

TRAINING LAY PEOPLE AT GRAHAM COMMUNITY CHURCH,
LAINGSBURG, MICHIGAN, TO PREACH AND TEACH
THE BIBLE EXPOSITIONALLY

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TRAINING LAY PEOPLE AT GRAHAM COMMUNITY CHURCH,
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To Kathryn

The wisdom from above is first pure.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BSF Bible Study Fellowship

BTCP Bible Training Center for Pastors

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PREFACE

Although I had the privilege of writing this paper and attending classes that preceded it, this entire project was birthed in the spiritual nursery of Graham Church. This local body of believers graciously listened to my preaching, tolerated my weaknesses, and provided for my family for fourteen years. They then generously supported me through my mid-life crisis as I returned to school after a generation away.

My wife has been my biggest prayer partner, best counselor, strongest encourager, and closest friend through this project. Her name, Kathryn, means “pure,” and her love and wisdom have been undiluted in every way.

I thank God for the professors and staff of Southern Seminary, the authors whose books enriched me during my studies, and my fellow students who encouraged me when I needed it most.

Now that I am in the second half of my ministry years, I am finally beginning to understand the Apostle Paul’s amazement as he declared, "I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service" (1 Tim 1:12).

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Laingsburg, Michigan

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to train lay people at Graham Community Church, Laingsburg, Michigan to preach and teach the Bible expositively and to improve my own expository preaching.

Goals

This project sought to accomplish four primary goals which established the criteria for evaluating its effectiveness. The first goal was to train lay people at Graham Community Church to preach and teach the Bible expositively. Graham Community Church had no formal or effective plan for equipping teachers to do biblical exposition. As a result, there has been a shortage of effective preachers and adult Bible teachers in the church. I developed a training course for use in the church, which gave participants an overview of biblical exposition, homiletics, and teaching methods. Participants in this training course were encouraged to practice their new skills in a church setting. The desired result was that new preachers and teachers would be equipped to expound the Scriptures in Sunday School, Bible studies, and church services.

The second goal of this ministry project was to change the perception of many in Graham Community Church that expositional preaching is possible only for those who

have a formal Bible college or seminary education. While most members prefer an expositional style of preaching, few attempt to practice exposition themselves. By learning basic skills of expositional teaching, lay participants in the training program realized that anyone can know and practice the inductive study of a text of Scripture and develop that study into an effective sermon or lesson. Students who took this course acquired a positive attitude concerning their ability to teach and preach the Bible expositoryly.

The third goal of this ministry project was to develop a greater emphasis within my personal ministry on equipping the next generation of church leaders. While I have modeled biblical exposition for fourteen years at Graham Community Church, I have not adequately mentored or trained church lay people to practice biblical exposition themselves. This ministry project developed a training curriculum and program which set a pattern for equipping future preachers and teachers in the church. As a result, Graham Community Church depends less on its vocational pastors for preaching and teaching as lay people share the joy and burden of the ministry.

The fourth and final goal of this project was to improve my own expository preaching, based upon feedback from seminar students. Having finished seminary over twenty-five years ago, I have developed preaching habits which may not all be profitable for ministry. Seminar students attended Graham Church and consisted of both theologically trained adults and those without formal education in the Bible. They were asked to critique my sermons in a constructive manner. As a result, I recognized weaknesses in my own preaching and attempted to improve in those areas.

Context

Graham Community Church is a suburban-rural congregation located five miles south of the small town of Laingsburg in Shiawassee County, Michigan. The church presently has a membership of 172 with an average Sunday morning attendance of 375. Graham Church has doubled in attendance and quadrupled its budget over the past ten years. However, the congregation faces a significant challenge with inadequate and aging facilities and a lack of space to expand on the current site. The church recently purchased property on a major highway about three miles from the present location for a future building site.

The church is situated in Woodhull Township, population 3850.¹ Woodhull Township was organized in 1838 and is a bedroom community for several medium-sized cities within a thirty-minute drive. The closest, fifteen miles away, is the state capital, Lansing. Woodhull Township sits on the northeast edge of the Lansing metropolitan area, which has a population of 454,044.² The Lansing region has one of the most educated populations in the country. Over 90 percent of adults possess high school diplomas. Michigan State University, the state's largest college, is a short commute from the church.³ Median household income in the greater Lansing metropolitan region in

¹U.S. Census Bureau, "Woodhull Township, Shiawassee County, Michigan Fact Sheet," *American Factfinder* [on-line]; accessed 22 January 2007; available from <http://factfinder.census.gov/>; Internet.

²State of Michigan, "Estimated Population of Michigan Regions and Statistical Areas: 2000-2006," *Census and Statistical Data* [on-line]; accessed 12 March 2009; available from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal/lm_census_Regions0006_190840_7.xls; Internet.

³U. S. Census Bureau, "Population and Housing Profile: Lansing–East Lansing, MI MSA." *American Community Survey Profile 2003* [on-line]; accessed 22 January 2007; available from www.census.gov/acs/www/Products/Profiles/Single/2003/ACS/Narrative/380/NP38000US4040.htm#footnotes; Internet.

2007 was \$50,314.⁴

The Mid-Michigan economy depends heavily on the automobile industry and has struggled in recent years. A local economist observed that, “General Motors, state government and Michigan State University are seen as the three pillars of the Lansing economy.”⁵ Although Lansing has fared better than other regions of Michigan, great uncertainty characterizes the manufacturing sector of the labor force. Numerous auto workers at Graham Church are uncertain whether they will have jobs in a year or two.

Worship services on the Graham Church site first met in a schoolhouse in 1846. The original church building was dedicated as the Graham Methodist Episcopal Church in 1879. This original building is presently utilized as Sunday School classrooms. Graham M. E. Church closed in 1929 due to the Great Depression and lack of attendance. In 1948, the church building was reopened as a Sunday School, and the congregation soon incorporated as the non-denominational Graham Community Church. The church family remained under one hundred members in size until the 1990s when significant growth occurred. The present auditorium was constructed in 1994, and the parsonage was renovated into church offices in 1998.

Graham Church would be categorized as a mixture of civic orientation and sanctuary orientation based on the model suggested by David Roozen, William

⁴Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce, “Per Capita Income,” *Regional Demographics* [on-line]; accessed 13 March 2009; available from http://www.lansingchamber.org/regional_demographics1/per_capita_income.html; Internet.

⁵Douglas E. Stites, “Hot Jobs Outlook,” *Greater Lansing Business Monthly* (January 2007) [on-line]; accessed 12 January 2007; available from http://www.lansingbusinessmonthly.com/article_read.asp?articleID=4092; Internet.

McKinney and Jackson Carroll in *Varieties of Religious Presence*.⁶ Graham Church demonstrates a civic orientation because of the priority given to harmony and tolerance within the church body. Under previous pastors, the church business meetings tended to be rancorous. The inception of elder rule and a teaching emphasis on biblical conflict resolution has changed the tone of those meetings significantly. Graham Church also shows marks of sanctuary orientation through the church's moral and doctrinal emphasis,⁷ and has promoted doctrinal clarity and personal fidelity more than social action and cultural change.

Graham Church has a conservative, reformed, Bible-instruction philosophy of ministry. As a result, the world view of the congregation has characteristics of both "tragic" and "ironic," based on the model put forth by Jackson Carroll, Carl Dudley, and William McKinney in *Handbook for Congregational Studies*.⁸ Many church members have a fundamentalist background, with a stress on total commitment to the Christian life, an element of the tragic worldview. However, in recent years there has been a renewed emphasis on authenticity and acceptance of circumstances, characteristics of the ironic worldview. These features are reflected in the Graham Church mission statement, posted at the front of the church auditorium: "We enjoy and glorify God as we make and equip authentic disciples of Jesus."

Graham Community Church draws attenders from across southern Shiawassee

⁶David Roozen, William McKinney and Jackson W. Carroll, *Varieties of Religious Presence* (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984), 87.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, eds., *Handbook for Congregational Studies* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986), 32.

County and northeast suburban Lansing. Church members live in Laingsburg, Perry, Bath, Haslett, Morrice, Williamston, and several other small communities surrounding the church. Consequently, Graham Church is not closely identified with any one town or village. The attraction to Graham for many families has been based more on ministry style and expository preaching than geographic location. In recent years, a significant portion of the growth has been from families with a conservative homeschool philosophy. Other families who have joined were disillusioned with their previous church's shift toward a seeker friendly or emergent philosophy of ministry. This immigration has contributed to a certain degree of tension in the church between homeschool and public school families. It also is a challenge to motivate church families to develop relationships with unbelievers for the purpose of evangelism.

Graham Community Church does not rely heavily on symbols and rituals. The original 1879 structure has more sentimental significance to church neighbors than to church attenders. Most members would gladly tear down the original building if this would allow construction of a new facility on the site. Sunday and Wednesday classes meet in four freestanding structures: the original building, the auditorium, a modular classroom, and the office building (the old parsonage). In the past ten years, three different church design consultants have advised the church that potential for expansion on the present six acre site is limited, and that the best option would be to purchase land and relocate. A building program for the new property is in initial stages.

Graham Church would be characterized as blending the “cultural right” and the “cultural middle” according to Tex Sample’s model.⁹ Many in the church are

⁹Tex Sample, *U.S. Lifestyles and Mainline Churches* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990), 63.

dispensational fundamentalists who place more emphasis on family and hard work than career success. These are characteristics of the cultural right. Another significant segment of the congregation would be described as cultural middle because they emphasize career and strive to be successful in society.¹⁰ Graham Church brings together professionals such as educators, doctors, engineers, and human resource managers with factory workers, truck drivers, and single mothers. While the typical church attender views education as important, church teaching and culture emphasize more metaphysical values such as building the kingdom of God. One result has been a significant number of church members making a commitment to serve in vocational Christian missions.

Overall, the church remains flexible and open to change. The congregation resists tradition for the sake of tradition. Most people in the church do not favor a liturgy or building decor dictated by tradition. Nevertheless, there is a significant culturally conservative segment in the church body. While the church blends worship choruses and hymns, some frown on the use of percussion in church services. Several homeschool families in the church do not allow their children to participate in youth group activities, preferring that their children not mingle with peers in graded classes or functions. Graham Church continues to have traditional Sunday evening services attended by an average of 120 people.

My personal church leadership style focuses on a team ministry approach. The previous pastor was a small church, strong leader who had to be involved in every ministry and decision of the church. Over the past fourteen years I have led the church to move from a congregational/strong pastor form of government to elder rule. Presently, I

¹⁰Ibid., 101.

am one of five elders who share equal authority in the church. A board of deacons oversees the church physical plant and finances. I am ultimately responsible for the office staff and associate pastors, but my practice has been to delegate responsibility and allow each of the staff to exercise his or her gifts. Each leader recognizes his or her own strengths and serves accordingly. The church has allowed me to serve in my primary strength, teaching, and to a lesser extent, vision casting. The administration and pastoral ministry of the church is a team effort.

Rationale for the Project

Graham Church's greatest strength is the quality of its preaching and teaching. The Sunday sermons, Sunday School classes, and Bible studies are more didactic in approach than evangelistic or fellowship-oriented. An unintended result, however, of the high standard of teaching from the pulpit has been a shortage of willing adult Bible teachers and preachers. Many members would never consider teaching an adult class. Too many members fail to exercise their spiritual gifts because they feel unqualified, untrained, or otherwise incapable. A second cause of the teacher shortage is the lack of teacher training offered by the church. Graham Church has held occasional teacher's meetings for children's teachers, but has never offered formal teacher training. This has been a significant lapse in my own pastoral ministry at Graham. A pastor's calling is "to equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph 4:12). This project has helped remedy this deficiency.

A second reason for this project followed closely on the first. Numerous individuals in the church perceive that Bible exposition can be done only by vocational

pastors. Perhaps some of this attitude is the result of laziness. It is far easier for the typical member to sit in the pew week after week, and pay the pastor to preach, than to study and prepare for a lesson. However, for many at Graham Church this feeling may have arisen from the fact that few, other than some church elders, are trained to do biblical exposition. The project endeavored to teach people, "You can do this!"

Third, some teachers in Graham Church have an inadequate understanding of how to teach the Bible. Certain teachers commonly practice eisegesis rather than true exegesis of the biblical text. These individuals unintentionally or unknowingly ignore authorial intent. Not all the teachers know the important difference between proof-texting and inductive Bible study. The project gave teachers a clear overview of biblical exegesis and how to find the contextual meaning of the Bible passage.

Some teachers also do not adequately apply the biblical text to the lives of listeners. The project trained teachers to recognize that biblical instruction is not complete until contemporary, personal application of the text is made to the lives of their students. They learned that expositional teaching includes more than communicating biblical content. Biblical preaching and teaching must aim to change lives based on the instruction and application of God's Word.

