial bowls and the jars for the drink offering and the continue bread shall be on it.” (Num 4:7). “God did not eat the bread but rather, it remained before the Lord (or shown) for one week. On each Sabbath the priests would replace the loaves of Showbread symbolic of man communing with God. . . . It therefore represents the establishment of a close and personal relationship with the Father.24

Divided by the Inner Veil the Altar of Incense faced the Ark of the Covenant. Prepared from a specific recipe, the incense burned morning and twilight, providing an offering of fragrance before God. Ketoret the transliteration of קטרת—incense meaning to bond or connecting, is a substance associated with prayer, elation and protection. “May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like

the evening sacrifice,” (Ps 141:2). The altar containing the incense was a place of worship and prayer—a sweet aroma to God.

And the Lord said to Moses: “Take for yourself aromatics, (namely) balsam sap, onycha and galbanum, aromatics and pure frankincense; they shall be of equal weight. And you shall make it into incense, a compound according to the art of the perfumer, well blended, pure, and holy. And you shall crush some of it very finely, and you shall set some of it before the testimony in the Tent of Meeting, where I will arrange meetings with you; it shall be to you a holy of holies. Aaron shall make incense of spices go up in smoke upon it; every morning when he sets the lamps in order, he shall make it go up in smoke. And when Aaron kindles the lights in the afternoon, he shall make it go up in smoke, continual incense before the Lord for your generations (Exodus 30:34-36, 7-8).”

Within the Sanctuary the Priest stood before the Altar of Incense and communed with God. His gaze was directed to the Mercy Seat, which was deliberately concealed behind the Veil, which reached from floor to almost ceiling. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would obtain some of this unique incense, placing it in an artistic sensor and transport it into the Holy of Holies.

The Torah only provides a partial formula for the daily incense burnt in the Tabernacle; instead it is the Oral law, which gives a list of eleven ingredients. Our Hakhamim taught: The ketoret contained eleven spices, balsam, onycha, galbanum, and frankincense, myrrh, cassia, spikenard, saffron, costus, aromatic bark, and cinnamon. The Acharit Shalom observes that whereas the eleven above-mentioned ingredients are listed in Hebrew, the remaining ingredients are listed in Aramaic.

“Also included in the incense was an herb known as maaleh ashan. This herb caused the smoke to go straight up like a pole and not to spread to the right or left.”

The Hebrew translation of (Exod 30:7) is that the usage of this complex non-fragrant

---


herb in the continual burning of incense was necessary to avoid the oppressive and unbearable smoke within the tabernacle (The Hakhamim taught; five pounds were burnt daily). Without this herb the smoke would have spread through the room, making it difficult for the Priests to complete their daily duties and suffocating all who entered. The use of the herb, allowed the sweet incense smoke to ascend, providing a pleasurable fragrance. It caused the required thick smoke, noted in Lev 16:2: “Speak to your brother Aaron that he should not come at all times into the Holy within the dividing curtain, in front of the cover that is upon the ark, so that he should not die, for I appear over the ark cover in a cloud.” This fragrance would have been more delightful than any perfumer’s fragrance, affecting all who came into contact with it.

Entering the Holy of Holies was only permitted once a year. During this time the High Priest entered carrying incense with the maaleh ashan allowing it to envelop the atonement cover like a cloud. This protected the High Priest from seeing God’s presence.

If the High Priest burned the incense and it did not contain this maaleh ashan he would be worthy of death. Furthermore if he left out any of the ingredients he would be worthy of death. “. . . the incense” (ha-Ketoret) teaches us that the incense must be complete without anything missing” (Lev 16:13). “He should place incense on the fire before Ha Shem and the cloud of the incense should cover the ark cover which is above the Testimony.”

On the Day of Atonement the sacrificial service was completed out of love; on the other days of sacrificial service, out of fear of God. The Shekinah or the Divine Presence, above the Mercy Seat, was visible above the Veil. Rabbi

\[28\] The Complete Jewish Bible.

\[29\] Hillel ben David, קטרת Ketoret.
Menachem Schneerson in his Internet article “Smoke Signals” explains, “Between the tri-un piece of gold, there was the presence and glory brightness of God in visible manifestation upon the blood—stained mercy seat.”

The Veil, a tapestry of finely woven threads of scarlet, blue, purple, and finely twisted linen richly embroidered with artistic gold designs of Cherubim was a work of art. “These cherub-angels were his ever-present agents of provision, protection . . . Being agents of the Almighty, it was only fitting that the embroidery of the cherubim was to be wrought in the rarest, most costly of materials—thread dyed blue, purple, and scarlet (tekelet)—a constant reminder of the royalty of the coming Messiah.”

God ordained the choice of colors used in the tapestry curtain, and obviously, the specifics were meaningful to God, but to analyze the precise meaning of these colors is beyond the scope of this chapter. “The Linen composing the mystic Vail was required to be fine; pure and faultless as the material could be produced, indicating that although the Messiah should be found in fashion as a man, he should be clearly exempt from the merest stain of defilement through contact with humanity.”

Woven into the inner curtain that hung in front of the altar of incense in the Holy of Holies were images of cherubim. The embroidered cherubim tapestry—complicated needlework was woven into the veil so that they could be seen on both sides.

---


The sixty by thirty feet drapery kept sinful humanity from entering the most Holy Place. This impressive Veil in the Holy of Holies symbolized the separation of fallen humanity from the presence of a Holy God. The Inner Veil (פורקארט parokhert) marked the dividing line where no one could pass except for the High Priest, and only then on the Day of Atonement. To do otherwise was to invade the internal shrine where God dwelt.

Jewish historians advise that the veil torn in two at the time of Jesus’ death was enormous. It is described as nine inches thick. It was made just as God directed yet it came to a seemingly violent end. God wanted to make an impact in the sanctuary. The Old Testament system of symbolic sacrifices and ceremonies had ended. The dramatic climax of the drama comes to an end as the curtain is ripped in two. “And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the

temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (Matt 27:50). The sins of the humanity, a source of alienation from God, were now covered under the blood of Christ, giving men and women direct access to enter into the presence of God.33

Behind the heavy tapestry veil, was the Ark of Testimony, a chest constructed from acacia wood and containing the stone covenant of the Sinaitic law. The Tabernacle, intended as God’s dwelling place amongst the Israelites, allowed God to be approached in a prescribed manner. It was not until he had redeemed the Israelites that God dwelt in their midst a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, more spectacular than a hologram.

This was established at Mount Sinai, when God proposed the construction of the Tabernacle. God’s Shekinah glory brought enlightenment to his people, suggesting that even in darkness; his light reigns supreme. God’s brilliance also brought structure and light to the Children of Israel. God’s presence above the Ark of the Covenant was a constant reminder to the Israelites of his love and mercy.

“Between the tri-un piece of gold, there was the presence and glory brightness of God in visible manifestation upon the blood—stained mercy seat…”34

The physical “Shekinah” presence of YEHOVAH God took up residence in the newly completed Tabernacle and was apparent to the whole nation of Israel. . . . “Mishkan” means, “dwelling place . . . of “him who dwells” or “SHEKINAH.” The Hebrew verb “shakan” (shkn) simply means to take up residence for a long period of time in a neighborhood . . . and continue as a member of the community. When Moses had ascended the mountain, the cloud covered the mountain. The presence of the Lord (“Cavod YHVH”) abode (“shakan”) on Mount Sinai, and the cloud hid it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.


34Conner, The Tabernacle of Moses, 26.
Now the Presence of the Lord (“Cavod YHVH”) appeared in the sight of the Israelites as a consuming fire on the top of the mountain (Exodus 24:15-17). At the time of the setting up of the Tabernacle (before it was finished) YEHovaH spoke to Moses out of the cloud and Moses realized the “Shekinah” was a vehicle and not YEHovaH God. As we see in Exodus 33, Moses asked for more—to actually “see” YEHovaH God and YEHovaH allowed him to see a larger portion of his physical “Shekinah” presence. . . . the LORD (YEHovaH) said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have asked; for you have truly gained my favor and I have singled you out by name.” He [Moses] said, “Oh, let me behold your presence” [He was speaking to Yehovah’s voice coming from the “Shekinah”]. And he [YEHovaH] answered, “I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the name LORD (YEHovaH, YHVH), and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show.” But, he said, “You cannot see my face, for men may not see me and live.”

The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies (kodesh hakodashim) compartment for the solitary intention of requesting atonement for the sins of himself, and then on behalf of the children of Israel. This inner sanctum contained the Glory of God (Shekhinah kavod), above the mercy seat a sacred symbolic representation of God’s permanent covenant. The Veil, ceiling coverings, and sparkling images of heavenly hosts, cast a kaleidoscope of reflective images around the Ark of the Covenant onto the walls reflecting back and forth like a 3D movie or an augmented reality, illuminated by the magnificence of the enthroned Holy God. The manifestations of the Shekinah glory of God described as light, fire, a cloud, or combination of all three, were witnessed by the Angels in heaven who stand in the presence of God, and Moses on Mount Sinai, travelling with the Israelites during their years of wondering.

Where God Meets Humanity

The Ark of the Covenant was an open top chest, overlaid and covered inside and

---

out with pure gold. A gold crown rimmed the top.

They shall make an Ark of acacia wood, two and a half cubits it length; and a cubit and a half its width; and a cubic and a half its height you shall cover it with pure gold, from within and from without, shall you cover it, and you shall make on it a gold crown all around. You shall cast for it four rings of gold and place them on its four corners, two rings on its one side and two rings on its second side. You shall make staves of acacia wood and cover them with gold; and insert the staves in the rings on the sides of the ark, with which to carry the ark. The staves shall remain in the rings of the ark; they may not be removed from it. You shall place in the ark the testimonial—tablets that I shall give you” (Exod 25:10-16). 

Dr. Cumberland in his book about Jewish weights and measures, writes: “The Egyptian and Jewish cubit was above twenty-one inches, and then the ark must be fifty-three inches long or more, and thirty-two and three quarters broad and high (1.25 meters long x .75 meters wide and .75 meters high).”

For centuries the Ark of the Covenant has fascinated scholars, archeologists, and every day people. This attraction has intensified in the last few years prompting such movies as, the “Raiders of the lost ark” and the television series “Stargate” in which the curious seek the mysteries held within ‘the ark of truth’. These movies and myths suggest that the ark has the power to control people, and destroy them. It is interesting to note how this fascination coincides with the historical aura that surrounded God’s Ark of the Covenant. The ark of truth though smaller in size compared to the Ark of

______________


37Richard Cumberland, An Essay Towards the Recovery of the Jewish Measures & Weights, Comprehending Their Monies, by Help of Ancient Standards, Compared with Ours of England Useful Also to State Many of Those of the Greeks and Romans, and the Eastern Nations (London, England: Printed by Richard Chiswell, 1686), 56, 57. This can also be read from Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, Digital Library Production Service, 2005 March (TCP phase 1).
Testimony is understood to hold the truth. In the same way God’s truth—the Ten Commandments—are held in the biblical Ark of the Covenant. There are many who try to project their version of truth onto the story and legend of the Ark. Explorers claim to have found the lost Ark of the Covenant, and yet its location remains a mystery. The Ark of the Covenant is a subject that will never cease to fascinate and occupy people’s minds.

**Counterfeit Pictures and Symbols**

Currently, there are those who seek to discredit the importance, reverence, and representative message demanded by God through this art form—and its contents. The Ten Commandments—the law of God, the Golden pot of manner—God’s provision, and the Rod of Aaron—God’s power over death—Jesus resurrection.

In 1994 Maurice Strong, and Mikhail Gorbachev both acting at the behest of the president of Green Cross international, launched the Earth Charter Initiative.

Standing in stark and sacrilegious contrast is the Ark of Hope—a modern day vessel designed to carry the Earth Charter. In many ways, the ark of hope was designed as a Satanic, half-price knock-off of the Ark of the Covenant. It is a wooden chest constructed from a single plank of sycamore, and is 49” x 32” x 32” in dimensions. The four sides have various artworks and represent the four directions . . . (earth, water, fire, and air). The top of the ark also features artwork, and represents the fifth element: spirit. Around the edges of the top are a variety of religious and cultic symbols, including the occult pentagram! The ark has four rings through which two carrying poles are inserted. The poles are designed to represent “unicorn horns which render evil ineffective.”

This man made representation of the Ark of the Covenant, was crafted from the sycamore tree; a species sacred to pagan religions during biblical times (The sycamore

---

carried special mythical significance according to the book of the dead). The new age movement is trying to impel every nation to follow what they consider to be the new covenant for humanity. Speaking on the public broadcast system—Charlie Rose’s show, October 23, 1996, Mikhail Gorbachev said, “Cosmos is my God. Nature is my God.”

The ark of hope contains the earth charter, temenos earth masks, and over 300 “Temenos books, including a new set of Ten Commandments which Earth Charter anticipate the world will adopt replacing God’s Holy Ten Commandments. Do not do unto the environment of others what you do not want done to your own environment. My hope is that this charter will be a kind of Ten Commandments, a ‘Sermon on the Mount’, that provides a guide for human behavior toward the environment in the next century.”

This appears, comparable to the Ark of the Covenant, and emerges as a piece of artwork focused on saving the planet and humanity. This ark of hope is claimed to be an affirmation of vital fundamental ideology and new laws for constructing a sustainable, diplomatic, new society.

*It is the responsibility of each human being today to choose between the force of darkness and the force of light,* note Alice Bailey, and Blavatsky used these terms. . . . the “force of darkness” are those who adhere to the “out-dated” Judeo-Christian faith; those who continue along their “separative” paths of the one true God. The “force of light’ Lucifer, in their view, is the inclusive new age doctrine of a pagan pantheistic New World Religion.”


Berit Kjos conveys that the ark of hope is geared towards “magic, occultism and a Harry Potter like attitude.” The ark of hope is a completely conflicting connotation in comparison to the Ark of the Covenant.

The ark of hope encompasses the “five painted panels of . . . ‘indigenous symbolism celebrating earth and all her living elements.’” Like the Native American medicine shield or the quartered circle of contemporary witchcraft, each panel visualizes a season, a direction (north, east, south and west). . . . The top panel celebrates the magical symbols of the world’s earth centered religions, and represents the fifth element: spirit. . . . It all makes sense! In a world that hates biblical absolutes and loves its own illusions of unity and peace apart from God, symbolic art becomes a powerful tool for change.  

Sally Linder the designer and artist for the ark of hope states, “Image and form have the power to transform consciousness.” She argues, the moment has arrived to

---


eliminate history by reinventing the past through this artifact—the ark of hope. This box has many paintings of various forms and is in itself a form of art; it is not the pure beauty of art. This group reflects what some in society understand to be a more popular vision of the future. Earth Charter Initiative states, “We stand at a critical moment in earth’s history time, when humanity must choose its future, to ensure lasting peace.”

Through the allure of postmodern propaganda the earth charter initiative seeks to draw its follows away from God’s visuals and message of hope, instead leading them toward a hollow representation of his deity.

The real Ark—the Holy Ark of the Covenant, also known as the Ark of the Testimony, Ark of God, the Holy Ark, the Ark of the Lord, and the Ark of the Pact, is seen as insignificant and irrelevant by the earth charter initiative. They see the one true God—our heavenly Father—as unpopular and immaterial. In creating a counterfeit ark, they would seek to eliminate the sacred symbolic message of one of the most holy religious treasures, and the one literary art form written by the very finger of God and encased in the Ark of the Covenant—the Ten Commandments. The acknowledgement that image and form transforms lives, the earth charter group has attempted to change cognitive thinking while at the same time, slander God and his laws.

A Message of Hope

“The Holy of Holies . . . was the sanctum sanctorum of the tabernacle. . . . The first article of furniture is the ark. . . . from God’s viewpoint, from the inside looking out, the ark was in the Holy of Holies where God’s presence dwelt. . . . From man’s

viewpoint, we would come first to the gate of the tabernacle then the brazen altar and the laver.”

The Ark of the Covenant—a chest for the Ten Commandments and a support for the Atonement cover were the only pieces of furniture in the Holy of Holies. God instructed the building of the Ark of the Covenant and the lid as the first pieces to be constructed. God would look beyond his footstool towards the Israelites; and they similarly looked inward to a Holy God.

The Ark was not only an art form, but also a symbol communicating a message of hope, for God himself was the architect and designer. This concept built on earth according to heavenly blueprints, were the holiest of the Sanctuary furniture. The Ark of the Covenant served as a visible reminder of God's presence with the Israelites.

A chest, for the verbal root of this word is ‘arah’ or gathering. In context here it will be the container or gathering place for the testimony or the word of God, to be eventually expressed in the tablets. ‘Aron’ is in the feminine gender. . . . The bearer of the “Word of God” is always in this gender, beginning with the seed of the woman (Gen 3:15). The Word of God is pictured as a child in a womb, to be protected, kept, and nurtured. He is giving instructions for a container for His words. . . . It will be a pattern designed to show us where He will dwell. . . . There is to be only one vessel in the heart of the sanctuary, the ark. YHVH will . . . teach, guide, and instruct His children, that which houses His eternal words. From God’s point of view this entire structure is constructed around His word. His word was, is, and will always be, the center of His will for man. This is the very reason that Yeshua is first introduced to us by Yochanan (John) as the “Word of God.”

Aron, the feminine form—to gather, signified the bearer of the Word of God,

---


perhaps recalling God’s command that Eve would become the bearer of Adam’s seed (Gen 3:15).

Therefore the Ark became a visual representation of God’s word and the perfect symbol of a mother’s womb protecting and nurturing the nation of Israel. There would be only one heartbeat within the sanctuary of God’s holiness, and that pulse would beat within the Ark.

The Ark of the Covenant was a depository for the Ten Commandments—factual sermons, and subsequently Aaron’s budded rod and the gold pot of manna were additions. These were narratives and sermons in themselves symbolizing God’s messages. By inserting the Ark of the Covenant between God and Israel, Moses followed Ancient Near Eastern legal traditions. During the forty-year journey in the wilderness God visibly educated the children of Israel with many art forms, making his messages clear. God was among them enabling the Israelites to understand their need of obedience before God’s holy presence.

For this reason the Ark of the Covenant assumed the statue of a sacred artifact and become a symbol of how the children of Israel approached God. The handling of the Ark was exclusively given to the tribe of Levi, and then only through a prescribed process. Those not of the tribe of Levi or authorized high priest, would die if they touched it. This construction signified God’s Holy presence among his people, and was part of the narrative sacrificial atonement service that was completed once a year.

The Hebrew worshipper, apart from his sacrifices, lived continually beneath the shadow of the darkness of a broken Law, he was often startled by the tremendous note of the trumpet, which threatened judgment for that broken Law—and thus he always lived in a condition of bondage. To what else could the Law bring him? To
convict of sin and to condemn the sinner is its utmost power.\textsuperscript{46}

\textbf{Imperishable Wood}

The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular box complete with transportation poles, demonstrating a God of mobility including symbolism and stability. Constructed from Acacia wood, “a beautiful, dense wood that comes from very fragrant and drought-resistant acacia trees that are indigenous to Africa and Arabia. Its wood is a finely grained orange wood that darkens with age and it is unaffected by insects.”\textsuperscript{47} This native tree to the Sinai desert became the structural foundation of the Ark. Fausset states, “In the thorn of man’s curse appeared the Angel of the covenant to Moses in the burning bush at Horeb, to bless man, and out of this wood was formed the ark of the covenant, the typical source of his blessing.”\textsuperscript{48}

“Make an ark . . . of wood that cannot be eaten by worms, and overlay it with pure gold. And thou shalt place therein the Word of the Law, which is the Covenant that I have written with Mine own fingers, that they may keep My law, the Two Tables of the Covenant.” Now the heavenly and spiritual (original) within it is of divers colours, and the work thereof is marvelous, and it resembleth jasper, and the sparkling stone, and the topaz, and the hyacinthine stone (?), and the crystal, and the light, and it catcheth the eye by force, and it astonisheth the mind and stupefieth it with wonder.\textsuperscript{49}

The Septuagint (LXX) describes acacia wood as an “incorruptible or non-


decaying wood.” Honey taken from the acacia tree remains incorruptible and pure.

Perhaps this imperishable wood was used as a symbol of the everlasting durability of God the Eternal One, holding his laws and covenant with humanity that will never be broken.

The ark in the tabernacle on earth contained the two tables of stone, upon which were inscribed the precepts of the law of God. The ark was merely a receptacle for the tables of the law, and the presence of these divine precepts gave to it its value and sacredness. Within the holy of holies, in the sanctuary in heaven, the divine law is sacredly enshrined—the law that was spoken by God Himself amid the thunders of Sinai and written with his own finger on the tables of stone.50

Israel’s everlasting safety was dependent upon their obedience to God’s law: a law of stone enclosed within the Ark of the Covenant as a reminder that God’s government is based on moral law. “The Ten Commandments and the cult laws of (Exod 34) give no conditions and no suggested penalties. They are strong, dramatic demands made upon the believer with an unstated, but threatening, hint that disobedience will be severely dealt with.”51 He is a just God. According to the Bible, sin is the transgressions of the moral law, and when a sinner approaches the throne of God he stands condemned by the moral law that rests in its foundation. The Israelites also believed that they too stood before the law of God.

The Gold Standard

The Ark of the Covenant was more than a wooden box constructed of Acacia wood, it was overlaid with gold, not just gold but the purest of gold protecting the Ark.


“Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out.”

This ark is a picture of the Messiah, the relationship between the gold (deity) and the wood (humanity). Gold has always been a picture of royalty or kingship. It is one of the items in B’re’shiyt (Gen) Chapter 2 called tov or good. Gold or zahav means shining, or brightness, and Yeshua is declared to be the brightness of HaShem’s glory in Ivrim (Hebrews 1:3). Gold is the mineral of the kings. So we see that this chest is not a combination of various materials but simply two. One is common and one is precious.52

Gold in its natural state is pure and is pliable. Hammer gold long enough and it becomes transparent and reflective, making the acacia wood visible through the pure gold overlay. Jeff Banner in his lecture “The Ark of the Covenant,” suggests that maybe the gold over the Ark was a mirror, as the Hebrew word for overlay is tsaphah. This word is also used for witness or observe—“He rules by his might forever; his eyes observe the nations” (Ps 66:7, Easy to Read Bible). “Is it possible that in overlaying the Ark it was saying; to make it like a mirror to observe you and that is why it is a testimony with us because the High Priest could see himself in it?”53

The Ten Commandments inside the Ark allowed humanity to see whom they were—sinners standing before a Holy God.

Deuteronomy 10:1, (God wrote the Ten Commandments on both sets, but God quarried only set #1, Moses was commanded to quarry set #2.) The first set of tablets, . . . Moses broke in the sight of the people. A Rabbi explained this was done so the people would not worship the stone tablets as they did the Golden Calf. A new set of tablets was then required. Only One who created the world could create miracles within a substance, such as these miraculous letters.54


53Jeff A. Banner, Ark of the Covenant Lecture (OR: Hebrew Research Institute, 2008).