Fourth, no formal curriculum or program previously existed at Graham Church to train teachers and preachers. A major purpose of this ministry project was to provide me with the knowledge and curriculum resources to equip the next generation of teachers in the church. The Apostle Paul commands the church leader to prepare others to teach in Timothy 2:2, ". . . and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." I desired that this project

would establish an ongoing pattern of teacher training in my personal ministry. In addition, I have had the privilege on several occasions of teaching homiletics and teacher training to pastors in Ukraine. This ministry project has prepared me to be a more proficient teacher of local church leaders on the mission field.

Definitions and Limitations

The following definitions explain my personal understanding of homiletics and the approach taken in the description of this project.

Expository preaching. The description of expository preaching used in this project comes from a simple definition offered by Hershael York and Bert Decker in *Preaching with Bold Assurance*. “Expository preaching is any kind of preaching that shows people the meaning of a biblical text and leads them to apply it in their lives.”¹¹

Teaching. For the purpose of this project, teaching refers to the explanation and application of the Bible in a context other than a typical church service. Teaching includes diverse methods such as discussion and interaction, projects, and numerous other means to communicate the biblical subject of the lesson.

Exegesis. Exegesis involves the investigation of a biblical passage to discover its original meaning.

Eisegesis. Eisegesis is an interpretation of Scripture that imposes the interpreter’s personal bias rather than discerning the original meaning of the text.

Lay people. Lay men and women refers to individuals within the church who are non-ordained and are not vocational pastors.

¹¹Hershael York and Bert Decker, *Preaching with Bold Assurance: A Solid and Enduring Approach to Engaging Exposition* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 33.

Limitation of group. Only one group of individuals participated in the expository preaching and teaching seminar. The group consisted of twelve adults of both genders and a variety of ages.

Limitation of time. The time limitation of this project was twelve weeks. This time period includes both the seminar, sermon series, teaching opportunities for seminar students, and evaluation. The goal was for each seminar student to practice the expository method before the conclusion of the project.

Research Methodology

This project involved two major areas of concentration. The first emphasis was providing a seminar to train lay men and women to teach and preach the Bible expositively. The seminar was prefaced by a two-week Sunday morning sermon series based on 2 Timothy 4:2, presenting a biblical and theological rationale for “Why We Teach the Bible.” The seminar involved twelve participants and lasted eight weeks.

The second major area of emphasis consisted of a six-week sermon series preached to the entire congregation on Sunday mornings. The sermon series was a study from Romans 11-12, presented in a manner similar to how I have preached at Graham for fourteen years, for the purpose of evaluation by a peer group and the seminar participants. Prior to the first sermon series and seminar classes, seminar students were given a questionnaire to assess their understanding of expository preaching and teaching. The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale and measured attitudes concerning their own ability to preach or teach expositionally as lay people. I assigned numerical values to the questionnaire answers, scored the questionnaires numerically and evaluated

the results for the seminar group. During the second sermon series, the seminar students evaluated the sermons on Romans each week using the forms in Appendix 5. Students returned the forms weekly so I could make necessary changes to my preaching during the series.

At the conclusion of the project the seminar students were given the post-seminar survey. The completed surveys were compiled and compared statistically to the first survey. The results helped determine if the seminar and sermon series had a positive effect on the understanding and skills of the participants. The seminar students also met with me for a focus group to discuss whether the seminar improved their attitude toward and understanding of expositional preaching.

CHAPTER 2

A BIBLICAL RATIONALE FOR TRAINING IN EXPOSITORY TEACHING

This chapter's purpose is to analyze selected Old and New Testament passages which give examples of expository preaching and give imperatives for Christians to disciple others to teach the Scripture. This study examines two lines of biblical evidence, by model and command, which should motivate local churches to train believers to understand the meaning of the text of Scripture and preach it accurately. These passages show that the spiritual well-being of the church depends on regular teaching of the Bible and the reproduction of teachers in the church.

Teachers from the Bible Model Biblical Exposition

When the people of God return to worship the Lord after a prolonged absence, that revival of spirituality is ordinarily accompanied by a renewed reverence for the Scriptures. Spiritual renewal entails a rekindled interest in knowing the Lord's revealed Word. Among the numerous biblical examples of this principle is the well known account of Josiah, king of Judah, who led religious reforms based on the discovery of the

Word of God in the Temple. Almost three hundred years before Josiah, his forefather Jehoshaphat helped bring a resurgence of spiritual life to Judah by commanding the nation's leadership to teach the Law of the Lord.

2 Chronicles 17:7-9

Second Chronicles 17 summarizes the reign of Jehoshaphat, the fourth king of Judah following the division of Israel. During the long, spotty history of the divided kingdom, few rulers received the high praise which the biblical historian reserved for Jehoshaphat. This king had military success (17:1-2), and his reign was characterized by a period of personal and national revival (17:3-6).

Jehoshaphat strengthened Judah militarily and instituted important religious reforms in obedience to the Davidic covenant. Perhaps the most significant of the monarch's new religious policies was his reinstatement of the teaching of the law to the people. This action went a step beyond the spiritual reforms of Asa, the king's father, who removed idols from the land. Jehoshaphat's reform was not merely negative, that is, destroying false worship, but was positive in character, as the king commanded that the common people be taught the Torah of God.

In the third year of his reign he sent his officials, Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah; and with them the Levites, Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; and with these Levites, the priests Elishama and Jehoram. And they taught in Judah, having the Book of the Law of the Lord with them. They went about through all the cities of Judah and taught among the people. (2 Chr 17:7-9)

This appointment of teachers of the law occurred during the third year of Jehoshaphat's reign, which may actually have been the first year of his sole reign.

Presumably, Jehoshaphat administrated the country during the closing years of Asa's reign due to his father's debilitating disease (2 Chr 16:2).¹² Upon his father's death, the king commanded five of his officials, laymen, to pursue an itinerant teaching ministry in the cities of Judah. These laymen were accompanied by eight Levites and two priests.

Jehoshaphat acted as the ideal king who had concern for the law and justice.

His policies went beyond the Mosaic command for the king.

And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself in a book a copy of this law, approved by the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes, and doing them. (Deut 17:18-19)¹³

The Old Testament describes teaching by priests in several places, but apparently the practice had become rare in the nation of Judah. Jehoshaphat restored the priests and Levites to their responsibility to teach as described in the Pentateuch. Mosaic law commanded Levites to "teach Jacob your rules, and Israel your law" (Deut 33:10). Priests were also expected "to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the Lord has spoken to them by Moses" (Lev 10:11).

Five officials, or lay leaders in the kingdom, were also sent by Jehoshaphat to teach in the cities of Judah. The identities of these men were noteworthy enough to the biblical historian that he recorded their individual names, although none of these five can be identified with any certainty elsewhere in the biblical text. As the five departed to

¹²Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 15 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 134.

¹³Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version.

represent the king, their ministry presence assigns and legitimizes a teaching role for the laity.¹⁴ The inclusion of lay officials meant the king was ready to organize all the resources of his kingdom for the purpose of instructing his people in the law.¹⁵

The itinerant nature of the teaching ministry was certainly unique in Old Testament literature, reminding the reader of the journeys of Jesus and his disciples. The only parallel in Hebrew Scripture is Samuel who served as a traveling judge; "He went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places" (1 Sam 7:16). The decentralized character of this education communicated the importance of putting the Word of God into the possession of the common citizen.

It is impossible to identify positively the full contents of "the Book of the Law of the Lord," although presumably the Book represented authoritative writings that brought order and control to Israel's community life.¹⁶ The phrase "the Law of the Lord" is used several times in 1 and 2 Chronicles to refer to God's instructions concerning sacrifices (1 Chr 16:40), judicial matters and legal disputes (2 Chr 19:8-10), feasts (2 Chr 31:2-3), and Passover and temple regulations (2 Chr 34-35). The narrative's reference to Mosaic commandments throughout 1 and 2 Chronicles underscores the importance of the written covenant to the people of God. F. Delitzsch contends that "the 'book of the law of Jahve' is a reference to the Pentateuch, not merely a collection of Mosaic laws, since in

¹⁴Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 134.

¹⁵J. G. McConville, *I & II Chronicles*, Daily Study Bible Series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1984), 179.

¹⁶J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, The New American Commentary, vol. 9 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 280.

Jehoshaphat's time the Mosaic book of the law (the Pentateuch) had been long in existence."¹⁷

Even some non-evangelical commentators agree that the reference to the Book of the Law of the Lord in 2 Chronicles 17 indicates the development of a written canonical record. Raymond Dillard observes, "This pericope does attest to the early existence of authoritative writings regulative of Israel's life, i.e., it speaks of canonical writings at a time far earlier than critical reconstructions have ordinarily allowed."¹⁸

Certain scholars have understood this teaching mission to be a duplicate of the judicial reform in 2 Chronicles 19:4-11.¹⁹ H. G. M. Williamson concedes that the text may be a doublet to chapter 19, but indicates that evidence concerning the source or tradition behind the text is lacking.²⁰ Although the accounts have certain similarities, the essential mission of those sent by Jehoshaphat differ in critical details. In chapter 17, officials, Levites and priests are sent to teach the law of God, but in chapter 19 judges, priests and Levites are commanded to adjudicate the law.

Second Chronicles 17 makes clear that Jehoshaphat dispatched both laymen and religious professionals to instruct people in God's Word throughout Judah. In the Old Testament, teaching the Torah was not restricted to the priestly class, or religious

¹⁷C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, rev. ed. [CD-ROM], vol. 3, trans. James Martin (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 627.

¹⁸Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 134.

¹⁹Martin J. Selman, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 405.

²⁰H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 282.

professionals, but was also expected of those who served in non-religious occupations. Teaching the Scriptures was the covenant responsibility of everyone, not just the clergy. God commanded Moses to “let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so” (Deut 4:10).

The text presumes that “the people are expected to know (and therefore *learn*) the laws in order that they may keep them.”²¹ Teachers are to enable their listeners to obey the Mosaic dictate, "The statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them" (Deut 5:1). God’s people cannot obey what they do not know. Leadership is responsible, therefore, to teach God’s people the Lord’s expectations as commanded in his written Word.

The result of the teaching of God’s Word and the accompanying national resurgence was that "the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat" (2 Chr 17:10). The instruction of the Law of God provided a foundation for the spiritual and political renewal of the nation.

Ezra 7:10 and Nehemiah 8:1-8

Three hundred fifty years following Jehoshaphat’s reforms, and almost sixty years after completion of the second temple, a crisis of leadership paralyzed the Jewish remnant in Jerusalem. A second group of refugees returned to the city from exile, accompanied by Ezra. The Lord raised up these people to bring financial and spiritual leadership to Jerusalem. Ezra’s determination to teach the law of God was fundamental

²¹Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1993), 748.

to his intervention in Jerusalem, "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Ezra is identified as "a scribe skilled in the Law of Moses" and a direct descendent of Aaron (7:6). It is possible that he previously occupied an official position in the court of the king of Persia, based on his official title as "Scribe of the Law of the God of heaven" (7:12, 21). A scribe's primary responsibility was the implementation and administration of the Jewish law.²² Williamson notes that a scribe was not only a student of the Scripture, "but explicitly a practitioner and especially a teacher of its requirements."²³

The timing of Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem and the provisions he brought with him are both attributed to the providence of God and the generosity of Artaxerxes. "The king granted him all that he asked, for the hand of the Lord his God was on him" (7:6). Artaxerxes gave instructions to Ezra which described the scribe's mission as administrative and educational.

And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment. (Ezra 7:25-26)

The king sent Ezra to Jerusalem to accomplish two important tasks. First, he was to reorganize a dysfunctional government. Artaxerxes ordered Ezra to devise a

²²Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 137.

²³H. G. M. Williamson, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 16 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985), 93.

judicial system for Jerusalem and the surrounding province. He gave Ezra great discretion to exercise governmental authority and to enforce the laws of the God of Israel and the laws of the king of Babylon within the occupied territory of Judah. Second, Ezra was to teach the laws of God to those who did not know the law. Ezra would fulfill his heart desire "to teach his statutes and rules in Israel" among the returned exiles in Jerusalem (7:10).

Ezra's teaching ministry to the people of the city who were ignorant of the law is best illustrated in the great public meeting of Nehemiah 8:1-8:

And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

The actual occasion of this public gathering for instruction is a matter of debate among Bible scholars. Evidently, there was a thirteen-year gap between Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes to oversee administration of the law (Ezra

7:8), and the occasion of the public reading of the law of God in Nehemiah 8 (see Neh 2:1). This chronology presents a particular difficulty if one assumes that the events of Nehemiah 8 were Ezra's first efforts in carrying out his teaching commission.

This problem, along with the literary evidence, led many to assume that Nehemiah 8-10 was added editorially between Nehemiah 7 and 11, and that the events described in Nehemiah 8 actually belong with Ezra 7 through 10.²⁴ Williamson argues that the narrative style and content of Nehemiah 8 naturally fits following the events of Ezra 8. He also reasons that Ezra is not the main character of the Nehemiah narrative, and his appearance in Nehemiah 8 is unnatural and unexpected.²⁵ If this conclusion is correct, then the teaching of the Law described in Nehemiah 8 occurred chronologically at the beginning of Ezra's ministry in Jerusalem, not at its conclusion.