God’s words were encircled, symbolized by the pure gold around the Ark of the Covenant. It could also be viewed as representation of the two characters of Jesus in the form of humanity and deity. The symbolism illustrated in the visual art form—the Ark of the Covenant incorporates worship and proclamation of who God is. “To this admmeasurements of the sacred chest, . . . a crown or projecting rim of gold was entirely to surround the opening of the ark, and to form, as it were a ledge or groove for the reception of the mercy seat, and that so as effectually to conceal the point of contact between the ark and the mercy seat from all-casual observation.”

Ellen White writes, “[The] Ark, which had the appearance of being of the finest gold. Has a border around the top of the ark, was most beautiful work representing crowns.” The crown border around the top of the ark itself was not attached to the cover in any way. The significance of the crown was appropriate signifying the kingship of God representing God’s authority and power over sin.

David Murray writes regarding the tabernacle:

God designed it in such a way that, while it taught much, it also taught that there was much more to learn. The author of Hebrews highlights how the Tabernacle not only revealed God to the Israelites but also created a longing and a hope for an even greater future revelation of God and His way of salvation. Thus, the Tabernacle served the present but also pointed to the future. It pictured truth for the present but also predicted more truth for the future. Wherever the Israelite looked in the Tabernacle, his response would be, “That’s true, but there is a fuller revelation of that truth to come. God has shown the way of salvation, but there is a more glorious manifestation of salvation to come.” The psalmists and the prophets give insight into the thoughts and desires of the spiritual Israelites as they meditate on the Tabernacle. Time and again, they take Tabernacle vocabulary on their lips and use it to express hope that an even greater Tabernacle of God would yet appear. In this way, Messiah—centered faith, hope, and expectation were cultivated. Eventually it was satisfied when “The Word was made flesh and dwelt (literally, ‘tabernacled’) or

---


‘tented’) among us . . . full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Indeed, God reveals far more of Himself through the Tabernacle than through the creation. And, if we trust the “Editor,” our preaching and witnessing would reflect that far more. 57

The authority of God was endorsed through the art form and beauty of the Ark and its lid. The lid (mercy seat), combined with the Ark of the Covenant, together formed one receptacle.

Suppose an Ark with no Mercy-seat: the Law would then be uncovered: there would be nothing to hush its thunderings, nothing to arrest the execution of its righteous sentence. The law expresses God’s righteousness, and demands the death of its violator: “Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them” (Gal. 3:10). Such is the inevitable judgment

pronounced on all sinners by the inexorable sentence of the law.\textsuperscript{58}

The mercy seat—\textit{Kapporeth} \textit{Kapporet} from the root form \textit{kopher} to atone, cover, or ransom. The equivalent Greek word \textit{Hilasterion}—\textit{ηιλαστεριον} meaning “that which makes amendment, or propitiation—for the removal of sins” (Rom 3:25). The name mercy seat originated from Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible into German where he added to the meaning of \textit{Kapporeth} by translating it as a location or ‘seat’ of mercy.

Magnificent works of art were created in the building of the tabernacle using the most luxurious resources. Francis Schaeffer has written, “The tabernacle was to be filled with art work, God simply wanted beauty, beauty has a place in the worship of God. God commanded Moses to fashion a tabernacle in a way which would involve almost every form of representational art that men have ever known.”\textsuperscript{59} “Artistic representations,” Schaeffer notes, “are not constructed precisely to nature. Artistic freedom sought its impetus in nature, yet boldly reserves the right to display its diversity before God.”

The equipping of Bezalel and Oholiab by God in the knowledge of craftsmanship enabled them to perform and complete the tasks in the building of the tabernacle in fine workmanship.

But there is something further to note here. In nature, pomegranates are red, but these pomegranates were to be blue, purple and scarlet. Purple and scarlet could be natural changes in the growth of a pomegranate. But blue isn’t. The implication is that there is freedom to make something which gets its impetus from nature but can


\textsuperscript{59}Schaeffer, \textit{Art and the Bible: Two Essays}, 16.
be different from it and it too can be brought into the presence of God. In other words, art does not need to be ‘photographic’ in the poor sense of photographic!\footnote{Schaeffer, \textit{Art and the Bible: Two Essays}, 12-14.}

The Mercy Seat

The \textit{Kapporeth} was a separate piece of furniture, the only visual representation of God. This visual symbol was an amazing collaborative artifact viewed only once a year.

You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half Cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. You shall make two cherubim of gold—make them of hammered work at the two ends of the Mercy Seat. Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends. The cherubim shall have their wings spread upward, covering the mercy seat with their wings and facing one another; the faces of the cherubim are to be turned toward the mercy seat. You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I will give you. There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel (Exod 25:17-22).

The Mercy seat was positioned over the testimony of God. The Hebrew \textit{Kapporeth ‘al-ha’aron milema’elah} states that the lid is to be positioned directly over the Ark of the Covenant. The overshadowing of the Ark of the Covenant could only come from above. “Yahweh says, I will speak with you from above the \textit{Kapporeth}, from between the two cherubim that are upon the Ark of the Testimony of all that I will give you in commandment for the children of Israel” (Exod 25:22).\footnote{Tanach Torah.} God’s \textit{Shekinah} glory, represented as a pillar of fire by night and cloud by day, was superior to any modern three-dimensional hologram. This visible sublime symbol of divine presence between the two cherubim was more effective than any modern technology.
Guardian Angels

Upon entering the Sanctuary the priests gazed upwards towards the ceiling viewing the beautiful manifestations of the celestial Cherubim with their outstretched wings, similarly to the scene of the heavenly throne room. This would be a sermon in itself to the priests entering the Sanctuary, suggesting the sheltering canopy noted by the Psalmist. “Let me dwell in your tent forever; let me take refuge in the shelter of your wings. Selah” (Ps 61:4). The Cherubim wings stretched out to form a screen above the Mercy Seat although they were attached on the end of the Kapporeth/lid. “The presence of the Cherubim’s revealed the presence of the glory of God. Yet the glory God being revealed springs from the suffering of Christ. The glory of God shone between the Cherubic wings on the Mercy seat.” 62

The artisan’s final masterpiece the Kapporeth, which included gold cherubim sculptures at the ends were forged from the purest of gold. This was a representation of the purest love between God and his people. This art form would have undergone additional refining in the purifying process, removing impurities comparable to a jeweler, in the creation of the finest jewelry.

Two lovely cherubs, one on each end of the ark, stood with their wings outstretched above it, and touching each other above. . . . Their faces were turned toward each other, and they looked downward to the ark, representing the entire angelic host looking with interest at the law of God. Between the cherubim was a golden censer, . . . a cloud of fragrance arose from the incense, looking like smoke of most 1882 beautiful colors . . . before the ark, was exceedingly bright glory it appeared like the throne of God. As the incense ascended to the Father, the excellent glory came from the throne. Light . . . overshadowed the mercy seat, and the train of glory filled the temple.63

63White, Early Writings, 250.
Sages elucidate the Hebrew word *kruv*—cherub, is Aramaic meaning “as a baby,” denoting innocence reflecting the embodiment of pure love. The Jewish scholar Rashi writes concerning Exodus 25:2, “when *Eloheim* spoke to Moses, the voice would come from heaven to the top of the Cover, and from between the Cherubim it would emanate to where Moses stood, in the outer chamber of the Tabernacle.” The quality of God’s voice was clear and audible, more efficient than any microphone technology, allowing Moses to hear clearly what God commanded.

Within the Old Testament, the narrative of YHWH’s name is of consequence. . . . The name ‘Yahweh,’ connected with the phrase *ehyeh asher ehyeh* (‘I am that I am’; Exodus 3:14), is of central importance in Judaism, and ‘Yahwism’ became tantamount to Jewish monotheism. . . . the name ‘YHWH’ as it occurs in the so-called ‘Aaronic blessing’ in (Numbers 6:22–27), the blessing which became the exclusive prerogative of Aaron and the Aaronides, the priests descended from him. . . . The theology of YHWH’s name in Numbers is related to the book of Exodus. . . . ‘The name is attached to the main participants in the religious history of Israel: the tabernacle, . . . and also the people itself. Rather than being an idiom of transcendence, it has become part of the language of identity. The name is called ‘upon the people.’ . . . Gnostic reflections on the name and identity of God. Drawing their inspiration from the book of Exodus, Gnostics designated God ‘The-One-who-is’ (Exodus 3:14). The name of God was not only perceived from an insider’s perspective, but also provoked a reaction from outsiders.  

The representation of the Cherubim at the ends of the atonement cover, turned towards each other and gazing down at the *Kapporeth*, is a pictogram of the heavenly angels looking with reverence to the law of God situated in the Ark of testimony.

When God commanded these works of art to be built, some artist had to make them. There are two sides to art. It is creative, yes but art also involves the technical details of how things are to be made. In Exodus 37:7 we are given something of these technical details “And He made two Cherubim of gold; of beaten work made, he them at the two ends of the Mercy-Seat.” The Cherubim on the ark didn’t suddenly appear out of the sky, somebody had to get his hands dirty, somebody had to work out the technical problems. The very thing that a modern artist wrestles with, these artists had to wrestle with . . . the Cherubim in the Holy of Holies; they

---

64 Van Kooten, *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses*, 9-11.
were Art in the round. There was bas-relief everywhere you looked. And there was also art in the round. “And in the most Holy house he made two cherubim of image work.” (V10).  

The sculpted Cherubim on the ends of the Mercy Seat symbolically point back to the protectors at the entrance to the Garden of Eden, shutting admittance to humanity from God. “So He drove the man out; and at the east of the Garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen 3:24). In the Garden of Eden the Cherubim executed God’s judgment by forbidding fallen humanity, from returning to the garden to eat at the tree of life. At the Mercy Seat they now guarded the way to the life of God, with mercy and justice.  

Rabbi Harav Yitzchak cites in his lecture at Gail Einai Institute that “the cherubim, as well, had to be made according to most exacting instructions, out of one, solid piece of gold. Our Sages say that even the most minute imprecision in the form of the cherubim would render them as idolatry.” The Israelites could not risk constructing the cherubim in any altered state as they had already sinned, excluding them from God’s presence when building the golden calf. The Ark was instead a way back to the one true God who would live among them. Therefore the dwelling place for I AM, must be perfect. “There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim, which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel” (Exod 25:22).  

65 Schaeffer, Art and the Bible, 24-25.  
A Timeless Throne

In Exodus 40:34-35 the Shekinah glory descended over the Kapporeth in the Holy of Holies as Yahweh procured his earthly throne. The earthly Sanctuary was a copy of the Heavenly; “For the Messiah did not go into a sanctuary made by human hands that is merely a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, to appear now in God’s presence on our behalf” (Heb 9:24 ISV).

A throne is a piece of art that serves a purpose. It declares, it pronounces, it gives commands, it shows authority, seats rulers, princes and kings. The throne also commands law, light, justice, mercy, life, and death. From the beautiful art form of the

Earthly Tabernacle  (not to scale)  Heavenly Temple

Kapporeth—God’s throne over the Ten Commandments and among the Israelites, his authority and laws would be administered in the Holy of Holies. These laws commanded life, death, and mercy. Currently God’s throne is located in heaven and Jesus, our high priest, is at his right side. The Children of Israel could not approach the Ark of the Covenant or the hilasterion (atonement cover) because of their sins. Their sins were judged by the breaking of the Ten Commandments.

The Dramatic scene once a year, of the veil parting as the High Priest silently entered the Holy of Holies transporting the burning incense from the Altar of Incense behind the veil. The thick cloud of incense smoke would protect his eyes from viewing God’s glory. Sprinkling the perfect innocent lamb’s sacrificial blood, a symbolic illustration of ransoming, a covering of his and Israel’s sins, allowing life and freedom from the condemnation of the law. In hushed silence, all waited with anticipation as the people prayed for forgiveness and mercy, a dramatic scene, so tense, as to the outcome. Slowly the High Priest returns once again the veil separates, revealing his service completed, acceptance, forgiveness and mercy is bestowed.

The Ark of the Covenant contained the law of God. The Ten Commandments were kept inside of it as a constant reminder that God’s government is based on moral law. He is a just God. According to the Bible, sin is the transgressions of the moral law, and when a sinner approaches the throne of God he stands condemned by the moral law that rests in its foundation.  

The exposure to the law of God from an uncovered Ark, supplied only a throne of judgment, in which the Children of Israel could not exist. The sacrificial blood on the mercy seat covered the Israelites sins from the continual accusations and was sufficient.

---

The law administered under God’s mercy could no longer testify against the people or accuse them of their sins. The judgment seat, which was once one of Judgment, now becomes a throne of mercy. “Being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed” (Rom 3:24-25).

Jesus final sacrifice of reconciliation was now accomplished. Redemption cost God his Son.

The Israelites connection to their theology through the tabernacle, its furniture, and the rituals all help to paint a visual image of God’s holiness. It is interesting to note that the furniture’s positions form a cross. The symbol where the final sacrifice would be shed.

The inspired parables of the Old Testament (sanctuary) . . . are in fact a series of pictures directly from the hand of God, by which He would teach His children things otherwise all but incomprehensible. These vast and infinite objects He brings before us . . . with the accuracy of one who views them as they are seen and understood by Himself, and in a way in which they may be seen and understood by us. By them does He bring within the range of our capacity definitive view of the details of Christ’s works which perhaps but for these pictures we should never fully, . . . apprehend . . . the most elevated facts, which have taken, place before God Himself, facts which He has himself been the actor. He brings close before us in emblems and presents them to our eyes in a series of pictures. . . . It was Israel’s first “Bible” and it showed them God and His way of salvation in a series of simple, steppingstone pictures. The main question the Israelite asked when looking at the Tabernacle was, “What does this teach me about God?” The Tabernacle, its furniture, and rituals painted theological pictures (Hebrews 8:5; 9:11). These “figures of the true” or “pictures of truth” were God-centered. God recognized that theological truth in sentence form would be very difficult for the Israelites to grasp. So, He gave them theological truth in sensory form. Every touch, sight, sound, smell, and even taste conveyed truth about God’s character. . . . It set forth in picture form the only way of salvation. No Israelite was ever saved by making the Tabernacle, serving in the Tabernacle, or trusting in the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle Never saved anyone. What it pictured did.68

---

68Peck, The Path to the Throne of God, 11.
The Tabernacle expresses in picture form the only way of salvation. All approach and access to God the Father is found only in his Son Jesus. God the Father, alone is the only one who can forgive sin. This is only made possible through Jesus and his shed blood.

According to Midrash, . . . truth centers on sacrificial love and mercy. The sacrificial blood sprinkled on the Kapporet—representing the innocent taking the place of the guilty—“side steps” the issue by removing the curse of the law from the guilty (cp. Gal. 3:13). This is the “deeper magic” of the Sacrifice upon the stone table, as C. S. Lewis portrays it in the Chronicles of Narnia. The Kapporet therefore foreshadows the cross of Yeshua, and his shed blood is the means whereby a Holy God can righteously forgive our sin just as the sins of the nation were atoned for by the sprinkling of the blood on the Kapporet, so the shedding of Yeshua’s blood atones for the sins of the entire world.  

Visualization in symbolism and art is displayed through the tabernacle, presenting the plan of salvation pointing to the Messiah and what he would do for his people. God proclaimed his holiness through art, making his message more memorable. The blood sprinkled on the Kapporeth would forever be an imagery of sin’s condemnation by the law, now covered by innocent blood and God’s mercy and forgiveness.

Old Testament believers were helped to pray by the symbolism and imagery of the golden altar (Ps. 141:2). . . the Messiah will be our golden lid, our blood-spattered golden lid, our mercy-seat. He will not only cover God’s demands upon sinners but also satisfy them. In Him will meet the most contrary forces: law and mercy, righteousness and peace, God and sinners.  

Throughout the New Testament, there are revelations of divine truths in all aspects of the tabernacle. The symbolism of each sanctuary component divulges a


message. Separation of God and humanity caused by sin; the price for sin; acknowledgement of sin; deliverance from sin; genuine worship; the necessity of a high priest; prayer; and sanctification; etc. . . . Symbolizing the everlasting covenant between God and his people.

Another great visual, is the gut wrenching drama of the adulterous woman who with her sins, laid them upon the Lamb of God—Jesus whose sinless blood covered them at the mercy seat. Who could forget the silence of the performance as the audience waited in anticipation for Jesus answer? “Go and sin no more.”

From the Holy of Holies, every piece of furniture, every act of service points to Jesus. “He was led like a lamb to the slaughter . . . and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa 53:7, 6 NIV). Through the sacrifice of his son God showed the magnitude of sin, the horror, depravity, and degree of separation between humanity and God in the breaking of the Ten Commandments. The sacrifice of God’s Son on the cross became necessary to resolve the problem of sin showing the depth of his love for humanity.

Christ’s blood is the basis of the New Covenant. “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Luke 22:20 NIV). The symbolic pouring of the wine in the cup represented the blood of Christ that would be poured out for humanity ending the Old Testament requirement of animal sacrifice.

God had to show that sinning was not just a little thing. That it took death and pain and life. It was not something trivial. The horror and the agony of it all had to be felt and observed so that the sinner would never want to do it again. By having visual symbols, the Israelites could see visually and more clearly the plan of Salvation. All of
this pain was alleviated by one thing, love. The love of a father for his children—God for us. The punishment for sin would not be a permanent separation but instead, Father gave Son, Son gave life, Son’s life paid for death, death finally gave eternal life, eternal life restored back, eternal life once again with the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Humanity started at the tree of life and now will finally return to the tree of life.

The Ark of the Covenant, the Mercy Seat and the Law of God all point to the character of God—a God who offered attainment for the sins of humanity. The artistic beauty, importance, and central prominence of the tabernacle in Jewish and Christian worship continues to inspire and fill hearts with wonder. See Amendment 1 – “Eternal Grace DVD.”

**Psalms**

Poetic Licence in Preaching

Poetry is the language of God and the Psalms are his heavenly whispers. Many prefer to study and preach God’s word as if it were a scholarly textbook, yet the writings of the Psalmist are layered with deep meaning, calling to us in song and melody. The Apostle Paul reminds us that we are God’s “poema,” “created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them” (Eph 2:10). In the same way the sky is simultaneously blue, orange, red, pink, or purple. Similarly, God’s songs of praise change pitch and tone as his Spirit moves within the preacher. In stanzas God is praised; in triplets his promises are claimed. Through verse the preacher repeats the prayers of others and relays the silent yearnings welling up within each person as hymns of sorrow and joy. Kings and shepherds alike find their voice in lilt and poetry. Psalms speaks a divine language, calling back to the one who crafted us in
his image. King David, through music, songs, and poetry, gives an example of such art. Hebrew poetry is a known genre to the writers of the Jewish scriptures and provided comfort for God’s people. The original Hebrew translation for Psalms, Tehillim—praises. Praise for who God is. Praise for what he has done. Praise for deliverance yet to come, showing the artistic mediums in this portion of the Bible.

David understood the need to praise his maker. Ordained by God and called to be a king, David toiled in the fields as a shepherd. Though he slay giants, the promise of power and prestige eluded him. With the melancholy words of a singer David poured out his heart: a heart burdened with sorrow. His reward was kinship with God. “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart” (Acts 13:22). David shows the beauty of poetry, giving life and picture words to his feelings illustrating his intimate love for God. The well-known poet knew not only the beauty of poetry but he was also known as a musician. The musical instruments of the harp, lyre, lute, cymbals, trumpet, timbrel, and horn that could project his soul’s deepest gratitude and fears toward the throne of God. David’s response to life was portrayed in poetry and song rejoicing in both sadness and joy.

It is much more enriching when one can sort out the instruments as they come in and go out, and as they join together to reproduce the beautiful music the composer intended. The book of Psalms is a diversified collection of sacred poems … anthology of prayers, worship songs, . . . sung and spoken in public and private worship. . . . The book closes with a summons to praise the Lord with musical instruments (Psalms 150). Using this metaphor to analyze Hebrew poetry, as the heart of the orchestra is strings, so the heart of Hebrew poetry is a device called parallelism.”

71C. Hassell Bullock, Encountering the Book of the Psalms (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2008), 36.
The range of the human heart is reflected in the words of the Psalmist. Through the Psalms we visualize the heavenly realm and feel the rush of God’s Spirit swelling within us. The book of Psalms reveals an intimate relationship between God and his people.

The Hebrew poetry of the Bible is not like English poetry. We talk about stanzas and poetic lines, but the lines do not rhyme, and the stanzas are not like those of modern hymns. Instead of thinking of poetic lines that have rhyming words at the end, a line of poetry from the Psalms usually has two or three main segments. . . . A good reading strategy is to treat each poetic line, bicolon or tricolon, as a package and reflection on how the parts work together to say an idea and give it nuances.72

History reveals that the book of Psalms has inspired numerous people. It contains some of the most beautiful poetry ever written. There are poems of joy and mourning, rejoicing and singing, love and praise, all dealing with the human heart. The Psalms also allows a person to visualize the heavenly realm and experience a loving God. The book of Psalms is a revelation of intimate poems and songs from the human experience to the joys of knowing who God is. There are various classifications in Psalms; one of those subtitles is with the subscriptions “for the director of music.” Some of these Psalms include Psalms 4, 6, 55, and 76. These Psalms are to be accompanied with instruments.

Psalms 23

Perhaps the best-known and loved Psalm is the 23rd Psalm. Though written by a young shepherd boy during a time of crisis, this poem shows the range of poetry and how the Psalms transcend time. “It is a love song. It is a song of hope. It is an intimate

song expressing so well the trust David held for his God—YAHVEH. Unlike many of the Psalm manuscripts which may have been sung by a male vocal ensemble and accompanied by multiple lyres and harps, the feel of Psalm 23 is that of a solo composition, accompanied by a sparse and simple accompaniment.”

Psalm 23 is an excellent illustration of poetry and imagery, which extends from David’s experience and understanding as a shepherd, pointing to Jesus who said he is the good shepherd.

The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup overflows. Surely goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life, And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever (Ps 23).

Psalms 23 is David’s opus—his legacy, for all who hurt and live in fear of death. This compelling psalm is preached by Preachers, spoken as a night-time prayer, read to the dying, and quoted at funerals. It is a meditation to the grieving, and recited when fearful. There is something inherently comforting in the words found in the 23rd Psalm. It speaks to a very deep need—and the fact that this psalm is a poignant word-picture of a shepherd with his flock—is foundational to its power. David’s praise of God’s attentiveness and protection arose from his experience in the fields and pastures. Other Psalms demonstrate how David’s “day job” provided inspiration for his prayers and how God helped David’s daily struggles (Ps 28:9; 74:1; 78:52; 80:1). Drawing upon his daily work David writes, “We are His people and the sheep of His pasture, Psalms 100:3.” Alastair MacKay notes, “The responsibility of a shepherd towards his flock, and

the natural habits of sheep, are two similes used time and again throughout the Bible to typify the relationship between God and man.”

Psalm 23 is David’s Hymn of Praise to God’s attentiveness and demonstrates the position of God in the dedicated person’s life. “From the relationship of a shepherd and sheep have come some of the most effective metaphors and touching expressions of the Bible.”

Comparing the Lord as a shepherd, David emphasizes the care and direction God provides to all. David is fully aware of the responsibilities and burdens placed upon a good shepherd. He observes that the Lord is his shepherd, and declares God to be good, watchful, and caring. This Good Shepherd leads his people on the right paths, away from trouble and toward streams of refreshment and rest. “Although the likening of God or a ruler to a shepherd is a commonplace in this pastoral culture, this psalm is justly famous for the affecting simplicity and concreteness with which it realizes the metaphor.”

David, both a shepherd and a wander, recounts the caring ways God brought him back—at times with a holy staff, other times a shepherd’s crook.

Through the watchfulness of the shepherd another aspect is the Lord’s care. He becomes our trusted guide. “He leads me beside the still waters. . . . He leads me in the paths of righteousness… (Ps 23:2-3).” God is able to skillfully pick the best path through dangerous terrain and deliver his sheep safely to the other side. “People turn to poems for some kind of illumination, for revelations that help them to survive. The


This brings out another aspect of the Lord’s care for us. Besides protector, Psalm 23 highlights God’s attributes as a trusted guide. As David says, “He leads me beside the still waters. . . . He leads me in the paths of righteousness.” Yet we seldom invoke the Twenty-third Psalm when we are merely perplexed or seeking direction; almost invariably, we read or quote its reassuring words when danger is near or the darkness in an unknown path is fraught with perilous uncertainty. This is why this psalm is read to those who are dying, walking through “the valley of the shadow of death”—because we know that God “will be our guide, even unto death” (Ps 48:14). God is our guide who skillfully picks the best path through danger and the unknown and is there to protect us the whole time.

The presence of the Good Shepherd’s rod comforts us, too. This club, fitted with sharp pieces of metal and used to ward off prey, symbolizes God’s might over our enemies.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!” For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper And from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, Or of the arrow that flies by day; Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, But it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the LORD, my refuge, Even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, Nor will any plague come near your tent (Ps 91:1-10).

The persistent imagery in Psalm 23 is that God is able to protect us from evil.

---

We can trust God’s mighty hand he will drive away our enemies and shield us from the evil one. Even when we walk through “the valley of the shadow of death” we will fear no evil because we know the Good Shepherd cares for us. His staff comforts us. He will use it to climb down into ravines and to rescue us when we have gone astray. “What do you think?” Jesus asks. “If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?”(Matt 18:12).

Other Bible passages parallel and enlarge upon this theme of a powerful, strong shepherd, tender towards us but fierce toward our enemies. “Behold, the LORD GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him. Behold, His reward is with Him And His recompense before Him. Like a shepherd: He will tend His flock, In His arm He will gather the lambs and carry *them* in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing *ewes*” (Isa 40:10-11, emphasis added). Yet despite the heart-tugging beauty of Isaiah’s metaphor, it is Psalm 23 that, because of its sustained imagery, comes to our minds and lips when we feel danger closing in on us.

Harold S. Kushner addresses its deep appeal when he states: “Is the universe a friendly place, supportive of human hopes and aspirations? The Twenty-third Psalm, with its image of the Lord as our shepherd, responds to that concern. It gives us an answer, not in theological language but in beautifully crafted words and skillfully chosen images.”\(^7\) Or as Robert Alter notes, “Although the likening of God or a ruler to a shepherd is a commonplace in this pastoral culture, this psalm is justly famous for the

affecting simplicity and concreteness with which it realizes the metaphor.”

The dominant concept is that of God as guide and protector through the vicissitudes of life.

The fact that “skillfully chosen images” can become so vivid and real and indeed create a metaphor to be used in such a graphic way speaks to the power of poetic words and paints pictures on the canvas of our minds. Relying solely on facial expressions and gestures, a skilful poet can captivate an audience without props. In fact, when the lights are turned down and the auditorium dark, the power of our imagination allows us to clearly “see” in darkness what we cannot understand in light. Ancient storytellers used this principle to paint rich word-pictures around the dying embers of a fire-pit. Modern radio dramas rely on the spoken word to project an imagined reality. Even the words of a novelist must engage the reader’s imagination or else the story remains dull. This is the power of poetic license in preaching.

The verb *hirbits* is used by David, “He makes me to lie down.” Robert Alter writes, “This is a specialized one for making animals lie down; hence the sheep-shepherd metaphor is carefully sustained.” “He leads me,” describes how “an Eastern shepherd goes before his flock,” not trailing behind or watching from afar, as though inattentive. The Good Shepherd leads. He scouts for trouble, startles the jackals and carves a trail where none exists. Accuracy and attention to details gives biblical metaphors authenticity and believability.

---


80 Ibid., 78.

The Psalms are more than stories; they are declarations of praise and a repository of hope and promises. They are songs—songs sung in stanzas and couplets. “Even though the primary mode for this song is the well known ahavah rabbah mode, David introduces different modes and melodies to create emotion and variation as the song progresses. There is even a little blues-thing happening in measures 28 and 29. Psalm 23 is a textbook example of a well-written song from both a melodic and lyric standpoint.”

![Related historical mode - Ahavah Rabboh Mode (ahaba rabba)](http://musicofthebible.com/psalm023.htm)


Regarding the centering line, James Howell explains, “Here is a fascinating item: James Limburg points out that, in the original Hebrew of Psalm 23, there are exactly twenty-six words before and after, ‘Thou art with me’. Perhaps the poet was boldly declaring that God being with us is at the very center of our lives.”

---

82 One of the predominant modes used within the Psalm manuscripts. A traditional mode common to Eastern European Jewish folk and liturgical music.

83 McCorkle, “The Earthly and Heavenly Tabernacle.”

Psalm 23

Yahveh Is My Shepherd
"I Lack Nothing"

Dennis F. McCorkle

Lead Sheet.

A m  F  E  E add2  E+  A m

mez-moe' lo-divid' Yah-vah' ro' lo teh-shi' ben-

a Melody of David "Yahveh is My Shepherd" - I lack nothing!

Among grass He causes me to lie down,

m man-no choi' yon-he la' ne

over calm waters He leads me

He restores my being. He guides me in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake

Even when I walk through a valley of dark shadow,

I will not fear evil for You are with me,

Copyright © 2007 by Dennis F. McCorkle

5/3/2009 - 3:46 AM
Figure 13. Music of the Bible. McCorkle, “The Earthly and Heavenly Tabernacle.”
phrase was placed in the precise center of the psalm—whether intentional or not—in deliberate adherence to an established and effective art form.

Form and Structure

The Psalms are not only the inspired Word of God, but also a highly structured art form, one that the writers of the Jewish scriptures knew well. King David’s poetry gives life to words, illustrating how intimate God’s love is for us. As a result, David’s passion for God is seen in the rhythm and balance, providing some of the most beautiful Hebrew poetry written.

D. Guthrie points out how Psalm 23 achieves a visual balance as well: “This poem owes much of its charm to the skillful blending of contrasted imagery which covers the major aspects of human life, viz. peace (v. 2) and peril (v. 4b); the possibility of evil (v. 4b) and the prospect of good (v. 5); times of invigoration of soul (v. 3a) and times of ominous gloom (v. 4a).”

Another example of this highly structured pattern is found in Psalm 119, the longest of all Psalms. This acrostic poem has sets of six to eight verses grouped under a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet. From “aleph” to “taw,” each verse in the group begins with that same letter. Further, each of the six-eight verses contains a variation of a word describing God’s law, word, precept, ordinance, decree, statute, command, and promise.

The alphabet acrostic form, especially one as elaborate as this, may appear arbitrary and artificial to a modern reader (as if the author merely selected a traditional form from the poet’s workshop and then laboured to fill it with pious sentences), but a sympathetic and reflective reading of this devotional will compel a more favourable

---

judgment. The author had a theme that filled his soul. . . . Nothing less than the use of the full power of language would suffice and of that the alphabet was a most apt symbol.\footnote{Kenneth Barker, gen. ed. \textit{The NIV Study Bible} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985), 914.}

What is the end result of this combination of inspired worship and skillful art in the Psalms—particularly in Psalm 23? It leads to the same attitude of trusting, loving and worshiping God that filled David’s heart when he was inspired to write this psalm. The modern artist, Thomas Kinkade, is famous for creating landscape paintings that exemplify stillness, peace, and safety—much like the green meadows and still waters that David describes. “In the end, after years of painting and reflection on the meaning of my work, I’ve concluded that art is akin to worship. It is the highest form of human expression, a form of prayer.”\footnote{Thomas Kinkade, \textit{The Art of Creative Living} (New York: Warner Faith, 2005), 242.}

David’s passionate expression of love for God, allowed him to rise beyond his legacy of warrior and king and become a writer after God’s own heart. David wrote the twenty third Psalm in the spirit of worship and prayer. Similarly, when a preacher preaches the Psalms, he or she is not simply repeating well-worn words, but allowing the audience to have an experiential moment as the words envelope their intellects, allowing the audience to meditate on the Lord as their Shepherd. Their shepherd—at that moment as the preacher speaks in the midst of their present needs within the walls of the church.

It strikes a positive note. It is not beseeching God to be something or to do something. It is a stating positively that He is and does all that is required by man. The writer does not say, “O Lord, be my Shepherd! Make me to lie down in green pastures; lead me beside the still waters.” He is asserting these very things and
glorying in them? Ps 23 is the psalm of trust par excellence. The psalmist has rested his whole life in the loving care of the divine shepherd.88

For a people living in an agrarian culture among rural settings, David’s descriptive poems struck a familiar chord. Even today in this postmodern culture his words ring true, drawing beauty to their cadence. Though the world changes, the hearts of men and women still respond to the poetic rush of meaning infused with soul.

Jesus, The Good Shepherd

Building upon this theme of the Good Shepherd, Jesus takes on the protective nature. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down this life for the sheep.” In this way, Jesus elevates the meaning of the 23rd Psalm and offers us salvation, not from the valley of death, but death itself. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28).

The Psalms are not only the inspired Word of God, but also highly structured poetry. “There are four main images in the Psalms, in verses 1-3 the Lord is pictured as a shepherd providing safe pasture and water for his sheep. In verse 4 the setting is danger, but the shepherd still protects. In verse 5 the Lord provides bounty with enemies around. In the final picture, goodness is personified as chasing down the psalmist.89

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Dwell without a veil—rest within the shadow of God’s throne. The location of the 23rd Psalm in relation to the

88Bullock, Encountering the Book of Psalms, 172.

89Webster and Beach, The Essential Bible Companion to the Psalms, 59.
others carries additional meaning for this poem as it comes after a song of despair and desertion. “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?”

Amendment B, “If Only-Psalms 22” CD

Like two bookends we see the solitude of the shepherd growing in his role as guarding of the sheep; in the other we see the shepherd an accomplished savior.

With the words of this psalm, Jesus embraces pain and suffering, shame and loss, sadness and abandonment with wide-open eyes of faith; he changes his dialogue and his gaze from horizontal to vertical. And by so doing, he binds his loss to God’s promises and transforms his suffering from preposterous waste to a paradoxical wonder—a prerequisite or glory.”

By combing these two Psalms, (23 is a postscript to 22), the preacher allows the audience to comprehend the shedding of blood as the final atoning sacrifice, in contrast to the Shepherds care. To save his sheep the shepherd must be willing to die. David exhibits in his Psalms the importance of a personal relationship with God, regardless of the severity of circumstances.

In the Greek New Testament . . . lists a few more than four hundred quotations from the Book of Psalms. The Gospels made extensive use of the Psalms to disclose Jesus’ identity. . . . Jesus generally used phrases or brief quotes that would require the hearer to make the connection. For example, he gave the lesson about the good tree that bears good fruit and concluded that it was not the person who said, “Lord, Lord,” who would enter the Kingdom, but the one who did the will of his Father. To wrap up the lesson, he quoted from Palms 6:8, “Away from me you evildoers” (Mt 7:23/Lk 13:27). At other times Jesus was more direct. He closed the parable of the vineyard with a quotation of Psalm 118:22-23, applying it to himself as a prophetic prediction: What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. Haven’t you read this scripture: “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this and it is marvellous in our eyes.” (MK/12:9-11/Mt 21:42/LK 20:17). The apostle Paul makes extensive use of the Psalms to show that the gospel was not a novelty in history, for it already existed in the Old Testament form. . . . John Calvin a new trend in Psalm usage takes effect, the singing of metrical Psalms. Calvin insisted there could be no better instrument for the praise of God than the Psalms. . . . The tradition

90Webster and Beach, The Essential Bible Companion to the Psalms, 58.
of Psalm singing has continued in the United States, the Christian reformed Church published a new edition of the *Psalter Hymnal* in 1987, . . . the Psalms will enrich our spiritual life . . . . Through those windows we will see the hues of a new landscape where our help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. . . . A summary of the power and use of the Psalms in Christian and Jewish worship and personal piety during the centuries of this era . . . suggests the potency of the Psalms in both worship traditions. The Christian experience, . . . that no book of the Bible has been more influential in shaping the worship and piety of the Church. . . . The Reformed . . . perceptively seized upon the power of the Psalter and thrust it forward as its book of prayer and praise . . . . hopefully, the modern generation of Christians is rediscovering this powerful instrument of worship.\textsuperscript{91}

The word-pictures are even more real in the original Hebrew than in our best English translations. “If anyone ever doubted the power of poetry and metaphor to express the most profound spiritual truths, they surely would be convinced in reading Psalm 23.”\textsuperscript{92} Psalm 23 is a prime example of a powerful use of art forms. Therefore an animated preacher relaying a psalm from the podium can also show the same result.

Poetic License

The main theme of this section is to show that poetry and songs found in Psalms have been effective art forms in understanding Biblical messages. It is clear: David declares that God will never leave or forsake his sheep even in terrifying, stressful, and horrific circumstances, even when going through the valley of despair, and especially when facing death. God walks besides his sheep daily and liberally provides. Psalm 23 encapsulates humanities greatest needs and the preacher needs to be able to deliver this message for their audience to understand that they need to turn to God for protection, for succor and for healing. If the preacher can encourage their congregation to artistically

\textsuperscript{91}Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 89, 90, 94, 97, 98.

hear and visualize David’s poetry they will be more readily able to recall these messages of hope leaving a lasting impression.

David praised God on instruments. He danced and wrote psalms. He did not limit the creative means in which he could articulate his adoration for God. David the artist revealed the need for a savior, a shepherd who would deliver his people safely into the arms of a deeply personal God. The congregation strains to hear the voice of God in the consoling word paintings in storytelling and poetry of the preacher. Like David, the artistic preacher can convey God’s creative spirit through art forms and technology in ways that allow modern audiences to find solace for their worries and hope in the midst of their fears. The message is that God goes with us through the valleys, leads us to pastures of rest, and protects us from evil. As his workmanship we too become his “poema” A masterpiece.

**Ezekiel**

Priest, Prophet, Mimes, and Street Theater

Most Hebrew prophets were instructed to speak prophecies or tell parables to convey God’s message to their people. What are we to make of a mute prophet? How are we to react when God commands his mouthpiece to remain silent? Can hearts change if God delivers his message through silent gestures, crude theatrics, and overt demonstrations of disgust?

Ezekiel performed strange pantomimes utilizing a wide range of props and accessories. When God called Ezekiel to speak a word of warning to the people of Jerusalem he instructed the prophet to remain silent—as God would be following the destruction of his Holy city. The time for a gifted orator had passed. Ezekiel was the
Marcel Marceau of the Babylonian captivity, and like Marceau, was determined to convey a message though the “art of silence” (L’arte du silence).93 “We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature—trees, flowers, grass—grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch souls”94—Mother Teresa.

The people of a walled city had “shut” their ears to God’s voice. They would not repent from their sin nor listen to God’s words of warning. Only after the act was done, would Ezekiel explain. “While seeing, they may see and not perceive,” Christ quoted Isaiah years later, “and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven” (Mark 4:12).

The pronouncement of judgment, both then and during the time of Christ, illustrates the gravity of Israel’s sin.

For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, but to the house of Israel, nor too many peoples of unintelligible speech or difficult language, whose words you cannot understand. But I have sent you to them who should listen to you; yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me. Surely the whole house of Israel is stubborn and obstinate (Ezekiel 3:5-7).

Deaf to his voice and void of his spirit, God called upon a priest to perform in an offensive manner, bringing street drama and bold hysterics to the public square. Many of the prophets were gifted actors,” writes Christopher J. H. Wright.

In today’s world they would have been exponents of physical theatre, exploiting the potential of gesture and mime, even elements of burlesque and clowning. And all this was in addition to the amazing tool-kit of rhetorical techniques and verbal imagery they could draw on. None of them however, was called upon to use visual

---


94 Mother Teresa, Albanian Roman Catholic Missionary in India, born 1910.
Ezekiel was the consummate theatrical artist. His exaggerated performances left audiences thoroughly entertained—even if they often misinterpreted the message of his performance. As the nation of Israel slid toward debauchery God asked his prophet to once again use his thespian talents to prick the calloused hearts of a disobedient people.

I did so, as I had been commanded. By day I brought out my baggage like the baggage of an exile. Then in the evening I dug through the wall with my hands; I went out in the dark and carried the baggage on my shoulder in their sight. In the morning the word of the LORD came to me, saying, “Son of man, has not the house of Israel, the rebellious house, said to you, ‘What are you doing?’” Say to them, “Thus says the Lord GOD, ‘This burden concerns the prince in Jerusalem as well as all the house of Israel who are in it.’” Say, “I am a sign to you. As I have done, so it will be done to them; they will go into exile, into captivity” (Ezek 12:7-11).

Symbolism in Art

Ezekiel’s dramatic demonstration continued a theme of public performances in the manner of Amos and Jeremiah. They too shared their message through props and staged performances, all-be-it with less subtly. For these two prophets it was an almond tree ripe for harvest, cooking pot steaming with broth, or baskets of fruit, each element fulfilled its role as a symbol of God’s blessings or judgment. Perhaps the best-known examples of a stage props is Jeremiah’s clay jar and its destruction before Jewish elders. “Then you are to break the jar in the sight of the men who accompany you and say to them, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts. Just so will I break this people and this city, even as one breaks a potter’s vessel, which cannot again be repaired’” (Jer 19:10-11).

“Ezekiel himself, is perhaps the most intellectual of the prophets, a considerable poet,

and a prose artist adept at manipulating establish oral and literary genre to novel effect. Yet the behaviors the Lord mandates for him—the circumstances of his prophesying and the signs he is commanded to perform—are bizarre and humbling in the extreme.”

God’s prophetic words included the uses of visualization, symbolism and action in communicating prophetically in the life of Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. The use of Symbols spoken by God such as: Jeremiah directed to an almond tree “What do you see, Jeremiah?” (Jer 1:11); Amos and the ripe basket of fruit, “God showed me, and behold, there was a basket of summer fruit” (Amos 8:1); Ezekiel a cooking pot “put on the pot, put it on” (Ezek 24:3); and Jeremiah’s breaking of the clay jar in the presence of the Israelite elders are a few of many recorded in the Bible. These prophets were God's representatives and the prominence was upon the messages given. These messages periodically generated by illustrations involving natural surroundings.

God’s reasoning in employing Ezekiel for the intended use of these arts is: it got his message across to a people who were no longer willing to listen to plain words spoken to them in Hebrew. As God voiced to Ezekiel when he called him as a prophet, “For you are not being sent to a people of unintelligible speech or difficult language, but to the house of Israel. . . . Yet the house of Israel will not be willing to listen to you, since they are not willing to listen to Me” (Ezek 3:5, 7). God’s only option was to use silent drama and art to embed a picture firmly lodged into peoples’ minds. Alexander Jones argues that Ezekiel employed “a mixed media production involving illustration, 

---

pantomime, miniature war models, and a theatrical cooking show designed to shock.”

Scene One: A Mini-City Under Siege

As the first scene of this street sermon unfolds, the people of Jerusalem find Ezekiel constructing a mini-Jerusalem: complete with siege ramp, battering rams, and tent camps. For blueprints, he used an unbaked brick. On the soft clay he sketched a map of the city. “Now you son of man, get yourself a brick, place it before you and inscribe a city on it, Jerusalem. Then lay siege against it, build a siege wall, raise up a ramp, pitch camps and place battering rams against it all around” (Ezek 4:1-2).

Each day the people gathered to watch, but the progression of the performance lagged. For 390 days Ezekiel lay on his left side, the days denoting the number of years of Israel’s sin. “Lie down on your left side and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel on it; you shall bear their iniquity for the number of days that you lie on it” (Ezek 4:4). At the end of the 390 days Ezekiel rolled onto his right side indicating the gravity of Judah’s sin. “When you have completed these, you shall lie down a second time, but on your right side and bear the iniquity of the house of Judah; I have assigned it to you for forty days, a day for each year” (v. 4).

Any person passing by would soon have their attention seized in viewing a serious priest engrossed with creating what at first, seemed to be a children’s play set. The knowledge of Ezekiel’s meticulous personality would appear to present him as being a perfectionist, this then would suggest that when he made his models, Ezekiel

would have most likely constructed his models with intricate detail making them realistic.

Ezekiel was told to put the sin of the house of Israel upon his side as he lay there, and thus to bear their sin. The vocabulary calls the Day of Atonement when the high priest “placed” all the sins of the people on the head of the scapegoat, which then “carried” them off into the wilderness (Lev 16:20-22). . . . He is simply to lie there bearing its weight, suffering under it . . . He will not suffer instead of or on behalf of the rest of the people, but rather it is a symbolic or representative identification with their sin.  

God’s message of the impending siege was clearly meant to awaken those who prophesied that God would return his people and destroy their enemies. The message: “a sign to the house of Israel.” The Hebrew word oth translated “sign” can also be translated “ensign” — a military flag — again describing God’s use of simple, eye-catching art. Certainly God had helped his people in years past but now their sin was too great. “The first wave of exiles . . . regarded their captivity as temporary. They expected the imminent defeat of the young neo-Babylonian Empire, and their consequent return to Judah along with the captured Temple vessels.”

The exiles in Babylon believed God would soon return them to Jerusalem, even though the prophet Jeremiah emphatically warned this was not to be the case.

Ezekiel lying on the ground for 430 days with his silent theatrics, continued

---


99 Robert Young, *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1984), Index, 33.

month after month. Those viewing his mime—a living sermon would not have soon forgotten it.

For thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, and concerning all the people who dwell in this city, your brothers who did not go with you into exile—thus says the LORD of hosts, “Behold, I am sending upon them the sword, famine and pestilence, and I will make them like split-open figs that cannot be eaten due to rotteness. I will pursue them with the sword, with famine and with pestilence; and I will make them a terror to all the kingdoms of the earth, to be a curse and a horror and a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them” (Jer 29:16-18).

The Jews were not listening to God’s spoken word and refused to believe his written word, so God resorted to other resources to penetrate their minds with his message. Ezekiel’s elaborate depiction of Jerusalem’s impending destruction and his eccentric actions emphasized that God’s judgment on his people was far from complete.