However, moving Nehemiah 8–10 to the book of Ezra assumes references to Nehemiah in Neh. 8:9-10 and 10:1 to be later insertions. Derek Kidner considers the dispute to be unnecessary because,

There is no problem at all in the text—only in what is commonly read into it. The thirteen years are there, but there is no suggestion that they were silent years: this only arises from the assumption that Ezra produced the law book for the first time at this great rally. . . . Ezra's supposed inaction for thirteen years is the last thing that could properly be read out of this account.²⁶

The gathering of the people of Israel to Jerusalem was not in response to a general command, but appeared to be motivated by a spontaneous desire to learn the

²⁴Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 284.

²⁵Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 283-86.

²⁶Derek Kidner, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 11 (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1979), 151-52.

Scriptures. The occasion required a certain amount of forethought, since Ezra stood on a “wooden platform that they had made for the purpose” (Neh 8:4). The fact that the people listened attentively (v. 3) and responded emotionally (v. 9) gives further evidence that the public meeting was voluntary and desirable.

Ezra produced the “Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel” before the assembly. Biblical skeptics have long disputed the veracity of this clause because they challenge the historicity of a written Mosaic Pentateuch. Yet the record of the text should be accepted at face value. The Norwegian author, S. Mowinckel, states it simply, “The author himself did not doubt for a moment that the law book in question, ‘the Law of Moses, which was Yahweh’s command to Israel,’ was the familiar book which, to him and his contemporaries, had existed and had been known ever since the days of Moses.”²⁷

The assembly included “both men and women and all who could understand what they heard” (v. 2, compare v. 3). The Mosaic law visualized Israel as a people who learned the words of God from childhood, who were taught the meaning of the words and rituals (Exod 12:12-27; Deut 4:6; 6:6 ff.). Ezra read the Scriptures for several hours, accompanied by thirteen men, who may have been priests.

The reading of the Book of the Law was followed by a time of corporate worship and explanation of the Scriptures. Nehemiah 8 names thirteen Levites who “helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places” (v.

²⁷Sigmund Mowinckel, *Studien zu dem Buche Ezra-Nehemiah, III* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1965), 129, cited in Derek Kidner, *Ezra & Nehemiah*, 162.

7). It may be that the Levites moved through the crowd answering questions and offering explanation for the Word of God that the people had heard.

Verse 8 summarizes the work of Ezra and the Levites in expounding the Scripture. The author describes three specific parts of their teaching and the expected result. First, “They read from the book, from the Law of God.” Second, they worked through the text “clearly.” Fensham prefers the rendering, “translated it,” stating that the root word “may refer to the breaking up of the language while it is translated.”²⁸ Williamson translates this as “paragraph by paragraph,” implying a systematic study of the text of Scripture.²⁹ Third, “they gave the sense.”

Blenkinsopp states that “we have here invaluable information on the study, interpretation, and teaching of the Torah in the centuries preceding the emergence of Pharisaic scribalism.”³⁰ In this text it becomes clear that biblical exposition, the teaching of the Bible for understanding, is not solely a New Testament phenomenon. Christ’s practice of explaining the meaning and implications of the Law for lay people was based on ancient Israelite practice.

Acts 2:14-36

Following the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the very first act of the twelve disciples was to stand with Peter as he preached the initial sermon of the Apostolic church. Peter’s message was delivered to an attentive audience that had just

²⁸F. Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 217.

²⁹Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah*, 278-79.

³⁰Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 288.

witnessed amazing signs and heard the miraculous gift of languages. The dramatic ‘speaking with tongues’ accomplished an important purpose in gathering a large crowd around the disciples.³¹ One listener asked, “What does this mean?” Others mocked and accused the disciples of being drunk. Peter stood united with the rest of the twelve as he explained the significance of these strange events by expounding the Word of God.

Peter used two lines of evidence to prove that Jesus was the Christ and that the Spirit’s coming was a sign of the work of God. First was the teaching of Old Testament Scripture. Peter’s sermon set the astonishing events of that day into an Old Testament biblical context. The Apostle interpreted the miraculous gift of languages by explaining three Hebrew Scripture passages in Joel and Psalms, and by proclaiming the significance of the recent death and resurrection of Christ, which many of them witnessed. Peter’s second evidence was the eyewitness testimony of those present to the reality of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Undoubtedly, the record of Acts does not comprise a full manuscript of Peter’s sermon. Luke informs Theophilus, the initial recipient of his text, that he was summarizing the content of the message, as “with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them” (v. 40a). However abbreviated, Luke’s words accurately reflect the broad content of the Apostle’s message.³² First-century rhetoricians

³¹F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981), 67.

³²Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 111.

frequently used paraphrase to summarize relevant material.³³ Luke evidently also translated the sermon from Aramaic into the Greek of the original text of Acts.

Because Luke does not give the full content of Peter's message, it would be presumptive to assume what Peter did *not* say about biblical texts Luke examines. The contemporary reader of Acts simply must not over-analyze Peter's preaching style because the majority of his homiletic content is not present in the text. Luke's outline of the Pentecost sermon omits much of Peter's exposition, explanation, illustrations and applications. Luke does record that Peter expounded certain key principles from each Old Testament text and proclaimed the reality of those truths to his audience. Although Peter's exposition of Old Testament Scriptures did not follow a rigid, verse-by-verse, inductive study of the text, the Apostle faithfully taught a clear meaning and an accurate application of each of these passages.

Peter's example as an expositor must not be too rigidly followed by the contemporary preacher. As an Apostle, Peter was able to authoritatively speak to the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy in current events in a way expositional preachers cannot today because they lack apostolic authority. Peter's preaching models exposition plus a revelatory wisdom not typically given in the present economy.

Peter first cites Joel 2:28-32 as evidence for what God was doing through the Spirit at Pentecost. William Larkin states the Apostle declared to his listeners that, "The

³³Ben Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 139.

ultimate cause and significance of the Spirit's empowerment is found in God and his saving purposes."³⁴

These people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "And in the last days it shall be," God declares, "that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:15-21)

From Joel, Peter explained that God promised to pour out his Spirit on all people "in the last days." God's Old Testament promises to bring in a new age are at least partially fulfilled by the unusual events of Pentecost. Peter considered himself to be in the last days. The Apostle communicates here that the coming of the Spirit is the beginning of those days.³⁵

The Joel text also offered an explanation why the Spirit was poured out on such a diverse group of people, without regard for age, gender, social background, or ethnic origin. In the Old Testament time of promise, the Spirit came upon king and prophet (1 Sam 10:10; 16:14; Ezek 11:5), but in the last days, the Spirit came upon all people irrespective of status.

While Luke did not record Peter's words to this effect, it seems apparent that Peter intended two primary applications of the Joel passage. First, because these were the last days, the judgment of God in "the day of the Lord" would soon come. Those who

³⁴William J. Larkin, Jr., *Acts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 53.

³⁵Bock, *Acts*, 112.

have rejected God and his purposes will answer to their maker. Second, the grace of God for salvation is available to those who repent. “Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). The ultimate point of Peter’s message will be that the only way to be delivered from the day is to call upon the name of the Lord and, thereby, seek God’s salvation.³⁶

In verse 22 Peter transitioned from the teaching of the Old Testament Scripture to the point of immediate application, Jesus of Nazareth. The Apostle made the relevance of the Scripture painfully clear.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. (Acts 2:22-24)

After explaining why the Spirit had been poured out on so many, Peter then implicated the crowd in Jesus’s death. Many of Peter’s listeners stood in danger of God’s judgment because they had falsely accused the Christ. Peter declared that God powerfully vindicated Jesus, by resurrecting him from the dead.

The Apostle also pointed out that the events of Jesus’ trial and execution had a larger sovereign purpose, to fulfill God’s biblical promises. The crucifixion and resurrection were also part of God’s saving plan. Peter introduced a quotation from Psalm 16:8-11 to explain that the resurrection was a fulfillment of messianic prophecy.

For David says concerning him, “I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; my flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to

³⁶Ibid., 118.

Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.” (Acts 2:25-28)

The homiletic point of this quotation from Psalms was two-fold. First, Peter demonstrated that Jesus of Nazareth fulfilled the biblical promises of Messiah. Second, he explained how a person, whom many in Peter’s audience saw publically executed, could be the Messiah who reigns forever. The Scriptures had anticipated that Messiah would rise from the dead. Messiah was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see corruption (Acts 2:31).

Peter went on in his exposition to argue that the promise of this Psalm could not possibly have been completed in David, because David was dead. David had spoken of protection from death, and Peter explained that only the Messiah could have realized the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. (Acts 2:29-31)

Larkin explains that Peter came to this understanding by using two hermeneutical principles: literal interpretation and a messianic reading of first-person Davidic psalms.³⁷ Like any good expositor, the Apostle examined the passage to find its meaning, then proclaimed the implications of that truth in terms relevant to his audience’s experience and spiritual needs. "This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the

³⁷Larkin, *Acts*, 56.

Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing" (Acts 2:32-33).

Peter declared the Good News that God had raised up the Messiah whom his listeners had helped execute. His homiletic argument rested on the testimony of two witnesses to Jesus' resurrection; the Old Testament Scriptures and eyewitnesses who were present that day. The Apostle then added another confirming proof of the reality of Christ's ascension, the coming of the Holy Spirit in power.

Peter concluded his message with a final Scripture proof of the nature of Christ and his work. His third Old Testament citation is taken from Psalm 110:1.

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2:34-36)

It is not surprising that Peter quoted this well-known Psalm, as he had undoubtedly heard Christ use Psalm 110:1 to describe himself (Matt 22:42-46; Mark 12:35-37; Luke 20:41-44). Jesus cited Psalm 110 to question how the Messiah could be David's son, if David called him Lord. Peter chose a different application of the Psalm, declaring that Messiah, not David, ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God. The Apostle argued that Jesus, the one whom his listeners had crucified, was now reigning as Lord and would crush his enemies.

Based on biblical authority and eyewitness evidence, Peter preached judgment on those who opposed God's Messiah. The response was immediate.

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God

calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” (Acts 2:37-40)

Peter persuaded his listeners that they were in grave danger. Witherington insists, “If Peter’s words were to be believed, then his audience would realize that they had been party to a truly horrible act.”³⁸ Peter’s call to repentance gives a New Testament model of preaching for response. The Apostle teaches by example that the goal of Christian preaching is not merely to convey information, but to appeal for application and life-change. He preached the grace of God and promised the gift of the Holy Spirit to all those who called on Christ.

Each major element of the Apostle’s sermon applied biblical principles to the present circumstances of his listeners. First, Peter cited Joel to address his audiences questions concerning the nature of the day’s events. Peter did not have to get his listener’s attention, as did Paul on Mars Hill (Acts 17:22-23). They were ready to listen as he explained that the presence of the Holy Spirit gave proof that the last days and God’s judgment were coming. Second, Peter quoted Psalm 16 to prove that the resurrection was anticipated by Scripture and prove that Jesus was the expected Messiah. The high Christology of the Apostles was not an invention of the twelve, but the prophetic understanding of the Old Testament. Third, Psalm 110 gave biblical evidence that Jesus’ ascension proved that God anointed Jesus as both Lord and Messiah. The biblical evidence was clear, Peter’s listeners had murdered the One whom God had sent to save them. Therefore, their only option was to cast themselves on God’s mercy.

³⁸Witherington, *Acts*, 153.

The sermon at Pentecost, as recorded by Luke, was not a verse-by-verse exposition of the biblical texts which Peter developed. However, this message used clear Scriptural principles derived from each text which he expounded. Peter preached with unique Apostolic authority, declaring the fulfillment of Old Testament texts in the events of Pentecost. Peter also displayed a hermeneutic developed through study under Christ himself and guided by the Holy Spirit. His homiletic model demonstrates that New Testament preaching honors the authority and power of preaching the message of God's Scripture.

Training Christians to do Biblical Exposition Is Essential to the Healthy Spiritual Growth of the Local Church

Teaching spiritual truth is an essential component of the great commission. The Lord commanded the disciples to reproduce themselves in the lives of those who are baptized. They accomplish this by "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:20). Ultimately, teaching others how to obey the Word of God is the task of biblical exposition. If Bible teachers are not equipped and sent, the commission of Christ to the church will never be fulfilled. Paul illustrated this mentoring ministry through his work with Timothy.

1 Timothy 4:13

The Apostle Paul considered Timothy to be his son in the faith and Paul worked diligently to train the young man to be an evangelist and church leader. The Apostle wrote 1 Timothy to his young protégé from Macedonia following the Apostle's

release from his first Roman imprisonment.³⁹ Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to administrate the city's troubled church and to train spiritual leaders within the body. The letter is filled with pastoral instruction from Paul to Timothy discussing numerous topics which a young intern must be knowledgeable about so that he could effectively oversee a struggling church.

The teaching of sound theology would be essential to the recovery of the church at Ephesus. False doctrines and popular mythologies had crept into the congregation, so Paul urged Timothy to "remain at Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine" (1 Tim 1:3). The Apostle reminded Timothy of the danger of wrong teaching, because "in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons" (1 Tim 4:1).

Paul expected to personally return to Ephesus to tend to the needs of the church. Until his return, Timothy was charged with equipping the body of believers. To protect the church from false philosophies, Timothy must teach the truth. "If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. . . . Command and teach these things" (1 Tim 4:6, 11).

In 4:11-16, Paul strings together ten imperatives which address Timothy's teaching and leadership in Ephesus. In verse 13, three of these Pauline commands describe components that should characterize the gathering of the local church. Timothy is instructed to be devoted to these three forms of public ministry because they were to be

³⁹Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1982), 13.

the heart of the young man's spiritual leadership. "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" (1 Tim 4:13).

The use of the definite article with each of the three actions indicates that these were activities typical to the early church congregational meeting.⁴⁰ These three actions composed the pastor's primary means of combating the false teachings which threatened the church. All involve communication of the meaning and authority of the Word of God.

The first task, "the public reading of Scripture," denotes primarily the reading of the Old Testament before the congregation. This was an essential component of the synagogue service, and it placed the Word of God in the ears of the common person. It is likely that the earlier letters of Paul and other apostolic leaders were also read in the church. J. N. D. Kelly describes the task of reading as a technical challenge for the lector, "for the words in the codex were not divided."⁴¹ It was certainly more difficult to accomplish than the present day reading of a modern translation. The ministry of reading was important because it made the Bible available to the majority of the population who were illiterate or did not personally possess the text of Scripture. Scripture reading was not just a component of religious liturgy. It gave the Word of God to those to whom the written text of the Bible was simply not available or intelligible.

The second responsibility which Paul gave Timothy was "exhortation." Acts 13:15 illustrates the synagogue pattern, "After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, 'Brothers, if you have any

⁴⁰I. Howard Marshall and Philip H. Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 562.

⁴¹J. N. D. Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998), 104.

word of exhortation for the people, say it.” After the Word of God was read aloud for congregational consumption, the pastor was to “to summon or ask, to exhort, and to comfort” his listeners.⁴² Kelly identifies this exposition and application of Scripture which followed its public reading as the sermon.⁴³ Within the New Testament church service, the reading of the Bible was to be accompanied by the application of the Bible to the hearer’s personal affections.

The pastor’s third task was “teaching.” The Scriptures, having been read and used as the basis of exhortation, must also be explained. The word Paul uses here typically refers in the Pastoral Epistles to “doctrine,” but in this case it has the sense of teaching. J. H. Bernhard states that this word is closely related to “exhortation” and indicates that “the *appeal* to the heart and conscience ultimately rests on the *instruction* provided for the intellect.”⁴⁴ These two terms are also closely coupled in Romans 12:7-8 in a description of spiritual gifts, “the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation,” and in 1 Timothy 6:2 where Paul urges his disciple to “teach and urge these things.”

The pastor’s primary responsibility is to be a teacher of the Word of God. This is the basis of his remuneration. “One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches” (Gal 6:6). Proclaiming and teaching the Word of God is also the pastor’s evangelistic mission. Paul requests prayer, “that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ” (Col 4:3).

⁴²George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 208.

⁴³Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 105.

⁴⁴J. H. Bernhard, *The Pastoral Epistles*, Thornapple Commentaries (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), 72.

First Timothy 4:13 reveals a tripartite perspective on the pastor's public oral ministry. He is to read, explain, and encourage for personal application of the Scriptures. Instruction without application is not biblical preaching, any more than is the rote memorization of a catechism. Neither does application accurately describe biblical preaching without the necessary foundation of biblical explanation and authority. Many Christian self-help books take this weak perspective on teaching. Biblical preaching requires that the Bible be opened and read, the text explained, and then obedience and comfort urged upon the pastor's listeners.

2 Timothy 4:2

Not only must the pastor be a teacher of the Bible, the Apostle Paul expects the pastor to preach. In Paul's final instructions to Timothy, he commanded his disciple to, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching" (2 Tim 4:2).

This charge consists of five imperatives and a qualifying prepositional phrase. The first imperative, "preach the word," is in a dominant position in the verse, and is qualified and described by the remainder of the verse.⁴⁵ Timothy is told to proclaim aloud, or preach the message which he has received. This single command summarizes what Paul insists is Timothy's urgent practical duty in the present critical situation.⁴⁶ The "Word" as the content of preaching had been previously described by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:9, 15 where Paul speaks of the "word of God" and "the word of truth." In other words, the preacher's message and teachings are to be from God. Thus Paul charges Timothy to

⁴⁵Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 453.

⁴⁶Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 205.

proclaim publicly that message from God and its truthful teachings. Paul warned Timothy that those who “will not endure sound teaching” will find “teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth” (4:3-4). The pastor must hold the Word of God before his listeners so that they do not turn aside to error and abandon the truth of God. If the content of preaching is not characterized and constrained by Scripture, “itching ears” will demand a popular message instead of a true one from God.

For the contemporary preacher, the Pauline command must be obeyed by simply preaching the content and message of the Bible, the Word of God. Paul had just written that it is Scripture that is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). The preacher must preach the Word of God, the Scripture, by declaring faithfully the message of the Bible in a manner relevant to a contemporary audience. It is by this ministry of preaching the Bible “that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim 3:17). Homer Kent reasons that proclaiming God’s Word involves all the themes of Scripture, not selectively choosing some and ignoring others.⁴⁷ To “preach the word” simply means that the Word of God in its entirety is the basic material of the preacher’s message.

Four additional imperatives in verse two further qualify the nature of biblical preaching. Paul’s second command is that the preacher is to “be ready in season and out of season.” A preaching pastor should be ready to minister on every occasion which becomes available for the gospel. The basic idea is that the preacher is always there to

⁴⁷Kent, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 283.

grasp opportunities that offer themselves, whether convenient or not.⁴⁸ A commitment to expository preaching does not always necessitate that the speaker has adequate preparation time or an ideal preaching environment. The man of God must be ready to preach even under adverse circumstances.

Third, expositional preaching means the preacher must “reprove” his listeners. This implies that preaching involves correction of error in the listener’s thought and actions (Titus 1:13, 2:15). This is the task of “getting people to realize that they are sinners.”⁴⁹ Fourth, the preacher must “rebuke.” Preaching the Scriptures faithfully calls listeners to repentance for sin. Jesus told his disciples, "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).

Finally, the preacher must “exhort, with complete patience and teaching.” This is a positive expression of the preacher’s responsibility. The preaching pastor should balance his reproof of sin with the patient encouragement of teaching the “good news” of the Bible. This command “sums up the nature of teaching as persuasion and encouragement.”⁵⁰ Patience and teaching describe necessary characteristics of faithful pastoral ministry. Listeners will not change overnight, and it may take years of faithful preaching of the Word to produce significant congregational change. An impatient or hasty pastor may not have the stamina to faithfully preach to a congregation until the Lord produces spiritual fruit.

⁴⁸Marshall and Towner, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 800.

⁴⁹Ibid., 801.

⁵⁰Ibid.

2 Timothy 2:2

The faithful pastor has the dual responsibility to preach and teach the Word of God. However, preaching to one generation of listeners is not all that is expected of the pastor. He must also reproduce those preaching/teaching skills in the lives of his congregation. Paul commanded Timothy to train teachers in the church who can pass on the Apostolic doctrine. “What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2).

Paul expresses concern that Timothy “entrust” the gospel and the Word of God to reliable men who will pass on the truth. The apostolic truth and message of the gospel committed to Paul and Timothy is a sacred trust.⁵¹ Some see in this text a doctrine of Apostolic succession, but this is completely unnecessary when one realizes that Paul is commanding the passing on of the message of Christ, the gospel, not a chain of authority.

The preacher’s responsibility is to train other preachers to teach “what you have heard from me,” or the Apostolic doctrine and the gospel. The students of this training exercise are to be “faithful men.” These men must be trustworthy, dependable to carry out their task to pass on important truths.⁵² Knight suggests that these faithful ones are certainly “the same group of whom Paul wrote in 1 Timothy, the presbyters who ‘work hard in word and teaching (5:17).’”⁵³ Timothy is to train elders to teach others the Word of God.

⁵¹Kelly, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 172.

⁵²Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 384.

⁵³Ibid.

Training others in biblical homiletics and doctrine is a scriptural mandate. The pastor must seek out others, in this case, men of faith who show signs of character qualities and teaching ability, and train them to teach. These men must be prepared to equip succeeding generations with the message of the Bible.

Hebrews 5:11-14

One of the signs of a healthy church is the presence of good teaching and consistent teacher training within the body. The author of Hebrews takes his recipients to task for failing to reproduce teachers in the manner commanded by Paul to Timothy.

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. (Heb 5:11-14)

This is the third of five "warning passages" in the Book of Hebrews. These passages give stern warnings and positive encouragement for all Christians to persevere in faith and in the Christian life. The warnings occur in Hebrews chapters 2, 3-4, 5-6, 10, and 12. At the time of the book's writing, Jews who had converted to Christianity were under intense persecution from the Roman government and from their families. They were in danger of slipping back into Judaism and leaving Christ. This letter continually urges these Jewish believers to consider the greatness of Christ and awfulness of the result if they, like Israel in the Old Testament, turned against the provision of God.

In this text, the author admonishes his readers for a lack of spiritual growth. He cites four evidences of their weak spiritual condition. First, they display spiritual

lethargy, being “dull of hearing.” They refuse to do the work necessary to hear and grow from the Word of God. Second, they have a spiritual dependency, “you need someone to teach you again.” The author maintains that the church should have produced teachers by now, but instead they remain dependent on other teachers to feed them. Third, they evidence spiritual immaturity. They cannot digest “solid food” and they require “milk.” Fourth, as a result of immaturity they are spiritually ignorant, “unskilled in the Word of righteousness.” They remain inexperienced and untaught in the Bible.

The teaching of the Bible and the reproduction of Bible teachers is essential to the healthy spiritual growth of a local church. Craig Koester remarks that “Hebrews assumes that Christians receive basic instruction from the ‘oracles of God,’ which are found in the Scriptures and interpreted in the light of Jesus’ death and resurrection.”⁵⁴ Although, as the author writes, “enough time has passed for you to have developed into teachers,” they have failed to mature.⁵⁵ William Lane points out that the key to verse twelve is the irony that these professing Christians ought to be able by now to communicate the faith to others. The writer uses sarcasm to rebuke his readers for their lack of development.⁵⁶

It is not sufficient that attenders of a local church *hear* the Word of God preached. Certain of the church’s members must be trained and matured into *teachers*.

⁵⁴Craig Koester, *Hebrews: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 309.

⁵⁵Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 302.

⁵⁶William A. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 47a (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 136-37.

The church which does not show an ability to pass the truth of the Word of God to the next generation shows clear evidence of a lack of spiritual growth. Pastors must evaluate their personal ministry by their progress in reproducing teachers within their sphere of ministry. A healthy local church which sustains spiritual growth will be one which is always in the process of developing and training new teachers from within the congregation.

The Goal of Biblical Exposition

The goal of biblical exposition is to glorify God by effectively communicating biblical truth which has power to change the lives of the hearers. The Scripture texts examined in this study demonstrate the necessity of teaching the Bible to explain God's will, command obedience, and encourage believers. These passages also illustrate the pattern in Scripture of teachers training the next generation of teachers to carry on the work of teaching God's Word. The ultimate purpose of biblical teaching and training is to give glory to God as the Scripture produces fruit in the lives of listeners.

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 15:4-6)

The instruction of the Bible should result in a new hope and changed relationships, so that the church may glorify the name of God. The effective pastor will follow the biblical mandate to preach and teach the Bible and mentor new teachers for the purpose of magnifying God in the congregation.

CHAPTER 3

A MODEL FOR TRAINING LAY PEOPLE TO TEACH AND PREACH THE BIBLE EXPOSITIONALLY

The purpose of this chapter is to examine historical models of expository preaching, to evaluate contemporary examples of training lay people to do biblical exposition, and to propose a short-term training program for lay people in expository preaching and teaching.

Expository Preaching Has Been an Historical Model of the Church

The pulpit ministry of Westminster Chapel, London has modeled expositional preaching for the past one hundred sixty years. The church's pastors included well-known expositors Samuel Martin, G. Campbell Morgan, J. H. Jowett, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, and R. T. Kendall. The expressive style of their preaching varied significantly, yet each consistently emphasized the teaching of the Bible from the pulpit. This section briefly examines two of these expositors, Morgan and Lloyd-Jones, who served as very different models of a biblical preaching and teaching ministry. Both strongly influenced a

whole generation of pulpiteers to teach and preach the Bible, by example, and more significantly, through their published sermons.