There exists a debate as to whether Ezekiel merely narrated the sign of laying on his left and right sides or whether he actually performed the action (or lack thereof). Such sign actions exist in the scriptures from the earliest periods through the post-exilic period. One of the earliest accounts of a sign-action is that of God’s leading Abraham outside to try to count the stars in order to indicate to him the large number of his descendants (Gen.15:5). Later Ahijah of Shiloh takes the new cloak he is wearing and tears it into 12 pieces and tells Jeroboam to take 10 of the pieces indicating the breakaway kingdom of Israel that would consist of 10 of the original 12 tribes (1st Kings 11:29-31). Later prophets such as Hoshea also perform actions that are prophetic signs such as his marrying the harlot (Hoshea chap. 1). After the Babylonian exile the prophet Zechariah is told to place a crown on the head of Josh the son of Jehozadak, the high priest to indicate the uniting of the priesthood and royal line (Zech 6:11-13).10F

Ezekiel’s elaborate models and eccentric actions emphasized that a siege was

certain and fixed the event indelibly in their mind’s eye. “His simple announcements having failed, he is symbolically to give them an ocular demonstration conveyed by a word-painting of actions performed in vision.”  


To represent the wall of separation between God and his people, Ezekiel placed an iron plate between his face and the walls of Jerusalem. This griddle was a kind of cooking utensil used by priests to prepare offerings in the temple. Kenneth Barker notes the iron also symbolized “the unbreakable strength of the siege.”  


103 Barker, The NIV Study Bible.
an iron plate and set it up as an iron wall between you and the city, and set your face toward it so that it is under siege, and besiege it” (Ezek 4:3). This was a visual and odiferous parable.

That the “accomplishment (of the sign-action) is essential to a true sign-action. . . . A sign-action which was not actually performed but only narrated must be regarded as a late and weakened form” (Zimmerli p. 156). Clearly the text implies (as Ralph Klein noted, p. 41) that Ezekiel had an audience that observed his actions. If Ezekiel merely told the audience what God had instructed him, and did not actually carry out the instructions, the force of his message would be greatly weakened which is exactly opposite the desired effect. The author of this passage wants the reader to believe that Ezekiel did indeed carry out the actions that comprised the sign.¹⁰⁴

Act Two: A Future Famine

God commanded Ezekiel to restrict his diet to vegetables. He would cook three grains (barley, wheat, and spelt) and two vegetables (lentils and beans). Afterwards he was to grind these ingredients into flour and bake them over an open fire. Ezekiel’s rationed, starvation-portion meals would represent the scarcity of food the inhabitants would find during the siege. To indicate the degree of suffering the people would experience, God added a truly scandalous element to Ezekiel’s cooking spectacle—He would also cook his meals over the flames of dried human feces. “You shall eat it as a barley cake, having baked it in their sight over human dung” (Ezek 4: 12). For a priest this was not only repulsive but a clear violation of his duties, since the laws strictly forbade the touching of unclean things. Using dried human dung for fuel was too much for the kosher prophet.

You shall also have a place outside the camp and go out there, and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn to cover up your excrement. Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you (Deut 23:12-14).

God’s commands to Ezekiel were clear; “The bread was to be baked with loathsome fuel, as a sign of the banishment of Israel to an unclean foreign land. . . . Foreign lands were regarded as unclean in themselves.”105 Therefore the children of God would “eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will banish them” (Ezek 4:13).

Ezekiel pleaded with God to relent. Such graphic theatrics, even for an eccentric performer like Ezekiel, was too much. God yielded, allowing Ezekiel to use cow dung, instead. The shock value was lost, however, since dried cow dung was commonly used as cooking fuel. “Animal dung had two main uses; fuel and for manure. As fuel, it would often be mixed with straw (cf. Isa 25:10) and dried; it was then suitable for heating the simple ‘bread ovens’ of clay or stones used in Palestine.” 106

Scene Three: From Rubble to Stubble

Ezekiel silently followed this script. In scene three he shocked the crowd by shaving his head and beard in the mysterious mime. Shaving, perceived as part of a purification ritual, and Ezekiel’s extreme actions went beyond the customs and tradition of the day. For a Jewish male to shave his head and beard was a sign of humiliation.

105Dummelow, The One Volume Bible Commentary, 495.

The Book of Numbers gives specific commands regarding headdress, hair and beards. Ezekiel’s naked skull, pale white under the glare of the Middle-Eastern sun, would have brought stares and scorn—scorn that the people themselves would experience when they were “cut down” by the Babylonian swords.

As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword; take and use it as a barber’s razor on your head and beard. Then take scales for weighing and divide the hair. One third you shall burn in the fire at the center of the city, when the days of the siege are completed. Then you shall take one third and strike it with the sword all round the city, and one third you shall scatter to the wind; and I will unsheathe a sword behind them. Take also a few in number from them and bind them in the edges of your robes. Take again some of them and throw them into the fire and burn them in the fire (Ezek 5:1-4).

“After wordlessly acting out the symbols, Ezekiel received and probably relayed the divine explanations.”\(^\text{107}\) The clarification was clear: the siege would end when the Babylonian army broke through the wall and took the city. The hair of his head and beard represented the people of Jerusalem, and Ezekiel’s skit predicted that a third of those in Jerusalem would die of plague or famine; another third would attempt to escape but be killed outside the city walls; God would scatter another third to the winds and pursue them with a drawn sword (Ezek 5:8-12). The “small number” of hairs that the prophet bound in his robe were the righteous few whom God would spare—but even these, would endure affliction. Previously, God had stood by his people, forgiving them of their sin. No more. Now their punishment would be seen by all, Jews as well as Gentiles.

Scene Four: Cast Down, Spewed Out

Ezekiel acts out the next mime, the Judgment of Judea, which depicted events

\(^{107}\) Barker, *The NIV Study Bible* 1235.
that would coincide with the taking of the city. The Jerusalem Bible describes it as “the mime of the emigrant.”

For a people delivered from slavery and given a land plowed and tended by other nations, the nation of Israel expressed little gratitude toward God. Worse, they had become like the people they had displaced. “Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods; I am the LORD your God” (Lev 19:4). The people had defiled the land and the temple. God had promised to bless them if they obeyed his commands. Instead they failed to keep his covenant. As promised the land would “spew out its inhabitants” (Lev 18:25).

Ezekiel is instructed by God to perform a bizarre pantomime in the event that this would increase their attention: “Therefore, son of man, prepare for yourself baggage for exile and go into exile by day in their sight; even go into exile from your place to another place in their sight. Perhaps they will understand though they are a rebellious house” (Ezek 12:3).

God describes the street theater he wants Ezekiel to perform. Ezekiel builds a small house comprised from sun-dried clay bricks. In the center of one wall he carved a small hole. Carrying his possessions through the opening he hastily tossed them into the street. Hearing the noise, his neighbors left their houses and congregated watching the spectacle. Reaching twilight as the curtains came down, on this drama, with the last of Ezekiel’s audience viewing him, he bundled his belongings, blindfolded himself and stumbled about, carrying his belongings upon his shoulders, and strolls “offstage” into the gathering gloom, depicting how King Zedekiah would be led away from the city. Ezekiel’s meager belongings suggested that those who went into exile would carry little

---

108 Jones, The Jerusalem Bible, 1371.
with them. “This new symbolic action, mimed in dumb-show, foretells the approaching deportation of the population of Jerusalem.”

Ezekiel divulges that he had been playing the part of the King of Jerusalem, King Zedekiah in the drama—in fact; he had represented everyone in Jerusalem. Blindfolded and bumbling his way down city streets, was a chillingly prophetic message and vivid in its accuracy. The Babylonians broke through the wall of Jerusalem, King Zedekiah and his men attempted to escape by digging through the city wall. He was captured and the Babylonians “put out the eyes of Zedekiah and bound him with bronze fetters and brought him to Babylon” (1 Kgs 25:7). Ezekiel calls to the people on behalf of God, warning, “Say, ‘I am a sign to you as I have done, so it will be done to them; they will go into exile, into captivity’” (Ezek 12:11).

After the fall of the city, the once-mighty king of Judah now blind, along with the people, carrying their few belongings on their shoulders were marched off to relocate in Babylon.

The Bible does not record the exiles’ immediate reaction to Ezekiel’s skits, subsequently when they were informed that Jerusalem had indeed fallen in a siege, Ezekiel’s actions would have been recalled. Ezekiel’s prophetic pantomime to the people would be evoked when King Zedekiah arrived later, blind and carrying his belongings. Ezekiel had informed the people, “I am a sign to you. As I have done, so it will be done to them” (Ezek 12:11). Ezekiel always executed the unexpected when relaying God’s message, leaving the elders of Israel with the dramatic.

109Jones, The Jerusalem Bible, 1371.
Scene Five: A Nation Thirsts for God

Ezekiel’s final performance represents a people thirsting for relief. Cut off from their supply of fresh water and shunned by God, the remaining inhabitants would live as parched people begging for relief. They would wander the countryside in fear, searching for food and water while thieves and murderers pursued them. To represent the fear that would befall them, Ezekiel ate and drank with trembling hands. “Son of man, eat your bread with trembling, and drink your water with quivering and anxiety” (Ezek 12:18). Ezekiel’s theatrics were hard to ignore as they affect the basic human needs.

Ezekiel’s quaking must have been particularly violent, because this Hebrew word for ‘tremble’ is used elsewhere to describe an earthquake, suggesting he would sway side-to-side as though faint with exhaustion. Ezekiel finally stopped his violent shaking and explained to the exiles that his skit depicted the events after the fall of Jerusalem: during the siege itself, the surrounding land would be overrun and pillaged by the Babylonian armies, and the Jews who survived would later wander in fear of being caught as they searched for food and water, “their land will be stripped of its fullness the land will be desolation” (Ezek 12:19-20). The Prophet Jeremiah, lived through the siege of Jerusalem and its aftermath, described how, “We get our bread at the risk of our lives, because of the sword in the wilderness” (Lam 5:9). “The inhabited cities will be laid waste,” God promised, “and the land will be a desolation. So you will know that I am the LORD” (Ezek 12:20).

Final Scene: Moan No More

In the days leading up to the start of the siege Ezekiel discovered that God intended to take the life of his wife. Assembled before the people and knowing the
terror that was about to befall them, Ezekiel gave his final message. The prophet was asked to act out a final and excruciatingly difficult skit, that was not exactly a mime, since he was allowed to groan quietly. The pain God would inflict upon the heart of Ezekiel would also spread to all the people of Israel and Judah.

“Son of man, behold, I am about to take from you the desire of your eyes with a blow; but you shall not morn and you shall not weep, and your tears shall not come. Groan quietly; make no mourning for the dead. Bind on your turban and put your shoes on your feet, do not cover your mustache and do not eat the bread of men” (Ezek 24:16-17).

Ezekiel stands there as if dazed, in a stupor as he preaches the unexpected message that the desire of his heart—his wife would die. For a people accustomed to outward expressions of emotions and public displays of grief, Ezekiel’s silence in the face of his pain was deafening. “In this he became a sign to the people and was not allowed to go through the customary period of mourning, doubtless to emphasize to them the greater sorrow coming on the nation.”

Ezekiel’s exiled people understood that Ezekiel’s eccentric actions had symbolic portent. “Speak to the house of Israel,” God says. “Tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am about to profane My sanctuary, the pride of your power, the desire of your eyes and the delight of your soul; and your sons and your daughters whom you have left behind will fall by the sword” (Ezek 24:21). The sanctuary would be destroyed, the people dispersed, pursued and captured. The devastation would be so complete there would be no time for morning.

---

If God has permitted His city and His Temple to be destroyed and His people to be led into exile, He has thereby betrayed no sign of impotency or weakness. He Himself has done it, and was compelled to do it, because of the sins of the people of Israel, who misunderstood His nature and His will. Nevertheless, there is no reason to despair; for God does not desire the death of the sinner, but his reformation. The Lord will remain the God of Israel, and Israel will remain His people. As soon as Israel recognizes the sovereignty of the Lord and acts accordingly, He will restore the people, in order that they may fulfill their eternal mission and that He may truly dwell in the midst of them.\textsuperscript{111}

Was Ezekiel’s iconoclastic use of theatrics; numerous art forms, passionate performance and silence in conveying God’s message effective? Was God’s hope “that they will consider” his mimes, vindicated? The Jewish scholar H. H. Ben-Sasson states: “No doubt the activity of Ezekiel bore fruit . . . a decisive change took place in the religious and cultural perceptions of the exiled community. The syncretistic idolatry and fetishism that was still evident at the end of the First Temple period seems to have disappeared.”\textsuperscript{112}

Though the people continued to sin and scoff at Ezekiel’s message, Alton Bryant notes that “Ezekiel was a powerful preacher. . . . He used allegory, vivid figures and symbolic actions to clothe his message.”\textsuperscript{113} Effectual cultural mediums bring successful results. “This mission Ezekiel performed by observing the signs of the time and by deducing his doctrines from them. In conformity with the two parts of his book his


\textsuperscript{112}Sasson, A History of the Jewish People, 163.

personality and his preaching are alike twofold. The events of the past must be explained.”

While Ezekiel also conveyed many serious messages through parables and by the written word, this eccentric prophet is best remembered as a theatrical spokesperson and artist for a very creative God. As one commentator notes, “Ezekiel was a powerful preacher. . . . he used allegory, vivid figures and symbolic actions to clothe his message.” Ezekiel was obedient to God in acting out symbols and visuals. Jesus also used visualizations to exemplify his parables. “Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin. Yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all of his glory clothed himself like one of these” (Matt 6:28-29).

Jesus is the good shepherd promised by Ezekiel who will restore justice for his sheep (John 10:11). All who are in him are completely new creatures, filled with the spirit of God (2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 5:18) but the salvation revealed in Jesus is for greater even then that which was revealed to Ezekiel. The reality is far better than the anticipation it turns out that the prophets wildest dreams where simply not wild enough! In Christ, we have boldness to approach the throne of Grace (Hebrews 4:16; 10-19). The city toward which we press needs no temple (Revelation 21:22) for the final sacrifice has been offered once and for all by Christ (Hebrews 10:10).

Preachers can use the examples of Ezekiel as a source of inspiration. The mediums Ezekiel become involved with became the messages. His engagement in street theater and mime can be encompassed within the sermon, making it more experiential and elucidated to the congregation. “When God merges the arts with that breath of the

---


115Bryant, The New Compact Bible Dictionary, 166.

prophetic, He is able to visually speak a word of encouragement, comfort and edification to the body of Christ.”

The highest purpose of artistic mediums is to glorify God. This chapter has shown the effectiveness of art in symbolic representations, poetry, and drama relating to God and his people. Rather than limiting God and his messages, these art forms have instead depicted a broad view of who God is.

The construction of the Tabernacle, with its beauty and majesty edifies the representative abstract forms—colors, shapes, textures, and overlays of God’s message. David’s poetry with his picture words gives every listener or reader a deeper understanding of God’s love and protection for his people, David and Isaiah’s poetry are irrefutable evidence that God takes pleasure in literary art. The dramatic dramas of Ezekiel and life throughout the Old Testament provide relational messages of God. The images of God in the Old Testament provide themes and artistic illustrations for the preacher.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ART OF PAINTING WORD PICTURES

Is art detectable in the New Testament? Yes, commencing with the synoptic gospel of Matthew, it embarks with the birth of the Messiah, a drama in itself, concluding with John’s vision of the second coming of Jesus found in Revelation 22.

We preach with words but remember story. We teach facts but recall feelings. Jesus’ words were more than just words; they were that of an eloquent speaker, gifted storyteller and skilled debater. Yet, Jesus rarely “preached” to the crowds. The Gospels reveals little evidence to suggest Jesus mastered the three point sermons. His messages carried no grand hyperbole.

Instead, simple stories about common people can be found. Perhaps this is why the crowds flocked to hear his words. When Christ spoke, he added the furniture of the marketplace and smells of the seashore. He talked of farming and fishing, weddings, and wicked masters. His stories included the tools of a peasant laborer (a sheaf of wheat, kernel of corn, olive branch), homemaker (rooms swept clean, lamp stands, beds), and the naturalist (birds of the air, brood of vipers, roaring lion). He communicates to us through the touch, smells, sounds, art, and story.

The word “parable” has its origins in the Greek verb, “parabole.” “Para” means “along side.” To be with, by, or beside. “The Greek verb—Ballw.” meaning “to throw.
or to place.” You might say a “parabole” is a story “thrown along side of” information for the purposes of illuminating a truth.

“Parables are a form of indirect communication intended to deceive the hearer into the truth,” says Klyne Snodgrass, author of Stories With Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus. Rabbis spoke of parables as handles for understanding the Torah; before parables no one understood the Torah, but when Solomon and others created parables, then people understood. Analogously we may say that Jesus’ parables are handles for understanding his teaching on the kingdom.¹

Arland J. Jultgren writes, “A parable is a figure of speech in which a comparison is made between God’s kingdom, actions or expectations and something in the world, real or imagined.”²

**Basic Definitions of Ancient Literature**

James Montgomery Boice gives a definition of parables:

It has been said that a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The Lord Jesus frequently used parables as a means of illustrating profound, divine truths. Stories such as these are easily remembered, the characters bold, and the symbolism rich in meaning. Parables were a common form of teaching in Judaism. Before a certain point in His ministry, Jesus had employed many graphic analogies using common things that would be familiar to everyone (salt, bread, sheep, etc.) and their meaning was fairly clear in the context of His teaching. Parables required more explanation, and at one point in His ministry, Jesus began to teach using parables exclusively.³

Myths, allegories, and fables may present moral truth but they are not parables. Jultgren adds parables are narrative stories of the past that use similitude’s—phrases


³James Montgomery Boice, Parables of Jesus (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 1983), 12.
such as: “as if,” “is like,” in his observations. These distinct elements of Jesus’ parables are rooted in form and imagery.⁴

“A parable places the truth to be taught alongside of that, which is known and familiar,” says Jim Livengood. This is done in order to illustrate the essential truth the issue being taught. Said another way, the familiar and known aspect of the parable serves as an analogy that aids in understanding the lesson being communicated. An “analogy” is a resemblance in certain aspects between things otherwise unlike. Hence, a sower sowing seed is analogous to Christ preaching the Word of God. The sower, the familiar part of the analogy, serves to illustrate what the Lord Jesus does when He preaches; the sower spreads out the seed, Jesus distributes the Word. A sower and a preacher are different things. Yet one illustrates the other. There is thus a resemblance in certain aspects between things otherwise unlike. A parable is therefore said to be an analogy or comparison.⁵

A parable in its simplest form is an unexpected lesson presented in a compelling story. Anecdotes and illustrations, by contrast, rarely share the depth of a parable.

Boice also related what a fable is. On the other hand a fable is a short “fictitious story meant to teach a moral lesson.”⁶ The ancient Greeks and Romans used fables to present human morality through nature. Plants and trees talked, expressed emotion, and displayed intelligence.

Parables differ from fables in that a fable is not a real situation. An example of a fable is any of Aesop’s stories in which animals talk. In those stories the animals are simply people in disguise. Parables also differ from allegories, since in an allegory each or nearly each detail has meaning. C. S. Lewis’s Chronicles of Narnia are essentially allegories. . . . Parables are merely real life stories from which one or possibly a few basic truths are drawn. In Matthew’s gospel, chapter 13, there is not one but seven parables recorded. They have one theme, the kingdom of God, and so are called the “parables of the kingdom.” It is no accident that these are the first parables encountered.⁷

⁴Boice, Parables of Jesus, 5.


⁷Boice, The Parables of Jesus, 14.
So while parables and fables share the common thread of morality teaching, they differ in their portrait of truth. Fables are fictional worlds that go beyond the laws of nature and human beings. Parables are rooted in reality.

A *myth* is a story with a purpose. It explains the relationship between gods and humans and why things are the way they are. Myths often convey important social or religious meaning. Storms erupt at sea because Poseidon is angry. The earth quakes when Mother Nature vents. Rainbows appear after a storm passes to demonstrate God’s forgiving nature. Myths are humanities attempt to make sense out of things they cannot explain. Although most parables present permanent truths, there is nothing magical or mythical about sweeping a house clean until a lost coin is found, sowing seed in good soil, or selling all you have to buy a field with hidden treasure.

*Allegories* are narratives in which events, people, and objects have a hidden or symbolic meaning. The Old Testament contains several allegories. One of the best known is the allegory of the vineyard found in Isaiah 5:1-7. Here the vineyard represents Israel, the owner—God, and the hedge, God’s divine protection. Throughout the ages scholars regarded the parables found in the narrative Gospels as allegories. Adolf Jülicher refuted this interpretation at the end of the nineteenth century when he cited the differences between parables and classic allegories.8

Parables may have allegoric elements, but allegories are often one-dimensional. A parable, on the other hand, even a short one, is a complete story culminating in a surprising ending. Although the parables of Jesus may appear similar to fables, myths

---

and allegories, these layered dimensions suggest there is more to the message than moralization and entertainment.

The Power of Parables

Parables, props, and anecdotes provide a seductive means of expressing a truth in a non-threatening manner. For example, when Jesus wanted to present the truth of God’s righteousness and the need for judgment he presented an example every farmer and gardener would understand.

Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, “Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?” And he said to them, “An enemy has done this!”’ The slaves said to him, “Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?” But he said, “No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, ‘First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.’” (Matt 13:24-30).

What farmer would not be outraged to find his good crop corrupted by bad seed? Who among us would not seek justice and demand the perpetrator be prosecuted? The use of imagery, in this case a handful of seed, draws the listener into the story. The preacher should enable the audience to conceive Jesus, slowly walking along a furrowed row, carefully dropping the seed into rich soil. Later, when the servants relay the distressing news, the crowd feels the farmer’s disappointment. Indignation rises. Yet the farmer in this story does not react as we might. Rather than ripping the weeds from the ground, he allows them to grow. Justice delayed, vengeance deferred. This is a theme of the Old and New Testaments.

At first glance this story might appear as little more than practical farming tips.
No doubt, many who heard the story practiced Jesus’ advice and produced a larger harvest. However, the disciples struggled to make connection between farming and God’s kingdom. That was, after all, the point of the story, was it not?

“The parables are perhaps the most characteristic elements in the teaching of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospels,” says C. H. Dodd. “Their appeal to the imagination fixed them in the memory, and gave them a secure place in tradition. Certainly there is no part of the Gospel record which has for the teacher a clearer ring of authenticity.”

Figure 15. The four kinds of soil, in the sower and the seed. Peace Lutheran Church, back window, Wilmont, Wisconsin.

Son of God, sons of God, weeds and seeds, deeds and sins, a harvest to come, among a backdrop of angels, enemies, and evil. The disciples missed Jesus most crucial and relevant meanings to many of his parables.

---

Crafting a Mosaic with Words

A portrait is a rendition but it’s not the real thing. Similarly so is a parable. The colors and brush strokes of a painting reflect the image of reality, but the canvas itself is not the grass, trees and sky anymore than a story about sowing and threshing is the Kingdom of God. Looking at the message behind the craftsman we find hidden meaning in art that may be obscured in the real article. It is the artistry of Jesus’ parables that give life to his words.