G. Campbell Morgan

Campbell Morgan, who lived from 1863 to 1945, began his ministry years

working in association with D. L. Moody. Before assuming the pulpit at Westminster Chapel, he served as director of the Northfield Bible Conference. Morgan preached at Westminster during two pastorates, from 1904-1917 and 1933-1943.⁵⁷ He brought a distinctively Bible-centered ministry to the church, something quite out of vogue for his generation in Great Britain. One of Morgan's first initiatives was to reorganize the Sunday School ministry around the teaching of Scripture. Teachers and students were required to use no other resource materials or curriculum than the Bible itself. The church school "was Bible-saturated to the extent that no child or young person having any connection with it could fail to absorb the Bible content, so completely and yet so attractively was he surrounded by it."⁵⁸

Westminster's pulpit ministry experienced a similar transformation. Morgan propounded the conviction that the simple teaching of the Scriptures was sufficient to change lives. Theologically, Morgan proclaimed a non-Calvinistic gospel, and preached persuasively for human decision. He stated, "The preacher should never address a crowd without remembering that his ultimate citadel is the citadel of the human will. He may travel along the line of emotions, but he is after the will."⁵⁹

Morgan's method of Bible study was foundational to his expository philosophy. He painstakingly studied the Scriptures, and insisted on first hand examination of the biblical text before actual sermon development began.

⁵⁷Jill Morgan, *A Man of the Word: The Life of G. Campbell Morgan* (London: Pickering and Ingles, 1951).

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 155.

⁵⁹G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching* (London: Fleming H. Revell, 1937), 13.

Morgan meant by “first hand” study the use of the Bible itself by the student before the comments of others were investigated. This is more than advice to others; Morgan quite evidently practiced it. His works generally are not characterized by frequent quotation of other Bible scholars, though it is evident that he was widely read.⁶⁰

Morgan’s hermeneutic put great importance on the study of a text in its context. He practiced a general-to-specific method of textual study, which he describes in four steps: Survey, Condense, Expand, Dissect.⁶¹ Each Bible study began with an overview of the book and worked down to a careful examination of the specific text in question. Consequently, topical preaching from selected texts was alien to Morgan.⁶²

Morgan’s method of Bible study has great value for the training of lay people for preaching ministry. Even those who may not agree with his theology can appreciate his careful examination of the Word of God. Wagner noted, “His comprehensive analysis made possible the synthesis of each book or section into its historical or literary context.”⁶³ This skill can be practiced by lay persons who have no formal education in the original languages.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a physician by training, came to Westminster Chapel in 1939 to be Morgan’s associate. When Morgan retired, Lloyd-Jones assumed the pulpit and moved the church in the direction of Reformed Theology. Like his predecessor,

⁶⁰Don M. Wagner, *The Expository Method of G. Campbell Morgan* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1957), 47.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 50-53.

⁶²Jill Morgan, *A Man of the Word*, 158.

⁶³Wagner, *The Expository Method of G. Campbell Morgan*, 114.

Lloyd-Jones was committed to the exposition of Scripture, yet the character of his preaching was more Puritan and evangelistic than Morgan's. He defined preaching as "logic on fire, eloquent reasoning," and exhibited a blend of clear theology and reason with urgent passion.⁶⁴ To Lloyd-Jones, effective preaching was a communication of the Word empowered by the unction of the Spirit of God. Sargent explains, "This affects the preacher, lifting him out of himself and giving him abilities which are not naturally his as he discourses."⁶⁵ Lloyd-Jones placed more emphasis on spiritual power and passionate communication than did Morgan, his predecessor.

Lloyd-Jones had a very high view of the pulpit ministry. He wrote, "The work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called The most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching."⁶⁶ His book, *Preaching and Preachers*, established a biblical and theological foundation for expositional preaching. Lloyd-Jones' argument for passionate, biblical exposition rested on the fact that the church is the "pillar and ground of the truth" and that "preaching should make such a difference to a man that is listening that he is never the same again."⁶⁷

Lloyd-Jones engaged in three primary types of expository preaching in his

⁶⁴Peter Lewis, "The Doctor as a Preacher," in *Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Chosen by God*, ed. Christopher Catherwood (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1986), 76.

⁶⁵Tony Sargent, *The Sacred Anointing: The Preaching of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 58.

⁶⁶D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 9.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 53.

church. First, evangelistic, bringing the message of “ruin, redemption, and regeneration.”⁶⁸ Sunday evening sermons typically were gospel messages intended for the unconverted. His second style of preaching, characterizing his Sunday morning sermons, was instructional with a view to application. Third, Lloyd-Jones preached instructional messages with an emphasis on theological education. This final type of preaching was typically not done in a church service, but in a Friday night Bible study. The doctor’s fourteen year series on Romans serves as an example.

Lloyd-Jones intellectual rigor distinguished his preaching method. Packer characterized the doctor’s mental capability as follows:

Starting from a clear view of what constituted theological and spiritual wholeness, he analyzed everything and everyone systematically, as a matter of habit, to detect first of all what was disordered and then also what was lacking; for he recognized that what is not seen, or not said, can be as significant a sign of spiritual or theological ill-health as any actual sin or error. He was, in fact, a brilliant diagnostician both spiritually and theologically.⁶⁹

Lloyd-Jones’ ability to look beneath the surface presentation of a problem or sin and see the underlying difficulty was an exceptional example of the analysis which every preacher and Bible teacher should practice. The teacher’s task is to become, like Lloyd-Jones, a spiritual physician who diagnoses what is troubling people and prescribes the correct biblical remedy. Lloyd-Jones’ preaching also contained a mystical element. He desired that his hearers burn with the echo of God’s voice. Tony Sargent calls Lloyd-Jones’ emphasis “experiential theology,” a determination to go beyond just accurate

⁶⁸Lewis, “The Doctor as a Preacher,” 86.

⁶⁹James I. Packer, “Kind of Puritan,” in *Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Chosen by God*, ed. Christopher Catherwood (Westchester, IL: Crossway, 1986), 40.

exposition to sense the very presence of God. He noted, “The preacher’s first aim should be to turn a convert into a worshiper before a worker.”⁷⁰

Lloyd-Jones’ primary contribution to the practice of biblical homiletics was his unique blend of sound, reformed theology and passionate, Spirit-filled preaching. The doctor proved by example that these two qualities are not mutually exclusive.

Expositional preaching must not be dry or non-emotional, and it also must be a careful study of biblical truth. The lay preacher or teacher should learn by model from Campbell Morgan that good preaching begins with careful Bible study, and from Lloyd-Jones that biblical exposition is applied with spiritual passion.

Four Contemporary Models for Training Lay People

Numerous ministries and local churches have developed programs for educating lay people to preach or teach expositionally. This study evaluates four models representing a cross-section of training methods and targeting audiences, including Bible study groups, foreign mission agencies, and the local church.

Bible Study Fellowship

Bible Study Fellowship International is a worldwide organization which sponsors local Bible studies for lay people. While these Bible studies typically are held in a church facility, they are inter-denominational in character and are not affiliated with any one church. BSF studies meet weekly through the school year, and examine one biblical

⁷⁰Tony Sargent, *The Sacred Anointing: The Preaching of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 178-79.

book annually. The method promotes a four-fold approach to learning: daily questions for individual Bible study; lively discussion groups; compelling lectures; and enriching notes.⁷¹

BSF's weekly meetings include two basic components, a lecture about the text being studied, and a small group discussion which works through the previous week's homework for the text. The summary lectures are delivered by lay people called Teaching Leaders who have been trained by BSF to be effective expository teachers.

Teaching Leaders are trained through a homiletics seminar offered at the organization's headquarters. The training emphasizes a basic homiletical study pattern used to develop a talk on the specific passage studied. Jean Nystrand, BSF Executive Director, describes the five part homiletical process leaders follow each week:

1. The content of the passage is listed in ten to twenty items by topics or events.
2. The talk is outlined into divisions based on the main blocks of thought discovered from the content – usually two to four divisions.
3. A subject sentence of ten or less words is developed that summarizes the content of all the divisions.
4. The aim or main lesson is derived from the entire passage. This should be short and definite and is “the big idea.” Teaching leaders also develop and present a single key principle that arises out of each division. Application questions are then derived from that principle.
5. Specific applications are suggested in the form of questions designed to force answers that will yield behavior change.⁷²

⁷¹*Bible Study Fellowship* [on-line]; accessed 7 January 2008; available from <http://www.bsfindernational.org>; Internet.

⁷²Jean Nystrand, personal correspondence with author, 19 February 2008.

The Bible Study Fellowship model demonstrates that lay people can be prepared to do basic exposition of Scripture. Their method is biblically oriented and systematic in discovering the point of the passage in study. Lessons developed by the BSF approach should clearly express a single clear meaning of the biblical text, the big idea. Any lay training program would do well to emulate their emphases on an inductive method to study the Scripture and finding the aim of the Scripture text.

For the purpose of this study, a shortcoming of BSF training is that it prepares teachers more suited for leading a Bible study discussion group than for preparing a contemporary sermon or lesson. The goal of BSF lesson preparation is to divulge the content of a biblical text rather than suggest its application. Listeners are expected to provide personal application during independent study or in discussion groups.

Another weakness of BSF training for biblical homiletics is their reluctance to use outside materials in the exegesis of Scripture. Their policy against the use of commentaries and reference works forces the student to expose what the Scripture says for itself. The observation skills taught by BSF can be of particular value if a student does not have access to commentaries. The expository teacher, however, should consult commentaries to confirm his observations and for assistance with difficult passages. BSF training provides useful skills for any lay preacher or teacher, but is inadequate preparation to develop well-rounded expository preachers or teachers.

Bible Training Centre for Pastors

The Bible Training Centre for Pastors is a missionary organization based in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1988, founder Dennis Mock began creating a curriculum for training national church leaders who are unable to attend full-time college or Bible school. The

organization's mission is "To extend non-formal theological training to the world's untrained pastors and church leaders."⁷³ The program targets pastors and church leaders who can be trained in a non-formal, local setting. BTCP provides qualified teachers, often missionaries or visiting pastors, who work with students in a discipleship relationship.⁷⁴ Numerous organizations and missionaries from a variety of denominational perspectives use the curriculum worldwide to train national church leaders who cannot travel abroad for formal education.

The curriculum consists of ten courses taught in 520 hours of classroom time over a period of ten months to two years. It provides the equivalent of a basic Bible college education. The training system is marked by flexibility and a conservative biblical perspective. Course 4P in the pastoral curriculum track, "Preaching Biblical Messages and Pastoral Ministry," focuses on biblical homiletics and pastoral ministry.⁷⁵

The first half of the course, *Preaching Biblical Messages*, covers three primary aspects of preaching. First, in the introduction, the curriculum develops the nature and importance of expository preaching. Second, the curriculum walks the student through the preparation of a biblical message, including simple exegesis and the construction of a sermon. Third, the course teaches how to deliver a message, centering on effective oral

⁷³Bible Training Centre for Pastors, *Bible Training Centre for Pastors* [on-line]; accessed 4 February 2008; available from <http://www.bibletraining.com>; Internet.

⁷⁴Dennis J. Mock, *Bible Training Centre for Pastors Program Summary Manual* [on-line]; accessed 4 February 2008; available from <http://www.bibletraining.com/Downloads/PSM.pdf>; Internet.

⁷⁵Dennis J. Mock, *Preaching Biblical Messages and Pastoral Ministry* (Atlanta: Dennis J. Mock, 1989).

communication. The curriculum also contains numerous examples of biblical sermons as well as practice assignments.

The course deals strictly with the homiletical side of sermon preparation, giving no hermeneutical instruction. If the students take the BTCP classes in the pastoral training series in sequence, they would learn Bible study methods and interpretation in the first course.

Mock developed the philosophy of preaching which undergirds his text from Haddon Robinson's method.⁷⁶ His sermon preparation sequence is as follows:

1. Study the biblical text.
2. Determine the main idea of the biblical text.
3. Construct the message by determining the main idea of the sermon and outlining the content.
4. Add the introduction.
5. Add the conclusion.
6. Deliver the message.

The BTCP material's primary strengths lie in its dedication to training lay people on location and its commitment to biblical preaching. Mock asserts, "the teacher must demonstrate the critical importance of expository preaching."⁷⁷ No curriculum can anticipate all cultural and linguistic barriers to effective training, but this course attempts to define and explain the task of preaching in its most essential elements.

⁷⁶Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980), cited in Dennis J. Mock, *Preaching Biblical Messages and Pastoral Ministry* (Atlanta: Dennis J. Mock, 1989), 31.

⁷⁷Mock, *Preaching Biblical Messages*, 11.