We should not be surprised then, to find the one who is the Word, use stories to reveal truth about his father and himself.

Parables made up approximately one-third of Jesus teaching and according to Mark 4:34 he did not teach without them. Teaching with parables was a very common form of first century Jewish teaching known as Aggadah, and literally thousands of these ancient stories have been preserved. The Jews of Jesus’ day believed that legal references were for details but Aggadah was for inspiration.10

Preserving facts and history through folklore might benefit a nomadic people seeking to build a nation but how can storytelling buttress the pillars of God’s truth? Why would Jesus teach in parables when it is clear from scripture that many did not fully grasp the significance of his words? Ellen G. White lists three reason Jesus may have spoken in parables: (1) illustrations, (2) revelation, (3) awaken inquiry. Illustration

In Christ’s parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwell among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ’s teaching: the unknown was

---

Christ presented the holy qualities of a God in earthly terms that the common man or woman might understand. Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me” (John 14:6). Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (John 8:12).

Ways, word, light, and life: visual imagery designed to illustrate the message in ways that leave a lasting impression.

Revelation

His words placed the teachings of nature as well as of the Bible in a new aspect, and made them a new revelation. Jesus plucked the beautiful lily, and placed it in the hands of children and youth; and as they looked into His own youthful face, fresh with the sunlight of His Father’s countenance, He gave the lesson, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow (in the simplicity of natural beauty); they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” Then followed the sweet assurance and the important lesson, “Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?”

The translation of Christ from man to King, Son of God to Lord of All is presented in John’s Revelation of Christ.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden Menorahs; and in the middle of the Menorahs I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash. His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. In His

---


12Ibid., 19.
right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength (Rev 1:12-16).

It is through a similar transformation that Christ promises to cloth the believer with immortality, and righteousness. His use of art to “reveal” his message and purpose bridges the gap between man and God, allowing a limited mind to grasp the grandeur of God.

Awaken Inquiry

So wide was Christ’s view of truth, so extended His teaching, that every phase of nature was employed in illustrating truth. The scenes upon which the eye daily rests were all connected with some spiritual truth, so that nature is clothed with the parables of the Master. In the earlier part of His ministry, Christ had spoken to the people in words so plain that all His hearers might have grasped truths, which would make them wise unto salvation. But in many hearts the truth had taken no root, and it had been quickly caught away. “Therefore speak I to them in parables.” He said; “because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. . . For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed” (Matthew13:13-15).13

Jesus used parables to conceal truths from the casual listener. Only those with a deep thirst for the spiritual things of God (“whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst,” John 4:14) understood the truth behind his stories. As a result, many listeners did not fully comprehend Jesus’ message. Yet, for those willing to seek, follow and ask, he revealed hidden treasures.

Secrets Revealed

Many visit the Sistine chapel, some gaze upwards at the ceiling, pointing and speaking in hushed tones, others are oblivious to the awe and beauty of the art. These

13White, Christ’s Object Lessons, 20.
paintings and statues often go unnoticed by those who do not take the time to understand their meaning. All they see is nothing but statues and paintings of dead people. When the secrets hidden beyond the limited vision are revealed, the beauty and understanding of their message is exposed. Jesus is the painter of words and sculptor of Scripture.

“Two things people know worldwide about Jesus,” Jultgren says.

He was crucified and he told parables. From Christian theology and experience these two items of historical certainty are central from the standpoint of faith. Jesus as the Revealer of God and the Redeemer of humanity. His parables are the primary medium of Revelation and the cross is the primary means of redemption. By means of his parables Jesus frequently referred to the kingdom of God and at times focused on its explicitly.”

When the preacher presents the message with the richness of art he/she breathes life into God’s words. Through theatrical performance we add skin and bone to the message. Imagine for a moment a message delivered not from notes, but from the soul of the speaker.

**Preaching with Parables**

And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand” (Matt 13:10-13).

The prophecy of Isaiah was being fulfilled when Jesus spoke to the disciples concerning the parables. “Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; for the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed” ( Isa 6:9-10).

---


140
Parables are a seductive teaching tool because they do not threaten. The audience must wait until the end of the story to discover the story’s lesson and how it applies to their lives. This provides the listener the necessary space to relax and make the connection between the main message and their circumstances. A parable takes the truth of a story to explain something else.

To the audience, a parable plays as a movie. Parables present plot, character development, suspense, and surprising endings. At the end of the story, the preacher does not need to explain the main point. If the story is told well, the audience “gets it.” A three-point sermon on doctrinal theology, by comparison, comes across as a film documentary with facts. If presented without the richness of the story, the listener may be bored.

“The purpose of a movie is to entertain,” says Fred Penney.15

A documentary informs. Movies are mostly fiction and deal with imagination; documentaries deal with facts and real life problems. The struggle for the preacher is this: do I want to merely entertain or do I want to relay information that can affect peoples’ lives? As a preacher I want to effect positive change. Here’s the paradox: in the short term, a documentary may communicate more clearly, but in the long term, a movie may have greater impact! Parable preaching, like the parable itself, is understated, indirect and subtle. Think of a sermon from a parable as a seed, not a full-grown plant. Don’t always expect it to produce fruit instantaneously. Trust the seed to germinate. This is what Jesus was getting at in His quotation of Isaiah 6:9-10. So the parables are fertile ground for evangelistic preaching, but in a way beautifully suited to the post-modern audience. I suspect many preachers would be pleasantly surprised by that fact.16

Eugene Lowry argues there are four plot elements in every good parable: (1) situation, (2) complication, (3) resolution, and (4) application. In a longer parable such


16Ibid.
as “The Good Samaritan,” these elements are easy to find. In a shorter parable for instance “The Pearl of Great Price,” more effort and imagination may be required. For instance, in the Good Samaritan we find:

**Situation:** Here the inciting incident is a man on a journey, beaten, robbed, and left for dead by muggers.

**Complication:** Those who should help, but do not.

**Resolution:** The sudden arrival of assistance from a stranger or enemy presents a story twist.

**Application:** Jesus asks, “Who is your neighbor? Go and do likewise.”

Thus, challenging the listener to change.

### Structure of a Parable

The parables of Jesus often begin in a familiar setting and end with a surprising ending. The intent is to disrupt the audience and leave them disturbed by the interpretation of its meaning. A good parable builds upon itself, increasing the stakes for its characters and leads the listener toward an unexpected and unsettling conclusion.

A parable may adopt a light tone but its lessons often have eternal consequences. A parable is to focus on one major point.

### Suspense

Suspense keeps the listener leaning forward, drawing them into the story. “For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah” (Matt 24:37). Immediately the audience recalls the catastrophic events surrounding the Flood. What would be worse than mass destruction and the loss of millions of lives?
Familiarity

Familiarity builds relationships. “For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark” (Matt 24:38). Is this not the life of the listener? Do we too not go about our days assuming the sun will rise and our life continue? Yet there is a hint of impending change in the subtly of the parable.

Imagery

Reading the parables of Jesus gives the reader a sense of setting, a feel for the place and time. “Two men will be working together in the field. . . . Two women will be grinding flour at the mill.” In his parables Jesus makes a direct appeal to the imagination of the audience. Through dramatic descriptions we are pulled into the center of the story.

Connectivity

The power of the parable is in its ability to connect with listeners on their level. The parable builds upon characters, images, and situations common to the listeners, allowing the storyteller to establish connections to the present audience. “Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left” (Matt 24:40). These comparisons between the past and present, evil and good, just and unjust, are the hallmarks of Jesus’ parables. Jesus the foundation introduces new truths.

Contrasts

The distinction between opposing forces presented in the parable forces the
Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep (Matt 25:1-5).

**Surprise**

A surprise payoff is the punch of a parable. “And they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt 24:39). “But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’” (25:6). “The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know” (24:50). Sudden shifts in reality provide the final point for the story and sermon.

**Warnings**

Parables challenge the listener to be alert. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into” (Matt 24:43).

“But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone” (Mark 13:32). “When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be frightened; those things must take place; but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will also be famines. These things are merely the beginning of birth pains” (Mark 13:7, 8). “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming” (Matt 24:42). “For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will (24:44).
Consequences

Unpredictable outcome foreshadows the consequences of our own choices.

And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut” (Matt 25:10). “And will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (24:51). “So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (13:40-42).

In watching those in the story struggle and stumble, the listener learns and (hopefully) takes corrective action.

Rewards

Rewards abound for those who do what is right.

His master said to him, “Well-done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master” (Matt 25:23). Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears let him hear (13:43). Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions (24:46, 47). And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut (25:10).

Summary

Jewish culture was and is story based. When Jesus was asked a question, he usually answered it with a narrative. Like any good storyteller, the preacher reinforces his/her main point with a summary statement. “They did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matt 24:39).
Reach One, Teach One

Sense(s)

The addition of familiar props and visual aids creates a richness that touches not only our minds, but our hearts too. Research shows that the more our senses are adjusted, the greater our recall. Smell ignites our emotions, memory, and creativity. Our sense of smell allows us to identify food and danger, as well as sensual pleasures like perfume and flowers. Acrid scents, like smelling salts, will jolt the mind. The senses of smell and taste, two of the five senses identified by Aristotle, are called “chemical senses.” About 80 percent of what we taste is actually due to our sense of smell. Without the sense of smell, we would only be able to recognize five tastes: sweet, salty, sour, bitter, and savory. Simply changing its smell can alter a food’s flavor. In fact, our sense of smell becomes stronger when we are hungry. This is the power of a parable: to ignite an urge through words, sight, smell and sound.

Nature Abounds

Patience and perseverance are constant themes in Jesus’ parables. Progress comes gradually for farmers, as it does for building committees, and pastors. By reminding his listeners of the slow but steady growth Jesus created a bond with his audience. “He presented another parable to them, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches’” (Matt 13:31, 32). The use of nature to explain the precepts of God carries broad implications for the preacher seeking to transmit his truth.
Treasures in Testimony

The preacher’s testimony and life experiences point to the love of God and reflect his glory. When the preacher allows self to become the canvas, to be marred, beaten and refined in the kiln of God’s fire, this is reflected in the message presented, and their life becomes a masterpiece. “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field” (Matt 13:44). The desire of the preacher is to give the message of hope, to secure and preserve our life, liberty, and pursuit of joy, but how to find that treasure, that is the question?

Pearls of Wisdom

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matt 13:45, 46). For the Preacher, few things are as precious and powerful as a contemporary parable told well. Once trained, this storytelling technique becomes for the preacher a reservoir of rich communication and ministry.

Net Results

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt 13:47-50).

The sifting and sorting of good from bad, wheat from chaff, flows throughout the Bible. The preacher of parables also needs to prayerfully differentiate which parables to include. Which characters to include, what senses to touch? Should we include props,
lighting, and sound or let the thunder of an unspoken prayer rumble in the minds of our
listeners? These are the questions facing preachers.

A Wealth of Knowledge

And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of
the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure
things new and old” (Matt 13:52). Preachers draw upon their life experiences, bringing
forth riches. Watching the shuffled walk of an elderly couple and listen for God to
speak—to give us his message as we reflect upon the stamina of a love that perseveres
through sickness, loss, and fatigue.

Christ relays usage of different resources from the Old Testament. These
principles are explained by Jesus as depicted in Luke 24:27, 44 (NKJV): “And
beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the
Scriptures concerning himself. . . . then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I
spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were
written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’”

The stories are there. So too, is God’s voice calling to us: Watch, wait, listen,
and tell others. Jesus used the effective methods of his day in relaying the messages
concerning God his father. Pastors today, need to also use tried and proven biblical
methods along with art, technology and media if we are to reach the postmodern visual
generations.

Plotting Tips from the Prodigal Son

The basic framework of story and the three-act structure is so universal all
thirteen-plot points are found in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Though we remember characters and listen intently to dialogue, plot is the power grid that carries the message foreword. Taken together, any sermon shaped into the message of story will leave listeners entertained and enlightened. In his book, Plotting, Not Plodding, Eddie Jones explains the basic plot structure of the parable.

Jones provides a notable illustration of replicating the parable of the Prodigal Son as listed below:

**Parable In Action: A Contemporary Retelling of the Prodigal Son**

**Act One**

1. **Introduce your Lead.** The youngest son of a wealthy man feels oppressed by his overbearing older brother.
2. **Introduce your Lead’s motivation.** Show the boy’s restlessness.
3. **Begin the quest.** The boy decides to leave home. He goes to his dad and asks for his share of the inheritance.
4. **Change your Lead’s direction.** The boy sets out for Las Vegas.

**Act Two**

5. **Challenge your Lead with problems.** The boy runs with a fast crowd and soon loses all his money to gambling, women, drugs, and drink.
6. **Change your Lead’s status.** Out of money and on the street, the son of a wealthy father is now broke, friendless, and homeless.
7. **Challenge your Lead with tougher problems.** Destitute, lacking skills and street smarts, the young man applies for any job he can, but is turned away each time. (If this sounds like your life as a writer, keep reading!)
8. **Lead suffers maximum angst.** The boy settles for the lowest job in the city, scrubbing toilets in the MGM casino.
9. **Offer your Lead a transition:** Having hit bottom, the young man decides to go home. Maybe he can get a job working in his dad’s warehouse.

**Act Three**

10. **Change your Lead’s direction.** The scene opens with your Lead stepping from the rig of an eighteen-wheeler. As the truck pulls away, you’re Lead starts up a dusty road.
11. **Your Lead’s last chance.** An expensive car speeds past, ignoring the young
man’s signal for a lift. Moments later brake lights flash; the car pulls onto the shoulder.

12. **Lead either wins or loses.** The boy sees his father exiting the car. They make eye contact. His father reaches for the door handle as if to get back in the car. Then . . . grabbing his jacket from the front seat, the father runs to the young man. They hug. The father puts his coat on his son.

13. **Tie up loose ends.** The father tells his son to wash up; they’re going to the club to celebrate. But the older son refuses to join them. Over dinner the younger son is given a high position in his dad’s company while the older son sits home fuming, thus presenting the conflict for the sequel.  

“Plot, and thus a great story,” Jones says, “is a series of cleverly arranged events whose purpose is to invoke an emotional response from the reader. Joy, hope, sorrow, laughter, fear, or anger.” The objective as a preacher is to touch the heart of their audience, and burn God’s message deep into their hearts. Narratives are one art form that can accomplish this.

**A Visionary Preacher**

Visionary preachers also use story and words but in a different approach. They project meaning onto the furniture of the scene. A “little horn” signifies a power ruler. “Stars” indicate angels. Menorahs, bowls, vials, and ghastly beasts represent the furniture of heaven and worldly tyrants.

Imagine a scene where the narrator of a theatrical performance is rendered mute by the charismatic power of the lead actor. The curtain rises. A voice reverberates like a trumpet throughout the auditorium. Smoke rises from floor vents, covering the stage in a cloud of sweet-smelling incense. Menorahs ignite; halos of golden light cast rings

---


18 Ibid., 12-18.
into the haze. Amidst this rock-concert introduction a towering figure strides forth, piercing the silver mist into the light. The narrator, a solitary old man huddled on the floor of his prison cell, withdraws and falls face-first to the ground.

The stage-star approaches. With each step his bronzed feet shakes the walls. Mortar cracks, stones fall. The old man scurries toward a corner, trying to avoid the penetrating glare of the king man now towering above him. He is drawn to the figure and before he can stop, their eyes meet—the old man is glazed over by age. The king has a blazing appearance as if fueled by a thousand furnace fires.

Dropping his gaze the old man notices a golden sash around the king’s waste. The synched sash secures the king’s regal robe. In his fist are seven stars. The king bends toward him; the old man scoots away, pressing his arthritic back against the wall.

“Do not be afraid!” The king’s words tumble forth like the torrents of a cascading river. “I was dead, but behold. I am alive, again!”

Silently, the old man says to himself: “But it wasn’t me. I didn’t kill you. It was the others. They ran when you cried out. I came; I was there. Yes, I know I didn’t do anything to stop them, but I stood by your side when they—” “I hold the keys…”

(Keys? What keys? Do you mean you can free me from this prison? “ . . . to death and Hades. I am the First. I am the Last.”) Reaching down the king touches the old man. “Write what you have seen.” I can’t. It’s too much, thinks the old man. “Write what will take place later.” A rush of warmth surges through the old man’s body. He’s never felt such peace, such wholeness. “Write the mystery that will take place,” the compassionate and tender king commands. How can I? “Write!”

Yes. You are right. I must. To do anything other than reflect the king’s glory
would be blasphemes. With trembling lips the old man mouths, “My God and king.” His chin quivers as he accepts the assignment, head nodding in agreement.

The second section of this chapter deals with the symbolic nature of the Apostle John’s cryptic Revelation of Christ and serves as an introduction to “art-felt” preaching—how the art of painting with words moves beyond picture stories and into a realm of signs, wonders, and beauty. Through the powerful tools of visual icons, the preacher can master the craft of creating illustrated scenes that capture the attention of the audience and leaving them hungry for God’s message.

The Wonder of Artful Preaching

Arts and technology enhance the spoken word, complimenting God’s message through rich visual imagery, powerful preaching, and dramatic illustrations. Through lights, sounds, colors, and action the preacher rouses the audience, igniting imagination to create a vivid world that transcends mere words. “Preaching is about things happening, about dead bones coming alive, about God’s word making a difference—returning to him,” writes Micheal J. Quicke. “If nothing happens, it is a waste of breath.”

Bryan Chapel adds, “The last sixty seconds are typically the most dynamic moments in excellent sermons. With these final words, a preacher marshals the thought and emotion of an entire message into an exhortation that makes all that has preceded clear and compelling.” Through art, technology, sights, and sounds the preacher punctuates their message for dramatic effect. “A conclusion is a sermon’s destination,”

19 Michael J. Quicke, 360 Degree Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 194.

20 Bryan Chapel, Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 254.
says Chapel. “Ending contents are alive—packed with tension, drama, energy, and motion. Masterful conclusions sometimes thunder, and other times they crackle with an electricity barely audible to the ears, but the best endings always soundly register in the heart.”

Michael Quicke notes:

Since preaching nourishes renewed life for preacher and hearers, everyone should be caught up in the messenger’s impact. I picture this last stage as joyous mass splashing! Preachers having immersed themselves in Scripture and preached on a passage’s main impact, are joined in the river by listeners plunging in from every side to experience the grace of God. Instead of standing safe (and dry) at a distance, hearers have been drawn by the power of God’s word into fresh experiences together. No longer is a preacher alone in his or her immersion in Scripture, rather, he or she is thronged by others who have heard, seen, tasted, and acted on God’s good news. What is more, the dynamic of God's Word is carrying them along together to new places.

The Book of Revelation provides countless examples of God revealing the glory of his Son through visions, signs and wonders. The narratives in Revelation appear to describe various detailed paintings. Now the “Lamb who was slain” is wrapped in pillars of fire, recalling the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egypt. We see cloaks of clouds, halos of colors, bronzed bodies, eyes aflame and rainbows resting on heads. “For all who wonder what the world to come will be like,” writes Rick Willis, “the visions of Revelation tops any special effects any movie studio could ever produce. Together these descriptions add up to the perfect security and joy of fulfillment that only God’s presence can bring.”

Since the construction of the Ark, God has used illustrations, imagery, and ornate

---

21 Chapel, Christ-Centered Preaching, 254.

22 Quicke, 360 Degree Preaching, 194.

artifacts to convey his truth. In Genesis, for example, we see the rainbow as God’s promise for protection from impending floods. Later the rainbow encircles the throne of God and becomes an angel’s crown. “These and many other images from the Book of Revelation have infused our language and culture,” writes the author of the Art of the Apocalypse. “[They have become] familiar even to those who have never read the New Testament scripture from which they come.” Judith Rock suggests, “We need a new incarnation. A new indication of God’s presence among us here and now. Struggling to bless vision with form, artists may be the new prophets of grace.”

Visual devices used in artful preaching allows the listener to see how God encourages his message to be presented beyond the spoken message to embrace the drama of his story as told through sights, sounds, and color.

**Teaching and Preaching with Technicolor**

Nancy Grubb, the author of The Art of the Apocalypse writes, “The Book of Revelation has provided an irresistible source of imagery to artists for nearly two thousand years. . . . It has no doubt inspired so many visual interpretations not only because of the emotional impact of its story.”

A powerful delivery and compelling stage persona can leave listeners breathless, if done in humility. Often this aura is accentuated with vivid colors. For example red is a color of energy, movement and excitement. Businesses use red to draw attention to


their product or services. People surrounded by red find their heart beating faster and often report feeling out of breath. Businessmen wear red “power ties.” In the Book of Revelation the color red dominates the story. Robes are dipped in blood, a red dragon makes war in heaven, the moon becomes like blood. Through the use of these visual clues the listener anticipates action and stimulation. The author of The Art of the Apocalypse recounts how color is used in the drama unfolding in heaven. “The author (of Revelation) created a narrative that is startlingly physical, evoking the senses of sight, hearing, taste, and touch. Colors abound. The four horsemen are mounted on white, red, black, and pale steeds; the whore of Babylon ‘was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.’”

“Preaching is an exercise in aesthetics,” writes Darius L. Salter. “When it is not, it reduces everything to the practical.” Color adds a burst, inspiring the listener to go ponder the subtle meanings of the preacher’s message. Nancy Grubb reminds us that “inspiration has yielded some of Western culture’s most powerful and perplexing works of art, particularly manuscript illuminations including frescoes, oil paintings, tapestries, stained glass, and sculpture.” “Illuminations,” lighting, and focus play a key role in the successful delivery of a preacher’s message.

**Lights, Camera, Action**

One of the earliest examples of dramatic lighting is found in the use of the Old

---

26.“Revelations, Art of the Apocalypse.”


28.“Revelations, Art of the Apocalypse.”
Testament Menorah. “You shall make its lamps seven in number; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it” (Exod 25:37). For Moses and the Children of Israel, apart from the Shekinah Glory, the menorah became a symbol of God’s eternal light. Its radiance provided a tangible symbol of God’s deliverance from slavery to freedom. “Watch yourself so that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery” (Deut 6:12).

The significance of lights and illumination for dramatic effect is seen in the cluster of lights surrounding the Light of the World. “Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden Menorahs; and in the middle of the Menorahs I saw one like a son of man” (Rev 1:12, 13). Through the targeted lighting you can highlight key points with laser-like accuracy. “Those in the (heavenly) city do not lounge on wispy clouds playing harps as popular depictions often suggest,” writes Rick Willis. Instead “serve God, forever seeing God's face and basking in the light of his glory.”29 We would do well to remember that illumination and focus, when aimed at God, is not a distraction but a glorification of Him.

Costume, Makeup, and Wardrobe

Every Master’s stroke carries rich meaning and this is certainly the case in the transformation of Christ. When John last knelt before Jesus, he saw a teacher shedding the earthly garments of a simple carpenter. First in the Upper Room when Christ removed his outer robe to wash the disciple’s feet. Later when he was laid bare and nailed on the cross. Finally, in the tomb when the risen Savior shed his burial clothes.