The BTCP text carefully develops a basic theology of preaching replete with Scripture references. Unfortunately, the combination of instruction in both homiletics and pastoral ministry into one book results in an extremely brief treatment of expository preaching. The section of the textbook which covers preparing messages is only seventy pages of which half consists of examples, questions and assignments. Therefore, a significant burden falls on the instructor to supplement the outline of the textbook. However, the example outlines and sermons are of great value to both the teacher and student. Homiletical students need concrete illustrations of the skills involved in sermon preparation, and Mock gives substantially more space to practical examples and assignments than most homiletic texts.

Mock also gives considerable attention to the formulation of the main idea of the sermon. His approach presumes the student is working in one language, not the original languages of Scripture. Therefore, simple observation and interpretation of the biblical passage leads immediately to the development of the sermonic main idea, skipping the exegetical work entailed in more advanced instruction. Students develop this main idea from the passage's *subject*, what is talked about, and *completer*, what is said about the subject. Mock carefully reminds students of two expository message essentials: First, the passage itself determines the content of the message; second, the concept of the message must be built around the main idea, concept or truth.⁷⁸

The BTCP course clearly demonstrates the feasibility of training students with little or no formal theological training in expositional preaching and teaching. The BTCP

⁷⁸Ibid., 31.

class certainly cannot make students experts in exegesis or biblical exposition. Yet these students can, with practice and sufficient resource materials, develop a sound philosophy of preaching the message of a biblical text and gain proficiency in the development of simple expository sermons.

I have personally taught biblical preaching in Ukraine using Mock's curriculum on three occasions, most recently in Krivoi Rog in 2007. The most significant difficulty with presenting this material to lay preachers in that cultural setting has been a minimal understanding of biblical hermeneutics and a lack of exposure to expository preaching. Most Ukrainian lay pastors practice topical preaching and have never considered a through-the-text expository approach to preaching. It is difficult to teach a homiletic concept to students who have never seen it exemplified. The language barrier also makes it extremely challenging for an English-speaking instructor to evaluate a national pastor's practice sermons. Nevertheless, the BTCP curriculum provides a sound framework for a course in basic biblical expository preaching for lay people.

Crossroads Ministry of Grace Community Church

Crossroads Ministry is a college division of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, CA. This group works primarily with students at UCLA and USC in Los Angeles. The staff of Crossroads, led by Pastor Rick Holland, have developed a training program, titled "Cutting It Straight," which teaches students three facets of pulpit communication.⁷⁹ In the first seminar, students are trained "How to Study the Bible" and

⁷⁹Crossroads Ministries, *Cutting It Straight* [on-line]; accessed 7 January 2008; available from <http://www.crossroadsministry.net/csformat.asp>; Internet.

basic hermeneutics. Part two instructs students “How to Prepare a Message,” with the goal of helping the student move from an accurate interpretation to an effective communication of the text of Scripture. This second session assumes the student has a basic ability to interpret the Bible, and is the most helpful part of the curriculum for the purpose of this present study. The third seminar trains students “How to Deliver a Message,” and addresses basic pulpit and oratory skills.

Justin McKitterick, director of Crossroads Ministry, states that this training program has been very successful in the seven years since it was implemented.⁸⁰ The course was designed for students in public universities and has become a launching pad to explore future ministry. The three classes are offered every semester, typically on a Sunday afternoon. The classes have no prerequisites, other than taking the three levels in order. Many of the students have background in secular speech, and some have a working knowledge of the Bible.

The initial classroom instruction time for each level is brief, one and a half to two hours. At the second level, on developing a message, an instructor meets with the group and walks them through the printed curriculum. The teacher often gears the depth of instruction to the level of biblical understanding which the students in a particular class possess. The students are sent home with an assignment to develop a twenty minute expository sermon from one of five selected passages of Scripture. These texts are chosen because they are easy to outline and do not present great hermeneutical difficulties. The students present their sermons before the class for evaluation by the

⁸⁰Justin McKitterick, personal interview with author, 20 December 2007.

instructor and peers.

Level two, “How to Prepare a Message,” presumes that the student has previously studied the biblical text and understands its meaning. The curriculum teaches five components of sermon development.

1. Determine the Proposition of Your Message
2. Compose the Outline of your Message
3. Prepare the Body of Your Message
4. Write the Introduction to Your Message
5. Formulate the Conclusion to your Message

The instruction emphasizes the importance of developing a sermon with a single proposition, or main thought which is personally relevant to the audience. The student is also expected to produce a clear outline so that listeners can follow the sermon argument. The curriculum is filled with examples, quotations, helpful questions to ask of the text, and practical suggestions for illustration and application.

The greatest weakness of the Crossroads Ministry method is the pace of instruction. Two hours is insufficient time to adequately deal with the sixteen pages of information contained in level two. Many of Crossroad’s pupils are graduate level students and used to accelerated instruction, but for the typical church body this pace is too fast. Nevertheless, the “Cutting It Straight” curriculum is an excellent overview of biblical homiletics. The success of the program illustrates the reality that lay people can learn some basic skills of expositional preaching and teaching without the financial commitment or relocation typically involved in a seminary or Bible school education. Minimal prerequisite skills in hermeneutics show that even novices in biblical studies can

develop an introductory ability to teach an inductive, expositional lesson or sermon.

Precept Ministries International

Precept Ministries is the Bible training ministry led by Kay Arthur of Chattanooga, Tennessee since 1970.⁸¹ Arthur's organization has done much to popularize inductive Bible study among lay people. Her Bible study method trains individuals to examine systematically the text of Scripture to find the message of the text. She seeks to make the investigative examination of biblical texts within reach of the average lay person. Her ministry insists, "If you can read a newspaper, you can study the Bible."⁸²

Arthur instructs her students to approach inductive Bible study through a three-step process of observation, interpretation and application.⁸³ First, students discover what the Bible says by observing the biblical text. This includes an examination of the text's context, genre, themes, characters, and major doctrines. Even for students with previous hermeneutic training, Arthur's reminders strengthen a foundation for biblical preaching. Lay students, like vocational preachers, may be tempted to jump too soon to commentaries, sermonic helps, and technical resources without simply allowing the Scripture to speak for itself. Teachers must understand that the best preaching is not characterized by a clever outline or profound quotes, but based on God speaking in the text of Scripture through the personality of the preacher. Arthur states, "When you

⁸¹*Precept Ministries International* [on-line]; accessed 4 February 2008; available from <http://precept.org>; Internet.

⁸²*Precept Ministries International* [on-line]; accessed 4 February 2008; available from http://www.precept.org/site/PageServer?pagename=101_discover; Internet.

⁸³Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994).

personalize the Word, you'll know you are applying it correctly, and that's imperative."⁸⁴

Second, the student discovers the meaning of the text by interpretation. This is the largest section of Arthur's training method and the foundation of her inductive approach to Scripture. Arthur models a simple approach to biblical hermeneutics, emphasizing seven basic principles:

1. Remember the context rules.
2. Always seek the full counsel of the Word of God.
3. Remember that Scripture will never contradict Scripture.
4. Do not base your doctrine on an obscure passage of Scripture.
5. Interpret Scripture literally.
6. Look for the author's intended meaning of the passage.
7. Check your conclusions by using reliable commentaries.⁸⁵

This framework provides an essential overview of hermeneutics for the lay person. While the lay training course which is the subject of this project does not focus on preliminary hermeneutical work, the principles in Arthur's method provide a needful reminder that an expository message should reflect a study which first determines the original, authorial intent of a biblical passage. Lay teachers may be tempted to take shortcuts, moving too quickly from reading the text to outlining the sermon or lesson without first carefully studying what the passage actually says in its context. Arthur's method cautions the student to slow down and use care in the early stages of preparation.

⁸⁴Ibid., 23.

⁸⁵Ibid., 60-64.

Finally, the student discovers the personal meaning of the passage by exploring application. This is the briefest of Arthur's sections, as she largely leaves the application work up to the student. The simple application questions she poses can be of value to the lay preacher or teacher, but they are so generic and personal in nature as to be insufficient for classroom or church teaching. For example, asking "Are there new truths to be believed?" may help one's devotions, but is a weak basis for sermon application.

The primary value of Kay Arthur's method to this current study is her contribution to teaching lay persons how to do inductive Bible study and basic hermeneutics. Arthur's three-step approach to studying the passage is simplistic enough that almost any Christian can practice the technique. Lay preachers or teachers must learn the skill of careful observation of the biblical text rather than merely relying on the work of others in Bible commentaries. Precept Ministries offers training for small group leaders to use its ministry curriculum, but it does not train public speakers.

Challenges Lay People Face in Preparing and Presenting Biblical Messages

Most lay people, in the United States and internationally, cannot participate in the intensive biblical training available in a full-time Bible school or seminary. A short-term training program or seminar in expository preaching is by its very nature limited in scope, and must be carefully focused in order to accomplish worthwhile training goals.

Lay people usually do not have the advantages of training, resources, preparation time, or preaching and teaching experience available to a vocational pastor. The typical pastor who practices expositional preaching learned his preaching skills through formal education in a Christian college or seminary. Lay persons in evangelical

churches have varying degrees of education and experience, but most have never been formally trained in the philosophy and practice of biblical exposition. It is the local church's responsibility to provide basic preparation for lay persons to do exposition for ministry in Sunday School, Bible studies, and lay preaching opportunities.

Many lay teachers are also handicapped by the lack of books and resources such as commentaries and homiletic guides. Local churches can assist individuals in the selection and purchase of study aids. Additionally, teachers must be trained how to develop the information discovered in study resources into effective biblical messages or lessons. Lay persons often face the additional challenge of not having as much preparation time for a biblical message as a vocational preacher. The preparation method taught to lay persons must be efficient and simple. These individuals are probably not going to spend extensive time diagramming the biblical text or searching for a perfect homiletic outline. They must be taught to observe quickly and competently the biblical text, find the main teaching points, and develop these into a lesson.

Lay people can learn fundamental skills which equip them to preach and teach biblically. The Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of the believer holds that the primary difference between vocational pastors and lay persons is not in one's qualification to study and teach the Bible, but a distinction of giftedness, vocation, and calling (1 Pet 2:9). Spiritual gifts differ greatly among individuals. Some lay preachers advance quickly in homiletic skills due to the spiritual gifting of the Holy Spirit. A lay training program is necessary to focus these gifts and talents toward biblical exposition and sound doctrine. Spiritual abilities must be nurtured and developed under the guidance of godly leaders. (2 Tim 2:2).

Lay preachers or teachers must be shown that the ultimate power in biblical preaching is in the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. There is a temptation, especially for the untrained, to rely on human oratorical abilities instead of the Spirit of God. Teachers who employ engaging stories and humor may be well-received by an audience, but unless the message is biblical, the effort is of no lasting value. A training program for lay persons, therefore, must teach both the philosophy and method of biblical preaching and teaching. A prospective preacher or teacher should learn to rely on the biblical text for the content of the message and on the Holy Spirit for the teaching's power.

Essential Ingredients Common to Expository Sermons and Lessons

To many lay people, the prospect of expository teaching suggests one deliver a dry, detailed lecture over the technical components of a biblical passage. It is not surprising, then, that many of those individuals feel unqualified to present a biblical sermon, or unable to develop a lesson that engages the audience. The purpose of this section is to describe key traits which distinguish a good expository sermon or lesson from an academic lecture. These traits should be included in a homiletic training program in expository preaching and teaching for lay persons.

The heart of an expository message is the explanation of a timeless passage of Scripture to a contemporary audience. Expository teaching is not simply an academic talk revealing information which could be gleaned by reading a textual commentary. It is the delivery of a message from God as revealed in the biblical text to the hearts of listeners through the words of the preacher or teacher.

Biblical sermons and lessons vary widely in nature depending on the

presenter's gifts and personality, the biblical text being examined, the audience, and the occasion of the message. Accurate exegesis of a Scripture passage by different students could result in multiple applications from the same text. Effective expository sermons and lessons, however, hold numerous features in common. This section addresses homiletic characteristics of good biblical preaching and teaching rather than the exegetical and hermeneutical groundwork to sermon and lesson development.

While most lay people cannot do advanced exegesis, they can construct a simple yet sound expository message. The homiletic features described here are marks which should characterize any expository sermon or lesson. While the following eight elements are not intended to be exhaustive, they describe characteristics often missing in a lay person's attempt at preaching or teaching.

An Expository Sermon Must Include a Homiletical Idea which Reflects Authorial Intent

The heart of a good biblical sermon or lesson is a single main thought developed from studying a biblical passage. This "big idea" encapsulates in a sentence the message of the biblical text articulated for a contemporary audience.⁸⁶ The teacher should be able to express the point of the message in a single, clear thought derived from the text and applied to listeners. This summary statement becomes the focal point for the teaching of the passage. It is the Scripture which determines the expository teacher's theme and provides the authority for the message declared. Chapell maintains,

⁸⁶Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 31-44.