As with any performance, the preacher is judged by outward appearances. Compare the casual clothing of the earthly Christ with his attire in the pages of Revelation. “I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across his chest with a golden sash” (Rev 1:13). This use of wardrobe and makeup for dramatic effect can be a powerful symbolic component. “Costume design is important because it immediately supports the characters in the story being told,” writes Sabrina Evertt, artistic producer of Vancouver’s Twenty-Something Theatre. “It helps an actor find his/her character. And when it comes right down to it, if the actors are not believable as their characters then the audience won’t suspend their disbelief.”

So, too, the preacher needs to project a believable presence to his/her audience especially when using artistic mediums and technology. “You have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy” (Rev 3:4). “I looked, and behold, a great multitude . . . clothed in white robes” (7:9). “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun” (12:1). “He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments” (3:5). “He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance” (4:3). The physical presence of the cast says a great deal about their role in the drama but without context they are fully drawn characters set in a dull world.

---

“No matter the production, I personally believe design, all design, should be one of the first things to be considered,” writes Sabrina Evertt. “The design of a production supports the story. This overall vision for the piece, in my opinion, should be the very first thing to be considered.”

Scene sets the mood. The power of a scene is derived from the slightly claustrophobic feeling one gets when they are focused on the characters. The cast seems somehow trapped in a place, unable to leave. They are forced to face a main issue. In the case of the preacher, the set can serve to direct the eyes of the audiences towards the preacher’s main point. Well-crafted scenes transport the narrative through action, showing barriers, conflict, and choice.

The various scenes in Revelation set the atmospheres of different narratives. From pain, fear, destruction and rebellion: “And the great dragon was thrown down the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world, he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown with him” (Rev 12:9) to adoration, victory, triumph, joy, and love—“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being (Rev 4:11), And on his robe and on his thigh he has a name written ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev 19:16). “I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven” (4:1). “Around the throne were twenty-four thrones” (v. 4). “There were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne” (v. 5).

---

31 Evertt, “The Importance of Costume Design.”
“Before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal” (v. 6). The elements of these scenes convey a sense of urgency.

Movement in preaching omits dullness and stagnant preaching. Even subtle movement in preaching will suggest action, goals, conflict, and barriers. In John’s account of heaven there are numerous characters at odds with each other: angels and dragons, women and monsters, Satan and Christ. Comparable to the book of Revelation, when the preacher uses scenes of tension, it allows the audience to recall the message in an unforgettable way.

“Sound” Foundations for Effective Sermons

A message becomes memorable when it catches the audience off guard. Sound is an excellent way to jar your audience awake. Thunder claps, drums roll. Key points are punctuated with the blasts of trumpets, chanting crowds, earthquakes, and rumble of thunder. Sounds proliferate in the book of Revelation.

“The first voice, which I had heard, (was) like the sound of a trumpet speaking with me” (Rev 4:1). “From the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder” (Rev 4:5). “Day and night they do not cease to say, ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come’” (v. 8). “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created” (v. 11). “I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands” (5:11). “There followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake” (8:5).
“There were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder and an earthquake and a great hailstorm” (11:9).

Preaching becomes more effectual when sounds and tones are added to the preacher’s voice. Even music at the appropriate time can make the sermon more effective. “Sounds are loud and frightening,” explains the author of Art of the Apocalypse. “John hears ‘a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder’ (Rev 14:2). The noise of the monstrous locusts’ wings “was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle” (9:9). And the mighty angel of 10:3 “cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.”32

The absence of sound, however, can also be used for great effect. “When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour” (Rev 8:1). In public speaking this is called the pregnant pause, a technique used to hold the crowd’s attention as they wait for the payoff. “Good conclusions require careful craftsmanship,” writes G. Campbell Morgan, and “every conclusion must conclude, include, and preclude.”33 Sounds delivered at the appropriate times can highlight the importance of key points in relaying God’s messages, making it experiential for the audience.

**Preaching with Props**

Art reflects the descriptions of symbols, but the symbols themselves are not the

---


33Morgan, Preaching, 87.
real thing. Props create a “physical metaphor” that is used to symbolize something important. We see numerous props used as symbols in the Book of Revelation.

“I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals” (Rev 5:1). Secrets hidden, codes shrouded in mystery. “Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne” (8:3). Prayers presented as a pleasing aroma to God. “And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of his covenant appeared in his temple” (4:19). This is a treasure chest of God’s Words.

Rick Willis writes, “Descriptions of the perfections of the city, tells of its river of life, tree of life and throne of God. The river and the tree suggest God's provision of immortality, health and vigor to all who live with him.”

Props for visual presentation in preaching are effective tools drawing the audience into the message allowing them to fully visualize their daily lives.

**Supporting Cast of Characters**

The message will be memorable if a compelling cast of characters is added. Characters become notable when they stretch or shrink, cry and laugh. Great characters reveal heart, face obstacles, pick paths, make discoveries, reveal secrets, and conquer mountains. For your characters to be likable they should be witty, charming, wise, friendly, empathetic, authentic, encouraging, secure, or vulnerable. Using characters in

---

34Willis, “Heaven Surpasses Vocabulary and Imagination.”
narratives allow the audience to reflect. Sometimes they visualize themselves, a relative, or a friend, and this makes the character more like them, similarly to the characters in revelation. Looking at Christ as Lord of all with his plan and his planet.


In the Book of Revelation we see any number of individuals, each serving a specific role. “Upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders” (4:4, see figure 14). “Around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind” (4:6). “I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice” (5:2). “I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes” (v. 6). “I looked, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer” (6:2). “A
red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a great sword was given to him” (6:4). “I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain” (v. 9). “The kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains” (v. 15). “I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth, so that no wind would blow on the earth or on the sea or on any tree” (7:1). “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars; and she was with child; and she cried out, being in labor and in pain to give birth” (12:1, 2).

The preacher can build depth to the story by including characters with flaws, goals and secrets. When the preacher relays the reason for the audience to care about the people in their sermons, the congregation will be concerned with the meaning of the message.

Revelation 22:1-5 tells of its river of life, tree of life and throne of God. The river and the tree suggest God’s provision of immortality, health and vigor to all who live with him. They serve God, forever seeing God’s face and basking in the light of his glory (22:3-5). . . . Jesus is preserved in great tenderness in John 14. His promise is a room lovingly prepared in the Father's house. For all who wonder what the world to come will be like, the visions of Revelation top any special effects any movie studio could ever produce. Together these descriptions add up to the perfect security and joy of fulfillment that only God’s presence can bring.  

Preaching using artistic mediums and technology include all the senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. Through the use of dramatic elements preaching will provide listeners with a rich and meaningful worship experience. Of the 404 verses that

constitute Revelation, 278 of them contain at least one allusion to an Old Testament passage. The picture of Christ in Revelation 1, for instance, matches that of Daniels’s “Ancient of Days.” We dare not miss this point. John’s only code language is that of God’s Word.  

Conclusion  

God the father’s shekinah glory, and Jesus the slain lamb, are revealed in the ending to revelation’s narrative and also in the exodus tabernacle. “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Rev 21:22).

Revelation gives powerful examples by a God who uses art forms and nature. Preachers cannot be completely effective in modernity unless they use the visual aids and technology that surrounds humanity in their everyday life.

Jesus use of artistic narratives was so powerful that his audience could immediately convey the deep and central messages. He set aside the homiletical practice of biblical exegesis instead using simple stories that went deeper, moving those around him. An effective preacher needs to find and tell a story of his or her own to explain and explore biblical stories. Using art to reflect on biblical texts will serve as an effective method in reaching beyond the congregation to those who never open a church door.

Figure 17. “When I am lifted Up.” adapted by Jessica Trevithick from http://urlspy.co.uk/www.rightcogency.wordpress.com

With God all things are Possible
CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION
OF THE PROJECT

Inspiration for the Project

Jesus is the inspiration for this project—it is his life, his love, and specifically his astonishing preaching including his use of artistic mediums in relaying the message of whom God is. His creative and effective methods reflect and convey God to humanity, through various visuals, symbols, sounds, experiences and fragrances. God is in our midst beckoning us to see, to hear, to touch, to live in the moment of his love, leaving a memorable visual impact within our minds. Pastors need to use these same methods in feeding the sheep, whether lost or safe.

How does a Pastor stand out in a world of choices? Is their style and media design effective in preaching and reaching the audience they encounter? There is no preacher in history or in today’s society who has captured an audience, as did Jesus with the use of artistic mediums and technology of his day. Neither history, nor humanity, can offer a better solution. Jesus himself became the Message of God. Preachers need to preach in the same manner as Jesus.

There are many art forms that relay faith and artistic artifacts that help articulate faith. Jesus did not just paint words; he painted relationships with his use of art forms in his messages. Jesus employment of artistic structures in his preaching moved people
intertwining their lives with the message he revealed.

As preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ should we not use the same examples? Globally people assemble weekly to hear a narrative. This narrative has been conveyed and retold throughout generations. All preachers have their own expressions and interpretations when it comes to their style of telling the story of Jesus of Nazareth, who became Jesus the Messiah.

Preachers today with the help of artistic forms, media and technology, can effectively revisit the narratives, messages, and symbols in the Bible, and effectively use similar methods in retelling the narrative of Jesus. “What manner of man is this that even the winds obey him” (Matt 8:27)? Jesus used this powerful visual of nature to illustrate his point. This was more effective than any technology used today. A preacher can use similar effects in drawing their congregation’s attention while preaching.

This project has enabled me to dig into the richness of creative methods and styles of preaching, while portraying the messages of God in effective and experiential ways I had not previously used. Our culture is changing, and emerging generations are accustomed to learning in more experiential ways. My creative talents will always be part of whom I am as a preacher, allowing me to continue to identify and use technology and artistic mediums in preaching as the paradigm shift of each generation arises. My love for the dramatic, colorful, creative, and artistic portrayals of God’s messages is depicted through my sermon presentations. The reaction of the audience as they understand the messages of God in these art rich forms motivates me.

Over the past twenty-five years the dramatic rapid development of media has
enabled global communications to powerfully influence new generations, creating a new learning style. Those in developed countries, especially young people, derive most of their ideals, viewpoints, and lifestyle practices from the media, contrary to their families, education, or church. Today’s media often conveys worldviews that dishonor God. If today’s generations are going to be reached, then the preacher needs new media tools and training in using modern visual art forms and techniques.

Preachers today compete with secular television, movies, music videos, radio, the Internet, live theatre, concerts, and bands to name a few, for the attention of the postmodern congregation, and other audiences—especially in North America. Sermons presented in many churches appear to be insufficiently participative, relational, innovative or relevant in capturing and sustaining the interest of these fast-paced, postmodern, 21st century audiences. Many pastors do not convey the gospel in a structure or style that resonates with contemporary culture, or that competes well with the many clamoring voices of today’s world. Therefore, preachers need to feel and be the sermon they are preaching through artistic mediums and technology. Preaching is a sacrament, not just a transmission of incessant information but instead, an experiential experience for the audience in encountering God within the virtual world in which they live.

**The Desired Outcome**

The effectiveness of this project inevitably lies at the creativity of the preacher and his/her methods of preaching at a community level. The desired outcome is that preachers and leaders of the church acquire the necessary skills in reaching this visual generation in which they live. There must be research in media, artistic mediums, and technology for utilization in enabling potential opportunities for unsettling idealized
conception and supposition about technology and art form experiences. If we do not effectively communicate the message of God through mediums that this postmodern generation relates to, then all our preaching becomes pointless.

Preachers, evangelist, and leaders, should ensure that they, along with their audience, encounter God. Jesus used community and understanding in his representations. His parables and metaphors were symbols for the kingdom—a seed, a pearl, fish, treasure, sowers, and shepherds. Jesus narratives were agricultural and futuristic; “the kingdom of heaven is like,” relating to familiar cultural objects and life.

The postmodern preacher needs to heed Jesus’ examples utilizing modernity’s culture and lifestyle in the forms of technology—media, artifacts—films, songs, drama, art, and poetry—to name a few. Many preachers, evangelists, and leaders speak from the perspective of Christian culture rather than that of the postmodern cultural view. Preachers, evangelists, and leaders should ensure the encountering of God along with their audiences.

I have found from surveys and other complaints by congregants that when it comes to the sermon, they are not being fed. While many relay that some preachers add humor or helpful power point illustrations, the sermon itself lacked life and realism from the speaker. Some have said that they are more influenced by artists than anything else. These statements and my personal participation as an audience member has inspired me to search for effective methods to reach the audience when preaching.

**Outcome**

As pastors we need to reflect a similar image in our preaching. It is essential that God’s messages communicate this is what I need, this message with all of its technology
and art forms portray a must have message that is essential for the audience in feeling part of the sermon and God’s message. The Holy Word of God should reflect the preacher’s crafted art form with relevancy to the post-modern culture, when speaking to create a more effective sense of connection. The preacher should be an artist in relaying God’s Word to effectively connect to modernity.

I presented various exploratory sermons using artistic forms and technology. Through feedback on these messages I discovered the audiences’ feelings and responses to these mediums. The purpose of the qualitative preaching and art forms study was to explore the experiential and effectiveness of art and technology by the preacher in relaying God’s messages to the audience, especially the postmodern generation.

Figure 18. Prop, The Forgiveness Cross. Photo by Eugene Trevithick, 2011.
One example of artistic mediums in the form of the ‘forgiveness cross,’ constructed from wood and mirrors, provides a dramatic conclusion. The message effectively points the audience to the cost of their sins and the forgiveness by Jesus blood. This effective and emotionally charged prop reaches all generations and is not easily forgotten.

The first sermon preached in March at Alhambra, California was presented in the oral universal style of preaching without media, the results shown in figure 16. The graph indicates non-use of artistic forms and technology indicating the plausibility of reaching a wide range of age groups.

**Sermon—‘To the Ends of the Earth’ without Creative Mediums**
Based on Matthew 28:19-20

I have sought to summarize the responses below each of the questions:

1. **In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?**

   All are called to accomplish the urgency of evangelizing, witnessing and doing the great commission. I am Christ’s disciple and I need to use my talents. Even I can preach the Gospel if God calls me. The leading of the Holy Spirit allows me to make a difference in other people’s lives. God is with me and he died for me.

2. **Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?**

   I felt encouraged. We may have to make sacrifices to serve him, and all of us need to witness daily while using our life, gifts and talents, in sharing Jesus with others. I am motivated to do the Great Commission. You do not have to go to another country to spread the gospel. God doesn’t leave us. Jesus loves me, so powerful. I need to
witness more. God should be first in all things. We can all be evangelists even if it’s friends and family. Great preaching.

3. What did you gain from listening to the sermon-perspective/faith/motivation, etc.?

Motivation, to focus on witnessing while having God daily in my life.

Perspective and love in using my talents to serve him, while loving one another. I am called according to his purpose and realize the importance of the Great commission.

Faith and motivation to preach Jesus love. When you are afraid go forward. We don’t need special training, or a certain personality type, because we have hope, I have hope.

Table 1. “To the ends of the earth”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting and understandable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I was able to pay attention to the entire message.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The sermon was relevant to my culture.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Would Creative mediums have made the sermon more effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded in individual.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
Figure 19. Charts made from sermon, “To the ends of the ends of the earth.”

Table 1 and figure 19 shows that the sermon was effective without creative mediums. Over 90 percent (strongly agree and agree) of those surveyed would have preferred the use of creative mediums. Ninety-five percent of the audience surveyed (strongly agree and agree) that the message of the sermon would appeal to a range of age groups.

4. Which part of the sermon will you likely remember the most?

The Holy Spirit was here today. The sermon and its message. Jesus telling the disciples to go and preach and we should do the same. The disciples started as simple fisherman and became Jesus disciples preaching his story. The urgency to do the Great Commission in my world, and in all aspects of our lives we have the opportunity to share Christ with others. Much of the world doesn’t know of Jesus and our need to teach others. How much do we love Jesus, are we willing to do everything for him, I must rely on God to lead me? Jesus is my Lord and Savior and every day we need to
further our relationship with him. The antidote narrative of the pastor’s cousin Fred, and his mission trip.

5. *See your answer for statement “E” if Creative Visuals had been used in the sermon why would this have made it helpful?*

   I thought the message was good without visuals. Visuals would make the message more effective, cement the message in your mind, so you don’t forget and they would keep the mind from wandering. They enhance the Bible messages making the message more real. The visuals help me recall and remember the sermon and the message would have been clearer and more easily grasped. I am a visual person so I relate to visuals. Visuals allow you to pay more attention making the sermon more interesting leaving a lasting impression. Creative visuals simplify the sermon making it more understandable and would have given me a broader scope into the message. The use of visuals aids the sermon, and opens the door to a new light of understanding of Christ and who he is. The visuals make it more real, and interesting while the message comes to life. They help me to interact with the sermon and visuals definitively amplify the message. Visuals draw my attention, and people learn more when two parts of the brain are involved for example the auditory center and the visual center. Ties in with your imagination. I don’t think a visual would have changed the meaning for me. Not really I learnt a lot.

6. *Do you have any further comments?*

   At least two thirds of the population are visual listeners. The more visual aids used, the better one retains things. Even the best sermon can benefit from props. It needed that extra artistic value to give it an open expansion of life making the message
relevant for my generation. I loved the way the message was articulated. I am secure and safe because Jesus is with me. I was overwhelmed with the goodness of God. The Pastor exudes passion and is exemplified in encouraging others to be disciples of Christ. Great sermon, it was uplifting and made me feel good. Many personal complimentary remarks were given on my preaching.

A second evaluation form was distributed to several churches to see if the use of creative mediums when preaching would make a bigger impact on the audience.

Sermon—‘To the Ends of the Earth’ with Creative Mediums
Based on Matthew 28:19-20

This sermon was subsequently preached in March 2011, and employed media support at Rolling Hills, California, using props, drama, and video clip. In this sermon I attempted to parallel the story of my cousin Fred’s story as a missionary and his willingness to die, in proclaiming the Great Commission. The focal point being, we all need to do the Great Commission enabling Jesus to return. People need to relay this story—re-telling of the Great Commission. This sermon was more effectively received with enhanced media support, compared to the same sermon without media support.

I have sought to summarize the findings below each of the questions.

1. In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?

You can use art in preaching God’s word. An emphasis in doing the Great Commission, and making a difference in the lives of others. We are all disciples and need to tell people of the price Jesus paid for us being set free. Love of Jesus by his death for our sins. God will always be with me even to the end of the world. This sermon had relevancy for God’s people.
2. Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?

Giving the world, the message of Jesus love—do it now. Listen to God and live out the Great Commission. Being a good example to others. Knowing Joy, peace and love.

3. What did you gain from listening to the sermon—perspective/faith/motivation, etc.?

Faith, to speak of Jesus to a lost and dying world. Reviving our love for Jesus. Motivation. Share the Gospel with others. Perspective and faith. God’s sacrifice. His love brings hope.

Table 2. “To the ends of the ends of the earth” with media

Survey Results after sermon with Media Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting and understandable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I was able to pay attention to the entire message.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The sermon was relevant to my culture.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Creative mediums made the sermon more effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded individual.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
Table 2 and figure 20 clearly depict the impact of using creative mediums, (drama, story) resulting in 100 percent effectiveness (strongly agree and agree) in presenting the same sermon with drama, narrative and props. The audience also concluded 100 percent suitability of using this method of preaching to a large range of age groups (strongly agree and agree).

4. Which part of the sermon are you likely to remember the most?

The stories. The cross prop—Jesus loves me, and died to give us eternal life. We are called to do the Great Commission even if it is only in my world. The drama. Bible texts. The whole sermon. Being saved means being sent. Visuals, especially the drama. I can speak and be artistic.

5. Do you have any further comments?

Didn’t like the video clip. Very powerful and Illustrations’ helped me relate to the sermon. Jesus passion and Pastor’s love of Jesus came through the message. I want
to go out into the world and tell of Jesus love. I was impressed with the information, experiences, and resources applied in the sermon. The message of Jesus love for the lost, this encouraged me to go through the same suffering for the same purpose in leading others to Jesus. I came depressed and left lifted up, motivated and ready to conquer and witness to the world. Us youth got a blessing from the sermon finally someone who we can listen to, and we liked the drama. Well presented for every culture. We need more of this type of preaching. Time will tell in how many people were impacted with this sermon. The Holy Spirit touched my heart and he was evident throughout the sermon. The preacher is very animated; I sat in anticipation of what she would do with her visuals. I hope to hear this Pastor preach repeatedly.

Sermon – ‘The Great Conspiracy’ with Creative Mediums
Based on Revelation 12:7-9

I have sought to summarize the responses below each of the questions.

This sermon was preached for an Easter service April 2011, and employed media support at Hawthorne California, included media in the form of a movie—‘Eternal Grace,’ refer to amendment 1, chapter three. This story through film was produced and edited over 12 months. In this sermon I attempted to parallel the satanic conspiracies by Satan in killing Jesus, along with his other conspiracies to prevent God's plan of building up a group of sanctified people—men and women who are fully committed to Jesus. The focal point being God has a covenant with his people. God’s plan was evident throughout the Sanctuary. It’s services point to Jesus death as the final Sacrifice setting us free from sins reward, so we can gain eternal life.

1. *In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?*
Constant need of prayer, don’t put anything before my prayer time with God.

Total dependence on Christ who endured much so that we the people; could have eternal life. We need to choose Jesus and not the world; he is the one who can bring us through. Satan’s evil not only happened in heaven but he brought it to earth, and he tries to make us rebel also. Satan has the world believing that God is the reason for our problems. Remember there was war in heaven, and Christ won.

We need to show how much God the Father and Jesus the Son loves and gave for us. Next time we don’t feel loved or cared for, remember Satan wants us to believe we are worth nothing. Conspiracy and great temptation of humankind—blood of Jesus has been shed for all of us. Jesus dying on the cross defeating Satan’s great conspiracy.

Satan’s lies try to stop us from believing in Jesus. Listen and learn. The sanctuary is a covenant with us, and Satan’s’ lies won’t win. Christ died for our sins destroying Satan.

2. Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?

Yes, make time for God. I am worthy and I can be cleaned up through Christ. Sometimes we let go of God’s hand and think that there is no coming back, but God forgives—the sacrifice paid for it all. Don’t let Satan deceive your life, especially in believing in God. Jesus was crucified, his blood shed for me on the cross because he loves and cares for me. Jesus blood shed on the cross covers our sins when we accept him.

3. What did you gain from listening to the sermon—perspective/faith/motivation, etc.?

Motivation to read my Bible, and study God’s words more. It was positive and uplifting. My faith was strengthened and I grew in perspective, faith and motivation. There is hope, God will receive us always not matter what we have done. I must trust in
Jesus and not the world. Jesus loves us. I want to commit my life to God in ways that God will be pleased. I am motivated after hearing the message because it is something we need to hear and also read this message every day so we don’t forget. It’s very important that we know that Jesus paid the price, he lives, and he is coming—we need to remember that. The sermon gave me strength that God is loving and merciful. All to Jesus I surrender all. My faith was strengthened. My hope and courage was lifted higher in Christ, because I know Satan’s identity was revealed. Jesus death is the ultimate demonstration of his love to the world. Prayer is necessary; forgiveness was shown starting at the sanctuary. Finally a Pastor who understands us young people, someone we want to listen to.

Table 3. “The great conspiracy” with media

Survey Results after sermon with Media Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting and understandable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I was able to pay attention to the entire message.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The sermon was relevant to my culture.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Creative mediums made the sermon more effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded individual.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
Table 3 and figure 21 depict the use of creative mediums (film and prop) indicating 94 percent significantly felt creative mediums made the sermon more effective compared to 6 percent who were indifferent. There was a mixed response indicating the tension between the younger and older generations when it came to the appeal of creative mediums to a large range of age groups. Seventy-five percent (strongly agree and agree) while 19 percent were indifferent and 6 percent disagreed with mediums being effective for a large age range. Clearly the younger generations felt creative mediums where more important and more effective to larger age ranges.

4. *Which part of the sermon will you likely remember the most?*

All of it, the Movie—everything about the sermon. Movie on the Sanctuary, it shows Jesus death and made everything real—it came to life. I need to be better in my prayer life. The explanation of what Christ’s death means to me, he already paid the price. Always keep my eye on the cross. Satan was the great conspirator and he wants
us to take our eyes off Christ. The many garments that Satan wears designed to fool you. Satan tries to keep us from God. Satan’s deception of Eve and therefore sin entered into the world through Adam. We sometimes look at self and in our pride we lose sight of all that Jesus did in order that we can live a happy life. Satan is the great deceiver. The Devil is a liar, God is all-powerful, and God knows what is best for us.

God sent his son to die on the cross for humanity for whoever believes in him will be saved. Viewing and hearing the suffering of Jesus crucifixion just to save us and give us eternal life. Man and women are now clothed with the robe of darkness, fortunately Jesus tore the robe and offered his robe of righteousness. Love of Jesus and Satan is jealous.

5. Do you have any further comments?

I enjoyed the way the pastor used many different stories and visuals, especially the story through the movie. The visuals really helped, putting it all into perspective, and what Jesus did in love for his people. As a young adult I felt that this message and movie, was culturally relevant for me, meeting me in my culture. Great preacher.

Sermon — ‘He Is Not Here’ with Creative Mediums
Based on Matthew 28:6

I have sought to summarize the responses below each of the questions.

The Easter sermon presented in April 2011 at El Monte, California, was in the narrative style. This first person story of Mary Magdalene included biblical costume to depict a more realistic presentation of the narrative. A cross, held various sins that could be viewed from where the audience was sitting. The focus was a parallel story of Mary Magdalene and her sins compared to our sins. The focal point symbolizing the
importance of the death of Jesus in the forgiveness of our sins just as Mary’s sins were forgiven. I placed blood on the cross enabling the audience to visualize Jesus blood, covering their sins similar to those on the cross.

1. *In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?*

   Jesus love and mercy. Life in the ministry of Jesus on earth. Christ died on the cross and forgives us for our sins. Jesus died for our salvation. God’s love—giving his Son to save the world. A reminder that the cross plays a major part in our salvation. To live a different life in Jesus love. The view through the eyes of Mary Magdalene and how forgiveness cleanses all our sins. No one can condemn us, we are forgiven.

2. *Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?*

   Being merciful to others. Jesus was sent to forgive us for any sin. To remind me of what a sacrifice Jesus made for me. Christ has done everything for me. Culture is very important to us. We can relate to Mary, as we are sinners too. God loves us so much that he gave his Sons life for us. It moved me as a younger person, to look at a sermon that met my needs.

3. *What did you gain from listening to the sermon—Perspective/faith/motivation, etc.?*

   Motivation, and received hope, and renewal of my faith. Perspective. Knowing what Jesus did for me, gives me the hope of eternal life. Faith and motivation. Everyone—is loved by God. I gained hope, knowing I will be able to be with Jesus in the future. Love of God and his assurance.
Table 4. “He is not here” with media

Survey Results after sermon with Media Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting, and understandable.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I was able to pay attention to the entire message</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The sermon was relevant to my culture</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Creative mediums made the sermon more effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded in individual.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.
Table 4 and figure 22 are characterized by a mixed response in using creative mediums (first person narrative and props). While 83 percent (strongly agree and agree) to the effectiveness of using artistic mediums, 17 percent was indifferent to using creative mediums. A mixed response was also given in the effectiveness of reaching a wide range of age groups. Eighty-nine percent (strongly agree and agree) to the effectiveness of the sermon, 11 percent was indifferent.

4. Which part of the sermon will you likely remember the most?

The narrative presentation of the sermon. The cross and the handout. The presentation given through Mary in first person, and her testimony. Jesus is ready to forgive and give life eternal if I believe. No matter what, God loves you. The props. The entire first person sermon. The cross and Mary came to life for me in the presentation. When Jesus gave his life for our sins, his life is very powerful. When the Pastor walked in as Mary and starting speaking, her entrance immediately captured my
attention including the biblical costume. The cross prop was emotional for me. I could see myself as Mary.

5. Do you have any further comments?

Pastor is animated. Great Sermon. It was an interesting and effective way to present the message through Mary’s eye’s and then being led to the cross prop.

Informative sermon. There was effective communication, one I will not forget. One of the best sermons, and what made it special was, the acting and story through the eyes of Mary Magdalene.

**Sermon —‘After God’s Own Heart’ with Media**

Based on Psalms 23

I have sought to summarize the responses below each of the questions.

The sermon presented in May 2011, at Redlands California, using media (poetry recitals, through readings and CD) see Amendment 2, chapter three. I also included various props. The focal point focused on the parallel between the poetry of Psalms 23 Jesus is our shepherd, with Psalms 22 Jesus as Savior, and the beauty of this art form. By combining these two Psalms it allows the comprehension in the shedding of blood as the final atoning sacrifice, in contrast to the Shepherds care.

1. *In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?*

   Follow Jesus our good Shepherd because we are his sheep. He provides all our needs through the good, and the bad times. He is with us even in death—our Savior.

2. *Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?*

   God loves us, and gives protection for his people, with a promise to keep us from temptation. God is in the midst of our storms and will be with us to the end. I yearn to
know my shepherds voice, and be closer to him because I am one of his sheep—he will lead me home. I can have a Yahweh roi sheep—shepherd relationship. In times of sadness, despair and death, it is comforting to know that God will never leave me. You can never be lost because God will find you. God saves and guides me. We have a relationship with our heavenly Father, and this is the very essence of life.

3. **What did you gain from listening to the sermon—Perspective/faith/motivation, etc.?**

I gained perspective, faith hope, motivation, love, salvation and spiritual bread to satisfy my hunger. God is my Shepherd and I hope he comes and looks for the one lost sheep like me. It gave me inspiration and rejuvenated me. I now know who my Shepherd is, and that he is always there and cares for me. It made me more grateful to God, knowing I will live eternally with the Shepherd. It reinforced my belief in God as my Shepherd and provider because he is all we need. If we fall and go astray the Shepherd will pick us up and put us on the right path again. I know I have God, hope and my shepherd redeemer who cares for me. Many complimentary personal comments.
Table 5. “After God’s own heart” with media

Survey Results after sermon with Media Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting and understandable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. I was able to pay attention to the entire message.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. The sermon was relevant to my culture.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Creative mediums made the sermon more effective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded in individual.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Strongly Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Figure 23. Charts made from sermon, “After God’s Own Heart” with media.
Table 5 and figure 21 results very clearly depict 100 percent (strongly agree and agree) that use of creative mediums (poetry and props) made the sermon more effective. This same group also agreed 100 percent (strongly agree and agree) that this sermon would very clearly impact a large range of age groups.

4. Which part of the sermon will you likely remember the most?

The Shepherd caring for, and protecting his sheep. The story of two recitations of the 23rd psalm. The lost sheep. All of it, and to know the shepherd. The story of the Pastors sheep that were lost. The poetry, props—especially the cross with blood. The Lord cares for me, and restores us, as we learn to drawn close to him. I will live forever, because Jesus paid the price. Illustrations. The Pastors poetry she wrote on Psalms 22. Personal experience and the cross. Our Father in heaven forgives and heals our wounds caused by sin. Follow the shepherd and be saved. The Props were helpful in following the sermon and the poetry added that extra touch. Poetry, and preaching. The cross is the very essence of salvation, so the prop of the cross, reminded me of Jesus death and sacrifice for me. It also allowed me to see how much I am cared for by the shepherd. Strong presentation.

5. Do you have any further comments?

Many complimentary comments concerning my preaching and methods.

The graphs very clearly demonstrate a preference in the usage of modern mediums as they relate to the message of God presented by the preacher. This leads to the important question of how do preachers effectively stand in the pulpit and engage their audiences if they prefer artistic mediums and technology? The answer must be in that they are to be educated and trained effectively.
I completed some post sermon interviews with people after preaching with artistic mediums over the last several years at various churches in the USA and Australia. These included, Kingscliff, Byron Bay, Ocean Shores, and Casino to name a few churches in Australia. I inquired as to the effectiveness of the method of the sermon with use of creative visuals. Over and over people continually expressed that artistic mediums and technology were more affective for them in listening to the sermon. This allowed them to engage with the preacher and the message, making it an experiential and effective leaning method, allowing them to retain the messages of God as they lived their everyday lives.

**Results**

The purpose of this preaching and artistic media study, was to explore the experiential and effectiveness of the preacher using these mediums, in relaying God’s messages to the postmodern congregation.

God is such an artist that he speaks on many different levels. There is poetry as well as narrative, prophecy as well as prose, parable, history, proverbs, song, didactic theology, past and so on, and onomatopoeia, assonance, simile, allegory, metaphor, alliteration, hyperbole, and acrostics.¹ The created environment allowed experiential communication. The audience experienced the passion, excitement, and authenticity of God’s Word personally allowing the preacher to accommodate and communicate effectively to the audience visual and technological worldview.

Preachers attract audiences by being authentic. The audience wants to know who they are. In presenting the audiences sense of identity through the use of mediums they understand and know, it allows authentic understanding of the message presented by the preacher. People are always searching for something greater. There is a shift in people’s thinking; they are looking for a place of belonging in their environment. In this belonging environment, belief occurs.

Mixed methods research executed at various churches in both North America and Australia explored the audiences’ perception of sermons that did and did not utilize arts and technology. The response of the audiences suggest that messages are more effective in the acquiring reactions and reaching the audience with artistic mediums than those who do not use these mediums and allowing congregations to achieve a greater individual understanding of the message given by the preacher.

I fully believe that using artistic mediums and technology are effective, experiential, and powerful, in approaching and engaging today’s generations in preaching. If preachers and evangelists do not convey God’s messages successfully then they are futile. By incorporating these resources the preacher can accomplish an effective role in which they have been called in presenting the Gospel, breathing fresh energy and life into their sermons.
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

As a people made in the image of God we grapple with the mystery of a Holy Creator who resides in heaven and yet lived among us. How can the Father and Son be one (John 10:30) and yet distinctly different? How can Christ be at once the Author of life, Word made flesh, the Light of the world, the Good Shepherd, Lamb of God, Rabbi, Emmanuel—God with us, King, and Savoir? The whole of Christianity and God’s involvement within his creation is shrouded in mystery, but this should not be a surprise. “My thoughts are not your thoughts,” writes the prophet Isaiah, “Nor are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isa 55:8, 9).

Art Enriched

Author Darius L. Salter notes: “The story of our Christian faith is woven together with the mystery, imagination, creativity, and beauty. No other book contains more murder plots, love stories, betrayals, adulterous affairs, heroic feats, tragedies, triumphs, and redemptive endings than the Bible.” Is it any wonder that humanity is drawn to the artistic grandeur of a God that cannot be explained, or contained yet is real and seeks to be involved in the very minutiae of our lives? “Today’s post-modern world prefers
mystery over logic,” Salter adds. They seek impression over rationale, aesthetic beauty over practicality, and symbolism over obvious answers. We live in an art-enriched, art-minded world. For ministers, this rebirth of creativity and imagination opens the door for exciting possibilities. Scripture itself is an art form. It encourages preachers to invite their listeners to dialogue with them, to experience the Bible stories as they are being told; and by doing so, participate in the very nature and image of God.¹

Modernity craves sensationalism where everything must catch the eye; and humanity is drawn to paparazzi headlines, scandals and the steamy details of the rich and famous. It is no wonder that art and technology in its many forms are an essential necessity when it comes to preaching. As Darius Salter notes:

How disappointing it would be to visit the Louvre in Paris or the Getty in Los Angeles and discover that it's most esteemed piece of art had a drape or a veil over it. Instead you would like to find it in a setting and light that most enhances its magnificence. Obscuring the scriptures with trivial commentary, poor form, dull speech, and impotent moralism insults the task to which God has called us. Preaching is an exercise in aesthetics. When it is not, it is reduced to moral platitudes and utilitarian pragmatism.²

Society has evolved into a culture that screams, “I want it all and want it right now!” Cell phones, the Internet, and video-on-demand are just a few examples of how culture demands instant gratification. While previous generations might have waited for new technologies to develop, today’s consumer discards the latest gadget in favor of a ‘newer’ version before the original warranty expires. Plugged in, turned on, and tone deaf to the clatter of information surrounding society, the post modern culture refuses to wait, meditate, reflect on God’s words, or message and his will for their lives.

¹Salter, Preaching as Art, 22.
²Ibid., 20.
Similarly today’s preacher must be able to quickly deliver their message effectively across a broad spectrum of channels—print, going viral on the web, radio, DVD, podcasts, plus new mediums that are just beginning to emerge. To successfully reach the audience the preacher must engage them now, before they lose interest.

In recent years society has witnessed a surge in technological tools capable of projecting God’s message to the masses. Consider that less than a century ago the radio was a revolutionary concept. Today there are various television ministries, movie theatre churches, Internet sermons, cybercast baptisms, and virtual congregations connected via social networks. Can churches remain relevant under such a barrage of digital advances? Resource consultant Nancy S. Armstrong believes today’s preacher is ideally suited to reach the world for Christ in ways Billy Graham never could.

Has the advent of the Internet and computer led congregations toward the ‘virtual technology church,’ undermined the face-to-face relationships that have long characterized congregational life? Two recent studies, one supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the other by the Indianapolis Center for Congregations, suggest not. The vast majority of congregations using and experimenting with computer technology and the Internet are not promoting aberrations of Christian or congregational life. Rather, they are using computer technologies to enhance and promote traditional ministries: worship, fellowship, pastoral care, education, mission and community outreach, evangelism and communications.³

As preachers and leaders in the church we must ensure that technological mediums give the audiences an experiential experience, and not detract from it.

An “Artistic License” to Preach

Is the movement towards art-filled preaching and technological worship a poetic

licensure to proclaim God’s message through theatrical means, or merely an expression of the Holy Spirit’s desire to reach a larger and more diverse audience through modern methods? In a 2009 *Outreach Magazine* article, the author writes,

Presentation technology may be costly, not only in money but in time, in energy, and in the conflict it ignites in many churches. Yet most churches are motivated to use this technology not by its entertainment value but by its strategic effectiveness. One very traditional Baptist church in Indianapolis, for instance, decided that it was not effectively bringing the message of Christ to younger people and that its worship practices would need to be changed. The church’s decision to use multimedia technology in a new alternative worship service was driven not by the desire to appear relevant or up-to-date, but “to find the most effective ways of communicating the gospel.”

Modernity is a visual entertained society. The expectation in any event is drama, emotion, and laughter, all intertwined into a resounding conclusion. After all the bombardment of the senses, the absence of entertainment can feel like a great emptiness or void. If a preacher fails to use various works of art in his/her preaching they will often be labeled as dull or boring.

While software and projectors, large-screen televisions and movie clips may provide support and visuals; the truth of God’s message remains central to any sermon, evangelistic series, biblical study, or small group discussion.

Awkward (and often outdated) pull-down maps for Sunday school classes, for example, are being replaced by software-generated images of the ancient Near East, whereby Bible students can trace the missionary journeys of Paul or follow the exodus route of the Israelites. Classrooms of children can take part in an interactive encounter within Noah’s Ark, face-down lions with Daniel, or take part in a host of other games that enhance biblical literacy. . . . Whether or not churches will or should use computer technology is no longer the question. The real question is how congregations can best use these technologies to enhance their communities and missions.

---


5“Multimedia Presentations for Worship and Education.”
Individuals instinctively experiences life in an artistic and technological way. While other cultures, churches, and people may not feel comfortable or understand all aspects of today’s digital landscape, there can be no doubt that its global reach has and will continue to impact the Church. The question is not if today’s preacher should use visual arts, media, and technology in preaching, but how. “It’s so easy to sit back and criticize different methods of worship,” Jon writes in response to an Internet article.

I believe in being current and relevant in a world filled with negativity towards Churches. . . . If souls are being saved, then who are we to criticize the method in which it chooses? I can imagine there were many critics against Apostle Paul in the early church. He preached an entirely different way to worship God in spirit and in truth. Let’s be brave and bold in our ministry for God. My passion for God is what makes me bold.6

What is it about these qualities that make using artistic forms and technology in preaching more effective? In as much as art and technology can be defined as something undertaken with careful creative consideration and skill in order to stimulate the mind and/or emotions of the person partaking in these mediums, using different types of art forms while preaching can help enhance and combat issues.

With bold words and stunning drama God created the heavens and earth, actively participating in our struggles. Should not God command a large canvas? An argument for the use of visual arts in preaching is found in its effectiveness as a tool for reaching those outside of the walls of the traditional church. “Our church uses lots of technology and over 4,000 people have asked Jesus to be their Lord and Saviour in our church in its eight year history,” Pastor John Atkinson writes. “Technology is being used to reach the

---

people who wouldn’t have ever come to church to start with, without it.”

There will, of course, be congregations who resist all art and technology, claiming these mediums to be unbiblical. Yet substantiated evidence provided from God and his words in the Bible prove otherwise. “I think a balance can be struck where the message of the sermon is not lost in the flash of the technology. Granted, there are some churches, which seem more like a concert, or Broadway production than an actual service. Yet, I’ve seen some decent applications of technology, which actually enhances the service.”

Still, the struggle to enhance the worship service without detracting from it remains. One tech-savvy blogger warned, “As far as distractions from worship go I think everything (including preaching) can be used as a distraction. That is why we have to be sure of the “why” behind everything we do!” Another wrote, “I want to be faithful to express the simplicity of the gospel while understanding that modern technology (used the right way) can be a tool in doing that.” If artistic mediums and technology are successfully used in supporting the sermon rather than detracting from the message, these will powerfully accomplish the purpose of engaging the audience in proclaiming the Gospel.

Ways to Incorporate Art in Preaching

Biblical stories and religious themes of all sorts have been depicted in stained

---

glass, mosaics, painting, and sculpture. One member of Kenyan American Community Church in Marietta, Georgia, notes, “Music, poetry, dance, drama, architecture, and other art forms have also served catechetical purposes.” For members of the Kenyan American Community Church and other leading-edge churches, the addition of technology into their evangelistic mission includes, weekly website updates, worship service ripped to DVDs, audio sermons, podcasts, Internet radio shows, online videos, and print and electronic periodicals. Through the use of these and other tools visitors, active members, and “shut-ins” can participate in worship long after the close of service.

Alana Campbell suggests that God has always been a great reformer in the field of Christian art. “The glory of the Lord is revealed in art. Have you ever been in a museum filled with a variety of paintings, when suddenly you come upon one that is Christian? It speaks revelation to your heart, and you may find yourself meditating upon its message for a long time afterwards.11

Paintings and pictures have been used throughout history; today’s movies are nothing more than moving images accompanied by music and dialogue. A preacher who uses this medium at the beginning or conclusion of their sermon can leave a lasting and powerful effect. Preaching in the first person narrative or skit often evokes emotion in those who are watching as the main character goes through difficult transformations. Beyond being merely entertaining, an entire narrative is relayed, unlikely requiring any reading of an actual biblical passage to understand the message and has been proven

effective throughout history especially when the culture was illiterate. In actuality, a drama can enhance preaching.

Singing has always been a part of praising God. Music and lyrics are works of art within themselves. The addition of technology in the form of video monitors, projectors, lighting, and sound in churches brings new perspectives to worship and preaching. Concluding a sermon with a song can bring tears to the eye, or can be recalled over and again by the congregants, reminding them of the sermon. Numerous artistic backgrounds including photos and videos attract the attention of the audience and stimulate the brain. With service times ranging between sixty to ninety minutes long, the average person needs various mediums within the sermon for such an extended period of time.

For a truly effective message the decorated stage, backdrops, flowers, hanging photos, banners or paintings, including lighting and music, support the sermons main point and incorporate works of art. This effect is to reinforce the sermons main theme and points.

Great art forms including story, poetry and music perhaps best portray God’s magnificent messages when preaching. The arts have been used since the beginning of the Jewish Scriptures and continued on through the writings of the First Century Christian Church. Not only does the Bible bring to light the use of the arts, but it also provides us with a unique insight into the creative messages and life in the early church. The message and methodology conveyed through the arts powerfully proclaim God’s messages and glorifying Jesus Christ.

Larry Hubatka, Creative Director of the Elevation Church in Charlotte, North
Carolina, offers this advice - April 24, 2011. “We use whatever is the most effective type of media is what we will implement. We are so mission-minded and so driven by our vision that if overhead transparencies are the most effective, then that is what we will be using. But if high definition video is the most effective then that will be our choice.” Wes Watson, Elevation Church video producer adds, “Live video has truly impacted our church. By using video teaching, we are able to have two and three services at a time instead of just one. With the rapid pace that technology is growing, watching something on a high-resolution video screen isn’t a let-down.”

Previously the preacher would have been exhausted after preaching two sermons but with the support of art forms and technology, he or she is now to preach with ease and find time to rest and reflect during the worship service. Christian Artist Sandra Joy Perini says that art used for Christian ministry, or any other ministry, must connect with the viewer to make them think, as well as feel, something beyond pretty landscapes or interesting abstract paintings. Preaching today has to be innovative to reach the postmodern culture with all the technology and art forms that are constantly thrust into their faces.

A beautiful sculpture of a person or animal can be greatly appreciated and admired, but does it compel the viewer toward action or to consider a new way of thinking? Ministry Art tells a story and demonstrates a truth that evokes feelings of thankfulness, comfort, security, hope, faith, joy or peace. It can also compel the viewer to rethink spiritual beliefs or convict him of his need to change his behavior or values. 12

Jesus himself used artistic forms in preaching in the form of parables: constructing personal stories, yet touching the heart of each person differently. This

undoubtedly is a work of art. According to Pete Enns, Senior Fellow of Biblical Studies for the Bio Logos Foundation, has said:

Speaking in parables is indeed similar to an artist’s craft. Neither are systematic, logical arguments aimed at intellectual persuasion. Rather, they create impressions; whole new worlds of meaning intended to turn old worlds on their heads. Further, they do not always clarify, but actually can by design obscure a deeper reality. To apprehend that deeper reality, one must—like a patron facing a timeless painting—continue to seek, ponder, and meditate on what is being said.\textsuperscript{13}

A sermon is a work of art. When a preacher skilfully puts words and emotions together along with art forms or technology and scripture references into the sermon, these elements can be both thought provoking and stimulating. While preaching previously could stand on its own, today’s audience seeks a richer experiential experience complete with visuals, words, and sounds. Using works of art while preaching is not only effective, but also mandatory if the message is going to be received by anxious ears, remembered, and reacted upon. Therefore, the preacher needs to be well versed in these mediums.