“The meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon.”⁸⁷

The “big idea” as developed from the text of Scripture may be the most important facet of homiletic approach to be taught to the lay teacher. The Scripture’s truths, exposed through accurate teaching, provide the authority for the message. Expository teachers do not expect listeners to adhere automatically to their personal opinions. Scripture obligates the teacher to make sure that people understand what God says through the text to the hearts of the listeners. The preacher or teacher has no authority from God to do anything else.

The preacher or teacher must base the sermon upon the single meaning of the text, the author’s intended meaning. Otherwise, interpretation of the text becomes subjective and the resulting sermon or Bible lesson lacks divine authority. Through inspiration every biblical text has two authors, the Holy Spirit as well as a human author. Therefore, hermeneutical interpretation of authorial intent is not always easy or simple. The interpreter’s goal is to discover what the human author mean the text to communicate, and then collocate that with the Spirit’s further revelation. For example, a human author may intend a prophetic text to describe an event which is contemporary or in the final days. The Spirit, through further revelation, may indicate that God intended that text to speak additionally of Messianic events. Such is the case in Peter's inspired use of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2, discussed elsewhere in this chapter. The human author, Joel, may not have knowingly intended this text to refer to events following Messiah's

⁸⁷Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker), 32.

resurrection, but further revelation reveals its Spirit-determined significance. Proper interpretation studies both the divine and human authors' intended meaning, and makes that meaning the foundation of the sermon.

The teacher must resist the temptation to teach a subjective appraisal of the passage, or "what it now means to me." The text must be "the master which dictates and controls what is said."⁸⁸ Upon analyzing the text, the student comes to understand the primary meaning of the passage, which transitions into a homiletical idea during sermon development.

An Expository Sermon Must Include Structure and Progress

Outlining has been a fixture of homiletic courses since the Puritans perfected the art of a systematic sermon framework. "The human mind craves unity, order, and progress. The mind of the listener searches for overall unity."⁸⁹ Western listeners tend to think in orderly patterns and listen best when they understand the direction of a rhetorical argument. Sermon and Bible study lessons should use logical arguments to lead to or prove a main thought. For a sermon or lesson to be attentively heard and understood, and for its argument to be persuasive, it must progress in a reasonable fashion. Even sermons delivered in a narrative, story-telling fashion or using an inductive method need planning and organization to be effective.

⁸⁸John R. W. Stott., *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 126.

⁸⁹Keith Wilhite, "A Bullet versus Buckshot: What Makes the Big Idea Work?" in *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People*, ed. Keith Wilhite and Scott M. Gibson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 20-21.

In a *topical* message, the sermon is organized according to the subject's nature rather than by a biblical outline. In a *textual* message, the teacher develops both the homiletical idea and the main points from the passage under study.⁹⁰ Lay people without formal theological education can be trained to take a textual approach to find and use the basic outline of a passage. Three of the four lay training organizations researched in this study made the use of a biblically based outline as the foundation of lesson development.

Lay teachers must learn the importance of preparing sermons and lessons with clear structures, which show progress, and that incorporate the structure and teaching of Scripture within the outline of the messages. The teacher or preacher who uses this method keeps his or her own train of thought from wandering and precludes the danger of ambiguous thinking. If a teacher is not clear in his or her own mind about the direction of the message, the audience will almost certainly be confused about what is being taught. The maxim is true, "Fuzzy sermons create fuzzy Christians." The practice of biblical sermon outlining fosters discipline which prevents the teacher from wandering away from the text's subject.

In an expository message, the teacher explains what a particular text means by using the text-writer's spiritual principles to produce the points of the message. Lay people should be instructed to develop clear outlines from the biblical text itself. Chapell explains, "An expository sermon takes its topic, main points, *and* sub-points from a text."⁹¹ References to other passages of Scripture should typically be used to confirm or explain the point of the original passage, but not to develop additional sections of the outline.

⁹⁰Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 129-30.

⁹¹*Ibid.*, 131.

Both the overall subject of the sermon, as well as the structure itself, must be guided by the teaching of the passage. The resulting outlines, when preached or taught, should then reveal the structure and progress of the passage to the hearer.

**An Expository Sermon Must Include
an Interesting and Relevant
Introduction and Conclusion**

The most important minutes in a sermon are those at its beginning and end. First impressions of the speaker and his subject matter developed during the opening comments determine whether a listener is going to give full attention to his message. Hearers often decide whether they will act on the principles taught during the closing remarks. It takes an extraordinarily gifted preacher to successfully deliver an engaging message which begins or ends with exegetical details or doctrinal analysis. Both Morgan and Lloyd-Jones characteristically introduced their messages with descriptive details, theological explanations, or a review of a previous outline. Lay teachers must not adopt this practice as a norm. Chapell explains, “The assumption that one’s listeners automatically share one’s own interest in the sermon is a mark of an inexperienced preacher.”⁹² It is an unusual hearer who will heed the hortatory teachings of Scripture without a relevant-to-life beginning and a concluding call to obedience by the speaker.

An effective introduction commands attention, surfaces need, and introduces the body of the text.⁹³ The opening statements must arouse the attention of listeners to the subject of the message and point to the biblical text as the source of the solution. The

⁹²Ibid., 238.

⁹³Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 160-65.

goal of an introduction is to lead people to the homiletical idea and prepare them to find the solution to a personal need in the text. The hearer is much more likely to listen attentively to a sermon which promises to provide a solution for felt needs from the text of Scripture than to a message which opens with doctrinal niceties. The risk of anthropocentricity can be avoided when the teacher sounds two themes: First, the ultimate goal of the Christian life is to glorify God, and that goal produces ultimate satisfaction; and second, that applications in the introduction which are legitimate and natural results of obedience to principles divulged in the text. This approach makes clear to hearers that the Scripture is provided not just for information, but for life-changing obedience and the glory of God.

A good introduction answers the following questions: “Why should I listen?” “What does this say about me?” “What need of mine does this text address?” “Does the Bible have the answer to this need in my life?” “What does this passage tell me about God and his will for my life?” By the end of the sermon opening, the hearer should be able to briefly state, “What is this sermon about and why should I encounter this text?”

Listeners are more likely to remember the conclusion than any other component of the message.⁹⁴ A good summation entails more than a simple culmination of a sermon; It is the message’s climax. The conclusion accomplishes two basic purposes, to review and to motivate. The conclusion normally will not introduce any new exegesis, explanation or application. It reminds hearers of what has been learned and

⁹⁴Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 252.

asks them to obey.

The expository teacher should finish with a restatement of the homiletical idea or sermon purpose, and perhaps a review of the main points. Key conclusions may be restated or reworded, but no new subject matters should be introduced. The sermonic purpose is not simply so that the audience will gain academic knowledge, but to call them to obey. The conclusion asks, “So what?” and “What will you do about this?” Its goal is not to illuminate, but to motivate.

An inexperienced teacher may do harm with a poor conclusion to the sermon. One common flaw is for the teacher to simply stop when he or she runs out of time. The teacher should also abstain from announcing his or her conclusion, thereby raising expectations in the audience. Additional errors to be avoided include the introduction of new material, making the conclusion too long, and not being clear concerning the application expected.⁹⁵ The preacher or Bible teacher must make every effort to see that the conclusion successfully boosts the overall effort of the sermon.

Two of the five components of sermon preparation in the Crossroads curriculum focus on the introduction and conclusion. Lay speakers must learn the discipline to spend adequate time preparing to open and close. A well crafted introduction and conclusion are brief, specific, and down-to-earth. They communicate that the speaker cared enough about the subject matter to spend the time necessary to articulate it well.

⁹⁵Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 127.

An Expository Sermon Must Include Life Application

Rick Warren critiqued contemporary homiletical training, “I’ve read over 500 books on preaching and the vast majority do not really understand that preaching is about transformation, not information.”⁹⁶ If the goal of a sermon is to create intelligent Christians, then the teacher or preacher is successful when listeners gain academic knowledge about the text. The goal of expository preaching, however, is not head knowledge; it is life-change. Therefore, in order for the teacher to be successful, he or she must apply the truth of Scripture to the personal needs of the audience.

The distinguishing difference between an academic commentary and an expository message is that in exposition the teacher brings the truth of the biblical text into contemporary culture in order for the Spirit to accomplish attitudinal and behavioral change in the hearer. When the Word of God is taught as doctrine, is the basis of reproof, is used to bring correction, and is the basis of Christian training, then “the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17). Every sermon and every lesson must be taught with the purpose of achieving life change.

The student who does inductive Bible Study asks: *What does the truth of this text mean for me?* The expositional teacher then applies that question to the audience: *What does God want my listeners to understand and obey?* Biblical exposition must enable the hearer to understand the meaning of the text, both the original meaning in terms of context, grammar, and theology, and the personal meaning in the contemporary

⁹⁶Michael Duduit, “Purpose-Driven Preaching: An Interview with Rick Warren.” *Preaching* 17, no. 2 (2001), 6-17.

context. The hearer should be able to state simply the answer to the question: *What attitude, action, or affection should I change as a result of the truth of this Scripture?*

The lay teacher should avoid two common errors when incorporating life application into a sermon or lesson. First, the teacher must not view application simply as a genre or type of preaching. Teaching the practical relevance of the text is not incidental to expositional sermons. “If you are not having life application, you are not preaching” claims Warren.⁹⁷ Every message must be built around an applicational purpose. For many teachers, preaching with application can be difficult work. As a result the planning for application takes a secondary priority to the teaching of biblical information. Therefore, teaching for personal relevance is poorly done or never happens. Second, the lay teacher should not consider application as an afterthought, simply tacked on to the end of a message. Sermons, characterized by dry facts and disconnected information, cannot be salvaged in the concluding moments with an applicational thought. It is imperative that application be integrated throughout an expositional sermon. The introduction should indicate the coming explanation of the relevance of the text. The body of the sermon must incorporate questions, observations, and exhortations, as described in the following section. The conclusion should review content while asking the listener to obey its implications.

An Expository Sermon Must Include Contemporary Illustration and Analogy

The power of example distinguishes a colorless Bible lecture from an effective

⁹⁷Duduit, “Purpose-Driven Preaching,” 7.

sermon which motivates life change. Illustration and analogy are essential to expository preaching because the human mind yearns for concrete examples in which to anchor abstract truths.⁹⁸ Stories and representative models allow the listener to personally identify with scriptural principles and develop implications of the text for his or her own experience.

Illustration opens the human mind to visualize new truth. A principle does not impact a person's thinking unless he or she can see it. Abstract truths such as love, faith, holiness, or forgiveness demand concrete examples to explain their meaning. Warren Wiersbe pleads for preachers to think of the world as a theater, using drama and metaphor to communicate the abstract. He notes, "People think in pictures and respond with their hearts as well as their heads."⁹⁹

A lay teacher or preacher with modest gifts of oratory can retain an audience's attention and create understanding through the use of narrative examples of the principles being taught. A Scripture principle grasped by the imagination is much more likely to be internalized and obeyed. Biblical truths must be accompanied by particular examples and pictures in order to be retained.¹⁰⁰

If the teacher cannot find an appropriate example, it is likely that he or she does not fully understand the concept being taught. The teacher must be able to give concrete

⁹⁸Bryan Chapell, *Using Illustrations to Preach with Power*, rev. ed. (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001), 13.

⁹⁹Warren Wiersbe, *Preaching and Teaching with Imagination: The Quest for Biblical Ministry* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1994), 23.

¹⁰⁰Chapell, *Using Illustrations*, 56.

pictures of the kind of obedience expected by the text. Teaching without illustration adds more information to the listener's mind, but not necessarily understanding. Chapell maintains, "Illustrations do more than simply adorn thought. They persuade, they motivate, they stir the will, they touch the heart, they explain and they cause decision-making."¹⁰¹ Lay preachers and teachers must be challenged to do the hard work necessary to discover insightful and valuable illustrations of the text's principles.

Two particular risks must be avoided by lay teachers. First is the danger of telling stories which have no particular connection to the message of the text. A good tale may cause the listener's heads to raise and eyes to fasten on the teacher. However, the speaker must not presume that people who hear the story with interest are necessarily learning. Each illustration must achieve a specific purpose making clear some point in the biblical passage. Second, the lay teacher must not allow stories and illustrations to overshadow the teaching of the passage. Gifted story tellers can be tempted to rest on narrative abilities rather than wrestling with the text itself. Expository preaching requires both explanation of the content as well as exemplification. Listeners will often remember an illustration longer than the sermon itself. This powerful medium can be used to open a window of understanding to God's principles as developed in the text.

An Expository Sermon Must Include an Emotional Connection with the Listener's Heart

A mechanically correct expository sermon which fails to reach the heart of the listener will not result in life change. Good preaching connects the doctrinal truth of

¹⁰¹Ibid., 69.

Scripture to the emotional and volitional heart of the person in the pew. An expositor helps hearers feel the burden of the text through a personal rapport with them. This personal connection comes through the teacher's personality, body language, awareness of the audience, and involvement in the text.