Broadcasting Beyond Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria

Pastor Albert C. Jones of Taylorsville’s New Pilgrim Baptist Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, sites the use of technology for his church’s rapid growth. “Eight years ago New Pilgrim was a struggling church of just 55 active members. Then a young senior pastor, Corey J. Hodges arrived using new technology as one of the tools. Active membership (increased) to seven hundred people today, representing twenty different

nations.”

Brent Johnson of Eagle Brook Church sums up the experience of many younger congregational members.

Although I grew up in church, I’m in college and haven’t made the effort to go on Sundays for a while. But someone recently invited me... so I went to their website to look up information about the church and see what it was about. I clicked on some videos they had used for recent sermon introductions. They were short skits done by people from the church to go with particular messages, but they seemed very professional. And they were funny, so I watched them all the way through. I decided to go. On the first Sunday I attended, the pastor used a short clip from the movie “A Beautiful Mind,” about the mathematician John Nash. The clip helped make the pastor’s message about what’s most important in life more significant. I could relate better because they were using something I was familiar with—movies. The second time I went, the pastor put personal pictures up on the screen during his message, such as a picture of his grandson. This really helped keep my attention. The church has three large screens in front, and the music and video clips they used were impressive.

There are problems inherent in using any art form or new technology. Today’s preacher may find resistance as he or she seeks to touch all the senses in communicating with their congregation. Some may feel that using new technology will cause people to focus more on emotions, when in actual fact technology and art can help support the preacher’s message if relayed in a professional, effective, and deliberate manner. There is a very fine line between modernizing and displacing the formalities and values of preaching. Changing for the sake of change is more likely to have a negative impact on the congregation and the message the preacher is attempting to convey to his or her audience.

With churches launching art forms and the latest technologies in their daily


operations, those who choose not to update their services are often labeled by younger generations as boring or a waste of time. When arts and technology are absent, the Holy Spirit’s ability to communicate God’s truth is limited to the preacher’s message.

Part of that experience is hearing exactly what God is saying to the individual person. Using media that is open to interpretation actually gives those in attendance the opportunity to glean for themselves what God wants to say to them as opposed to hearing only what the preacher relays. It not only gives individuals the opportunity to meditate on the message, but also allows them to contemplate on the information for much longer than if they were to hear an auditory sermon that included no artistic concepts.

**How Great Thou Art**

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Words are but a small part of who we are and how we communicate. Before God spoke the Holy Spirit hovered over the waters, calling to us the way the smell of a sea breeze lures us to the shore. When God cast man in his image he shaped him from dirt, the way a potter might breathe life into us. Could it be our voice, raised in words and song, is the call of human beings returning to God the melody he placed within us, the creativity of the artistic nature inherited?

Art, in all its varied forms, speaks to people in ways mere words cannot. To say humanity is made in God’s image says too little. We are not made; we are sculpted. Humanity is not flesh and bones; but instead pitch and rhythm, melodies, dance, and actors. People are the shapes of sculptures born from within—and so much more.

Do we not feel the pulse and rhyme of the ocean and wish to dance? Do we not
hear a chorus of birds and seek to add our voices to their melody? Do we not see the beauty of nature and want to create a painting or film? How can humanity gaze at the banner of a garment woven with arthritic hands and not see within the fabric color, shape, and love? These cords remind the preacher of their own importance within the tapestry of God’s church. People strain to see God’s light through the pigment of stained glass, capturing the brilliance of the sun. When looking at the fractured panes one recounts the story of our Lord twisted, tortured, and broken for humanity—turning his radiance into light for his people. Yes, words have the power to change, liberate, and create, but art transcends words and speaks the language of God.

As preachers strive to convey God’s messages to the post-modern congregations, we must share it in ways that attract not just the traditionalist, but artistic, technological savvy, and culturally curious. To the extent that our audience learns best by art forms and digital mediums, the preacher must adjust their preaching skills to meet them. Faithfulness to God’s Word and his art forms compels us to use all possibilities when reaching toward a lost world. This is the call of the Great Commission.

**A Reason to Preach**

It is my hope that the preacher will utilize the amazing creative abilities given to them from God in relaying his or her messages effectively to the postmodern generation. Art and technology has allowed me to positively use creative methods in my own preaching, in ways that have reached beyond my expectations.

Finally, this project has, for me, been both exhilarating and humbling as I consider the potential and possibilities of the futuristic preacher and their audience. My passion to share, and yearning for preaching in an artistic manner has become realized.
through the arts and technology. In the words of the Apostle Paul:

I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some (1 Cor 9:19-22).

This is the challenge of today’s preacher: to become a servant to all and adopt preaching styles and tools that will most effectively reach our current culture. The longing and yearning to “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel” (Mark 16:15), can be satisfied by using artistic forms in the preacher's message. I have discovered in my actions that there is a profound response to art forms and technology, in almost all demographics concerning the preaching of God’s Word. Artistic mediums and technology are critical elements to evangelism and preaching. When Jesus said to go into the world and preach the Gospel, he was articulating the need to share the word with everyone, by all means and in ways they can understand. The preacher’s duty is to present the Gospel in the most informative and effective manner. Personally, art forms and technology have transformed my walk with God in relaying his words. I pray that this will be the same walk with all preachers. My results: Art forms and Technology were more successful than audible preaching, effectively reaching all generations.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

Technology and art forms cannot make an inadequate preacher a powerful speaker. It can, however, expand the extent and impact of an effective preacher. Therefore, I recommend that pastors and evangelists research and experiment with
various technology and artistic mediums themselves, observing their effectiveness within the messages they present.

Dallas Willard notes that the will is transformed by experience, not information. This invaluable study, and its resources are inspiring, generating an important area for further study. I have attempted to address the issue and controversy over art forms, technology, and applications being used in the church, highlighting that God himself from the beginning has used these mediums by means of examples from the Bible. Many pastors, evangelists, and other leaders feel unqualified and limited in their skills when it comes to using art forms and technology. Too often they face many issues in deploying artistic mediums and technology not only within their staff, but also among their congregation. It is especially important to examine the ways in which multimedia can be used to enhance the worship experience, when it comes to the preaching and teaching of God’s Word.

Unless trained in these areas, pastors, evangelists, and leaders face daunting challenges that stem from the paradigm shifts in society and may find themselves out of step with expectations of their congregation. Pastors must be educated in the usage of art forms and technology recognizing the importance of these mediums as used throughout the Bible. This study indicates several additional areas for research. There needs to be alternative forms of instruction via vocational education, DVDs, personal experimentation, workshops, conventions, and training models as supplementary forms of instruction. These tools reinforce the importance and effectiveness of art and technological usage and their effectiveness in preaching.

Further research in the exploration and use of alternative artistic mediums and
technology will serve preachers, evangelists, and leaders advantageously as they spread the Gospel. For this reason there needs to be further study in the developing area of art filled preaching.

Although the preacher’s use of artistic forms and technologies engagement is not for the use of entertainment power, neither should it become an obsession. Instead the use of these tools should convey discovery, enthusiasm, and employment within the worship service and during preaching. Pastors need to experiment and measure the most effective tools in acquiring this knowledge.

The use of visual, verbal, and technological communication by the preacher may present a daunting challenge, but it is a struggle worth surmounting, especially when one considers how the expanding role of communication is changing the political climate and culture in countries that were previously closed to new ideas.

My passion for preaching the Gospel compels me to present God’s messages in the most effective and articulate manner to these visual generations, engaging them in their own art and technology, resonating God’s message for all people. The reason I preach is because my Heavenly Father, my LORD and my Savior—Yeshua, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit have inspired me through their use of interactive artistic mediums and preaching. “For God so loved (“me”).

I have attempted to show how preaching through parable, symbol, poetry, other mediums, and technology can create the intrinsic value in the preachers message. My prayer and hope is that churches and their leaders will embrace all the tools made available by God and use them for his glory wherever, whenever, and forever. Therefore I would like to give these recommendations.
In Touch with Culture

The information gap among pastors is broad. Some have no real understanding at all while others possess limited knowledge of the theological devices available for preaching. This begs to question: Should we do more to provide in-depth training in the arts and technology for pastors, evangelists, and leaders? There needs to be an in-depth investigation on how to teach and educate these futuristic pastors, evangelists, and leaders in using these mediums. What necessitates change is how pastors, evangelists, and church leaders are presenting their messages. What percentage of education, if any, have pastors received in this imperative subject—media arts and technology?

Previously, technology has been viewed as an optional pursuit, but in today’s culture the use of technology is fundamental. Are there specific areas of need and opportunities to educate and train preachers, evangelists, and church leaders, for example, in social networking? While we applaud the innovative preacher who pursues the use of technology in the pulpit, this growing trend of dynamic communication should not be left solely to the church and its staff members. Instead, pastors should assume the lead and become fully involved understanding the effectiveness and the distribution of technology in the church. This allows pastors to learn innovative ways that can enhance their sermons.

It is essential that these mediums be included into the curriculum for pastors while they are being trained for the ministry. This will allow preachers to more effectively relate to the culture they will be preaching to. Those currently working in ministry should also be educated in these technologies and art forms through yearly conferences or by an experienced, educated, and qualified individual. Perhaps an
individual or team might travel to various churches or districts to train pastors and/or staff members. This could be done through seminars at churches, districts, or monthly pastors meetings. Pastors could receive followed-up instruction and further training through books and other media resources. In such a setting questions could be addressed and examples presented giving a more distinct approach to preaching practices when using technology and artistic forms.

The paradigm shift into these mediums will allow a fresh new perspective into preaching styles, which will in turn resonate within the world in which they live, allowing more successful interaction with their audiences. Technological knowledge is now crucial to the weekly worship service experience for pastors either personally, or through a pastoral team if they are going to succeed in reaching today’s generation, allowing interaction with their audiences.

**Seek and You Will Find**

Memorable preachers like Martin Luther will be remembered long after the sermons have been preached. Therefore, I would further recommend that pastors and evangelists research and experiment with various technology and art forms themselves, to see what is effective in relaying their messages to their audiences in using excellent forms of interactive media.

Technology and artistic mediums are amplifiers of natural abilities, conveying discovery, enthusiasm, and enjoyment within the pastors’ message. There needs to be experimentation in finding the most effective tools in acquiring this knowledge. These mediums will propel technological advantages when it comes to their messages—enhanced preaching.
Therefore it is essential that pastors and other church leaders creatively find and use these resources in discovering and understanding the innovation and usefulness that art forms and technology hold in transmitting God’s Word successfully. I would recommend to any reader that they seek to actively experiment and implement the arts into their own preaching styles—the device a person thought was a failure is quite often a success.

**Images of the Word—DVDs**

Media has become culture. Society is surrounded by videos, tweets, peeps, blog postings, and social network updates. As a result the preacher needs to know how to become “socially-connected” to a medium-driven audience. How does the preacher stand out in a world of choice? Each leader needs to successfully relay the interaction between the individual and God. A preacher comes out of the midst of his or her audience’s worldview and not from an external worldview. Each leader needs to successfully relay the interaction between the individual and God. Art forms can inspire humanity to transform, challenge, encounter, and motivate; allowing imagination and an unforgettable experiential moment inspiring the audience to be or do something further.

There needs to be a further in-depth investigation in assessing information. One such resource is the DVD or Blu Ray. Film is an effective medium that can be used in combination with relaying the word of God. Portable video makes learning easier. Pastors need to understand the power and effectiveness of images and films and movie clips within their ministry. One such resource is in creating an instructional and example DVD or Blu ray series. This will permit educational and visual access allowing easier learning. Another recommendation for pastors are books containing a DVD with
examples of sermons and downloadable e-books. An additional resource is accomplished by asking other pastors how they use film and DVD clips.

Pastors and evangelists need to be able to create films and DVD clips that enhance their messages while remaining true to God’s Word influencing society with their core message. If preachers do not succeed in developing a video ministry they risk becoming irrelevant in a media-culture allowing secular technological culture to speak louder. Pastors should seek to cut through the clutter of the world and project truth using whatever means available, including video. Personally I have experienced this positive reaction to the DVDs and video clips that I have produced, realizing this modern media driven culture in which we live is visibly connected to all aspects of life.

Using film as a visual aide reaches the visual listener allowing a broad spectrum of themes to be presented through images. For this reason we need to examine how film can bridge the gap between culture and the church. Other resources include audio books, portable and downloadable documents, and webinars. Therefore there needs to be further research in using film allowing a merge between both cultures. Included in this area is also a need for further publications and books written on the subject of artistic mediums and technology to further help the pastor.

**Female versus Male**

A growing trend is the use of arts and technology by female pastors. Some research suggests that both male and female styles of preaching can be effective, but in examining side-by-side preaching, women seem to have an edge when incorporating
Compared to their male counterparts, skilled female pastors on average are more likely to engage in new innovative methods. Female leaders will often bring fresh insights and suggest unconventional approaches. Research shows that higher standards are often imposed on women; therefore, women strive to use unconventional and transformative mediums with potential for meaningful change in their messages. This in turn can lead to innovations with artistic forms and technology.

Pastor Elizabeth Talbot is known for her effective means of using creative transformational style of preaching in her sermons by using DVD clips, props and symbolism. One does not forget her message. Another effective female preacher who impacts her audience is Dr. Hyveth Williams. She employs an effective style in her use of narratives in preaching. One viewer said he listened to preacher Joyce Meyer’s broadcast because he admired the many effective styles she used. Women’s emotions also can be powerful in their preaching. They are more likely to take risks and use alternative mediums in presenting their sermons. These three women some of the great examples of effective preachers; their calibers are beyond the art of persuasive speech. Therefore, there needs further research to see the comparisons of female vs. male preachers.

Workshops and Conventions

A further recommendation is the importance of making sure pastors attend and

participate in at least one to two workshops or conventions yearly. In physically attending these locations they will be able to visibly see what is working within the current culture and/or other churches. I have personally presented and spoken at conventions on this topic, realizing there is exigency in knowing how to incorporate technology and artistic mediums into ministry.

As preachers of the Word of God we stand behind pulpits and on stages, engaging our audiences and creating environments for face-to-face communication. Therefore, it is imperative that we understand and know how modernity comprehends the message so preachers can invite them to experience the passion of the living Word of God. Therefore the preacher or evangelist does not exist for the sake of artistic mediums and technology, but for the great commission. These modern mediums are but a tool to an end. This type of communication reaches a culture that understands art and technology. There needs to be an investigation to evaluate how these conventions and workshops can be used effectively in helping pastors and leaders impact and empower their preaching.

**Not the End**

Finally, further investigation and study needs to be done to view how we can effectively reach the younger generations, audiences, and the un-churched. There needs to be research into the effectiveness of artistic mediums and technology in preaching and evangelism to see what is relevant and effectual. This will provide preachers and other church leaders with evidence both biblical and cultural for successfully engaging the audience to the speaker and their message. A repository of resources is needed to
determine what is innovative, transformational, and effective in getting the message across from the speaker to the listener.

**Epistle**

“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings” (1 Cor 9:22-23 NIV). This project has given me the opportunity to start a foundation in the area of artistic mediums and technology that will always be a part of me. My energy and assessments have been worth the effort in bringing forth the importance of artistic mediums and technology in preaching. Part of our responsibility as preachers is to discover new and effective ways to reach our audiences. We need to remember that speech and visuals are intertwined enabling the audience to respond in an experiential way.

The apostle Paul declares when it comes to being effective in enabling others to know and follow Jesus, we have to integrate with others into their culture—*I have become all things*. Jesus became human in order to draw us to himself and creatively engaged the vehicles of his day. Paul became all things to the culture that surrounded him. Preachers ought to also become all things, crossing the cultural gap in presenting the gospel. If pastors lead with the gospel, art forms, and technology they will not only go into all the world, but will also become the light to the lost.

The capacity in this area of ministry is but the tip of the iceberg and is act one in the “drama” of preaching for the postmodernist’s preacher and evangelist. My research into Scripture has shown the interaction of art forms, symbols, and visuals, and how they are essential components in conveying God’s message. Demonstrative preaching is not
solely for communicating information, but for encountering God. I feel that being created in the image of the creator is to be creative. This is an amazing journey and call by God who has chosen me of all people, in relaying this information. I am also extremely grateful to those who have encouraged me, lifted me up, and shown their faith and belief in me in this drama of interactive preaching which necessitates the engagement of artistic mediums and technological methods. Without the use of these mediums, preachers risk isolation, ignorance, irrelevancy, and may lose their audiences in the trajectory of current culture. Scripture will never change but our approach to presenting his word must, especially when you consider that the average Christian is bombarded with receiving 3,000 media messages a day.

Technology and artistic mediums allow the preacher to be in this technological world but not partakers of the “drama” in the worldview. In interactive preaching, along with other “scenes” I have attempted to take “the lead.” I have undertaken the initiative in exhibiting a different method of preaching—a similar style originated by God. It has been a privilege to analyze artistic mediums, technology, and the sermon while connecting the audience, but especially in reaching the complex and diverse postmodern culture with the preaching of God’s Word. As a preacher looking at the nothing of the sermon and being able to create something out of nothing with artistic mediums and technology, it permits others to see who God is in my life as a preacher and artist. With the continual “drama” and rapid changes taking place from generation to generation in this complex world, issues arise in addressing these technological and visual only generations, therefore research must continue.

The Word of God will never alter, but it is essential that applications do. I will
continue to help make the correlations between God’s Word and the audience until the curtain goes down. My creativity, passion, and love of God’s words, artistic mediums, technology, and preaching have and always will inspire me:

\[
\text{And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come (Matt 24:14).}
\]

Figure 24. St. Peter’s Basilica, Rome. Photo by Richard J. Puleligh.
The magnificence of the artifacts of the Sanctuary and their meaning can only be imagined with the final sacrifice of Lamb of God through the visuals of this DVD.
APPENDIX B

CD—IF ONLY

Poetry, Chapter 3 Section Psalms

In our cultural climate of anguish, stress and despair this poem for a troubled world deals with the hope for those who wait on the Lord, and a longing for the world to see the love of the Savior. The poems message leaves a memorable effect.
APPENDIX C

DVD SERMONS

DVD—The Love Letter, John 3:16, Sermon

DVD—To the Ends of the Earth, Matthew 24:14, Sermon.


DVD—He Is Not Here, Matthew 28:6, Sermon.

DVD—After God’s Own Heart, Psalms 23, Sermon.
APPENDIX D

WITHOUT THE USE OF MEDIA EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Please answer the following questions about the sermon and your reaction to the presentation of the information.

1. In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?
_______________________________________________________________________

2. Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?
_______________________________________________________________________

3. What did you gain from listening to the sermon, perspective/faith/motivation/etc?
_______________________________________________________________________

Consider the sermon’s relevance and how it affected you personally.
(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree

A. The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting, and understandable. 1 2 3 4 5
B. I was able to pay attention to the entire message. 1 2 3 4 5
C. An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation. 1 2 3 4 5
D. The sermon was relevant to my culture. 1 2 3 4 5
E. Would Creative mediums have made the sermon more effective? 1 2 3 4 5
F. This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups. 1 2 3 4 5
G. This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent. 1 2 3 4 5
H. This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past. 1 2 3 4 5
I. Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded individual. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Which part of the sermon will you likely remember the most?
_______________________________________________________________________

5. See your answer for statement “E.” If Creative Visuals had been used in the sermon why would this have made it helpful?
_______________________________________________________________________

6. Do you have any further comments?
_______________________________________________________________________

220
WITH THE USE OF MEDIA EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Please answer the following questions about the sermon and your reaction to the presentation of the information.

1. In your opinion, what was the main idea of the sermon?

__________________________________________________________________________

2. Was there a personal message in the sermon that was relevant for you?

__________________________________________________________________________

3. What did you gain from listening to the sermon - perspective/faith/motivation, etc?

__________________________________________________________________________

Consider the sermon’s relevance and how it affected you personally.
(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree (4) Agree
(5) Strongly Agree

A The sermon vocabulary was varied, interesting, & understandable. 1 2 3 4 5
B I was able to pay attention to the entire message. 1 2 3 4 5
C An effective method of delivery was used for the presentation. 1 2 3 4 5
D The sermon was relevant to my culture. 1 2 3 4 5
E Creative mediums made the sermon more effective 1 2 3 4 5
F This sermon would appeal to a range of age groups. 1 2 3 4 5
G This sermon gave the impression that the preacher is intelligent. 1 2 3 4 5
H This sermon differs from those I have heard presented in the past. 1 2 3 4 5
I Based on the sermon, I felt that this preacher was an open-minded individual. 1 2 3 4 5

4. Which part of the sermon are you likely to remember the most?

__________________________________________________________________________

5. Do you have any further comments?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Barton, Bruce. “Must We Have Sermons?” *The Reader’s Digest*, October 1937, 2.


Kunkel, Fritz. *In Search of Maturity.* New Haven, CT: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1943.


Scherer, Paul. *For We Have This Treasure*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1944.


Jessica Trevithick
Email: hispastor7@yahoo.com

Education
DMin         SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University, 2012
MDiv         SDA Theological Seminary, 2001
MA, Theology  Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA, USA, 2000
Chaplaincy CPE  Loma Linda Children’s Medical Hosp, Loma Linda, CA, 1998
Imovie and MultiMedia training and classes, Apple one-to-one training, Brea, CA, 2008-2011
Highfield Business College, Business and Office, Caringbah, NSW, Australia

Work Experience
Pulpit and Multimedia Supply Pastor, churches in USA and Australia, 2001-2012
Associate Pastor, Riverside Community Church, 2009
Associate Pastor, Cross Point Service, Alhambra SDA Church, CA, 2006-2008
Pastor, Redondo Beach SDA Church, CA, 2005
Pastor, His Place Ministries, Orange County, CA, 2001-2004
Associate Pastor, Ridgecrest SDA Church, Ridgecrest, CA, 1999-2000
Associate Pastor, Glendale City SDA Church, Glendale, CA, 1998
Owner/Manager, Jessica Trevithick Exclusive Designs, NSW

Experience Multimedia
Daughter Commissioned Productions, Leadership and management in producing programs, 2006-2011

Seminar and Teaching Experience
Speaker, “Uplifting Women” Iranian TV program, 2012
Speaker, “Biblical Art forms & Technology in Preaching” Evangelical Homiletical Society Conference, Trinity University, IL, USA, 2010
Plenary Session Speaker, “Arts & Media in Ministry Workshop,” Women and the Word Conference, CA, USA, 2006
Outreach Home Bible Study Group, for young people, 2008-2010
Director and producer of short films and programs, 2011