The Apostle Paul was a great intellect, capable of lecturing to the greatest minds of his day. Paul's preaching and teaching, however, were not limited to academic engagement, but involved an appeal to the whole being, both mind and emotions. He preached for heart-change in his hearers. He told the Thessalonian church, "Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Thess 1:5). Chapell calls this conviction the *pathos* of the sermon, or its passion and fervor.¹⁰²

Jonathan Edwards understood the importance of preaching to hearers' affections. He insisted that while commentaries and books have value to the intellect of the reader, they do not touch the heart like the verbal proclamation of the Scripture:

The impressing of divine things on the hearts and affections of men, is evidently one great and main end for which God has ordained that his word, delivered in the holy scriptures, should be opened, applied, and set home upon men, in preaching God hath appointed a particular and lively application of his word to men in the preaching of it, as a fit means to affect sinners with the importance of the things of religion . . . and to stir up the pure minds of the saints and quicken their affections.¹⁰³

Lloyd-Jones maintained, "If a man's heart is not engaged I take leave to query

¹⁰²Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 35.

¹⁰³Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 39.

and to question whether he has really understood with his head.”¹⁰⁴ Lloyd-Jones asserted that good preaching is hard to define, because the best biblical sermons are not characterized by a list of do’s and don’ts, but by traits which center on the preacher’s emotional connection with the listener.¹⁰⁵

Lloyd-Jones describes five ways the preacher can make an emotional connection with hearers. First, the preacher’s personality must be involved, including body language and gestures. Second, authentic preaching has an element of freedom, or spontaneity. The preacher must be open to the inspiration of the moment.¹⁰⁶ Third, good preaching requires interaction with the congregation. The preacher must derive something from the listeners. There is an exchange which takes place in true preaching. Fourth, the preacher must be serious, but not overly solemn. The gravity of the gospel message should grip the preacher so that his listeners realize the message is not trivial or superficial. Fifth, authentic preaching requires personal involvement. The preacher is not merely an advocate, but a witness of the gospel message. This zealotry creates a rapport with listeners and an urgency about the message of the text.

The preaching and teaching lay person will never engage the hearts of hearers unless he or she first becomes passionate about the biblical text. Good preaching is contagious with an affection for God’s truth. Even the lay person who does not have

¹⁰⁴D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971), 90.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, 81-99.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, 84.

great spiritual gifts in preaching or teaching can passionately communicate a love for God. Many of the most effective teachers in the body of Christ are those who have modest verbal skills, and little or no theological education, yet manage with the Spirit's help to connect with the affections of hearers.

An Expository Sermon Must Include a Call for Obedient Response to the Passage Taught

The effective teacher desires to persuade hearers of the truth of his or her message. Expository preaching and teaching informs the intellect, affects the emotions, and ultimately must challenge the will. Paul appealed to the Corinthians, "We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20). Paul wanted to influence them to obey. An entreaty to the will is the primary difference between a lecture and preaching or between an essay and a sermon.¹⁰⁷

The teacher is not a salesperson who must close the deal for the work to be successful. It is not within the teacher's power to change the will of the sinner's heart. Yet, a challenge to obedience must be given if the Holy Spirit is to move the will to respond. If the text calls for a response of faith, the preacher or teacher should ask the listener to believe. If the preaching text warns against sinful behavior, the preacher or teacher must ask the hearer to repent of or flee this sin.

An Expository Sermon Must Include the Power of the Holy Spirit Operating through the Teacher

Proper technique and academic prowess in preaching without accompanying

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 92.

spiritual power results in educated listeners who may not have the means or motivation to obey the Scripture. There is a temptation for preachers or teachers to rely on their own preparation and not to seek the spiritual intervention of God through the message. In order for a sermon, Sunday School lesson or even a Bible study to be truly effective, God must empower that message by the anointing of his Holy Spirit. Lloyd Jones insisted that this anointing of the Spirit, or *unction* as he called it, was the source of preaching power that exceeds human ability:

It is the Holy Spirit falling upon the preacher in a special manner. It is an access of power. It is God giving power, and enabling, through the Spirit, to the preacher in order that he may do this work in a manner that lifts it up beyond the efforts and endeavors of man to a position in which the preacher is being used by the Spirit and becomes a channel through whom the Spirit works.¹⁰⁸

Lay preachers and teachers, like vocational clergy, must be warned against the danger of self-reliance. The authority for his or her teaching is the Scripture, and the power is the Holy Spirit. Christ promised his disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Believers manifest this power when they bear witness to the truth of the gospel message. Paul reminded the Corinthian church that his message was made strong, not by his human oratory abilities: "My speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Cor 2:4). The best method, the most profound exposition, and the clearest articulation of a lesson outline are no substitute for the Holy Spirit's power in preaching and teaching. Lay persons need to learn that the right technique can produce a lifeless sermon if God's help is not present. Prayer for the Spirit's intervention and humble

¹⁰⁸Ibid., 305.

dependence on God's grace are indispensable to life-changing expository preaching.

**Lay Students of Expository Preaching and Teaching
Must Learn a Method of Developing
a Biblical Sermon or Lesson**

The preparation technique of each expository preacher and teacher will be somewhat different. Every teacher plans and approaches his exposition in a manner based on his own training, spiritual gifts, time availability, and role models. The lay preacher and teacher needs a consistent method of study and preparation which will systematize the process of sermon development. For the purpose of training lay people in the work of exposition and for simplicity, the essential components of the development of an expository sermon are described here in ten steps.

This method assumes that the student has familiarity with simple hermeneutics and basic theology. The *Cutting It Straight* curriculum on "How to Prepare a Message" requires a prerequisite course on "How to Study the Bible." The Bible Training Centre for Pastors follows a similar sequence. Students who do not understand basic Bible study should learn this skill before attempting to develop an expository message.

Step 1: Select the Passage

Greidanus notes, "A poorly chosen text will haunt the preacher throughout the sermonizing process, and will, in all likelihood, result in a defective sermon."¹⁰⁹

Systematic biblical exposition, working one pericope at a time through a biblical book,

¹⁰⁹Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 127.

greatly helps the teacher when choosing the text for a sermon. However, lay people may not have the opportunity to preach or teach on a regular basis. In this case, the passage is selected based on the preacher or teacher's knowledge of the intended audience's needs. The lay teacher may also take into consideration his or her understanding of the passage and resources at hand. It may, for instance, be tempting for the lay person to preach about the visions of Revelation, but without a firm grasp of the nature of apocalyptic genre the interpretation of that text will likely be disappointing.

The preaching text chosen should be a literary unit. A typical expository message will involve a paragraph or section of the Scripture which has one identifiable theme or topic. The length of the passage studied may vary from a single verse to several paragraphs, depending on the literature genre and the time allowed for presentation.

Step 2: Observe the Passage

Before the preacher or teacher exposes himself or herself to the bias of commentators and theologians, he or she should carefully observe the Scripture text. It is important to take an inductive approach to Bible study, deliberately looking at the text to find what the passage says before coming to conclusions about how to preach it. The teacher must read and re-read the passage well, and observe literary clues *before* interpreting the meaning of the Scripture. The expositor must examine the passage with fresh, unbiased eyes to discover its content before developing the message structure.

Lay students of the Bible often miss the key teaching of a section of Scripture simply because they do not know what to look for in the text. A careful reading of the passage in its context, asking the right questions, can reveal important information for the

teacher and preacher. Lay people must be trained to observe context, genre, key thoughts and words, and theologically significant statements. The text should be interrogated, much as a detective would question a witness, by asking of the passage who, what, where, when, and how?¹¹⁰ The lay student may uncover helpful principles and messages from the Bible with no commentary helps at all. Study resources are useful to good exegesis, but consulting them must not be the first step to good sermon preparation.

Step 3: Interpret the Passage

Once the expositional preacher or teacher has found the *content* of the passage, he must distinguish the *meaning* of the text. He or she examines the biblical, historical and cultural context of the Scripture section, and does an analysis of the literary structure, genre, and syntax. Teachers who have not been theologically trained should familiarize themselves with interpretive resources such as concordances, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and more recently, internet sites with interpretive tools. The Kay Arthur procedure for interpreting a text of Scripture described earlier can be of much value here for a lay student of the Word.

Step 4: Find the Textual Divisions

The expositor must find the natural text divisions and outline the passage according to grammatical principles and clues within the content itself. The goal is to understand how the biblical author put the text together. The resulting outline will

¹¹⁰Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible: The Lasting Rewards of the Inductive Method* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994), 24-25.

summarize the main thoughts of the passage in a logical form which is natural to the teaching of the biblical writer. Epistolary literature, particularly Pauline texts, will usually reveal their outline through a diagrammatical examination of the text. Narrative genre, which involves the majority of biblical literature, often reveals its outline through a study of the flow of the story or the high points of the recorded event. The seminary trained preacher may find diagramming the passage to be helpful in this step. However, lay teachers will probably be limited to carefully outlining the passage from a Bible translation.

Step 5: Discover the Exegetical Idea

Each preaching passage will have as its theme a single dominant thought or subject, called the textual or exegetical idea. This is the main point which God was making to the original readers in the passage. At this step of sermon preparation the “Big Idea” may not yet be verbalized in a form for the contemporary audience. However, this truth will become the main thought of the sermon. When possible, this primary theme should be identified in advance, when the teacher plans the sermon or Bible study series. This projected theme would be subject to change as the preacher or teacher completes his or her investigative work.

Step 6: Evaluate the Human Need

The expository teacher next turns his or her attention from the text of Scripture to the condition of the audience. If the preacher or teacher has chosen the preaching text based on audience needs, as described in step one, he or she now asks, “What specific principles are revealed here that speak to the needs in my audience.” He or she must

evaluate the listeners' concerns, shortcomings, and aspirations in terms of the truth revealed in the passage, and identify personal sermonic applications. Chapell calls this personal need the "Fallen Condition Focus," which is, "the mutual human condition that contemporary believers share with those to or for whom the text was written that requires the grace of the passage."¹¹¹ The goal is not just to produce great sermons or lessons. The object of preaching and teaching is to see God change the lives of listeners by the Word that is preached.

A caution is necessary. The inductive approach to the explanation and proclamation of the Bible does not begin with human need. It starts with the Scripture and then evaluates the personal struggles, fears, challenges, sins, or other issues which listeners face that the biblical text addresses.

Step 7: Formulate the Homiletic Idea

The expository teacher takes the textual/exegetical idea and, in light of the human need, develops a homiletic idea. This single thought will be the focus of the sermon or lesson. This is not a theme or idea original with the teacher, but the natural progression of the biblical text to the contemporary audience. Robinson writes, "Ideally each sermon is the explanation, interpretation, or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture."¹¹²

¹¹¹Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 42.

¹¹²Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 33.

Step 8: Structure the Sermon

Robinson states, “A well-planned sermon begins with a good outline—a logical path for the mind.”¹¹³ This homiletic outline should be developed from the textual divisions discovered in the exegesis of the passage. Normally, the verse divisions in the sermon outline and the general subject of each division will be the same as in the textual outline. The homiletic outline is made contemporary through complete statements which relate naturally to the homiletic idea of the message.

The homiletic outline for the expositor will often include application. Where the text allows, outline points may be complete sentences which confirm or apply the homiletic idea. In some texts, particularly when teaching narrative literature, the outline may have one main point. In this case, the structure of the sermon or lesson may be less obvious, but the progression and plan should be carefully developed.

If the teacher were not teaching for life application, the textual outline developed in step four might be a natural grid for a lesson on the passage. However, an exegetical outline alone does not make an expository sermon. It is the teacher's task not merely to explain the text, but to personalize it for the contemporary audience.

Step 9: Explain and Illustrate

Once the homiletic idea and basic structure of the sermon are complete, the lesson or message must be filled out with illustrations, explanations, and applications. The importance of good complementary material cannot be overestimated. Illustrations help the audience to understand how the ancient Scriptures apply to their situation.

¹¹³Ibid., 130.

Lay teachers and preachers should be encouraged to work hard at planning illustrations and applications which create a window into the text. The most powerful sermons and the most remembered lessons are those which bring truth to life by demonstrating and applying textual truths.¹¹⁴

Step 10: Develop the Introduction and Conclusion

The final step in sermon and lesson development is the crafting of a well designed introduction and conclusion. The introduction must command attention and introduce the homiletical theme. It also explains how this theme meets a need within the listener. With the opening remarks, the teacher orients hearers to the main body of the message, giving them some idea of what to expect. The teacher must tie the reason for the message to the truths of the text. These thoughts should be concise and clear.

The conclusion reviews the main lessons of the message and reminds listeners of the homiletic theme. Typically, the preacher or teacher will illustrate the main idea during the conclusion and call for a listener response.

The lay preacher or teacher must be taught to make his or her introduction and conclusion to the point and engaging. Inexperienced teachers and preachers tend to make their introductions too long and, consequently, leave little time for an effective conclusion. Careful preparation in advance of these essential parts of the lesson will make for a more effective presentation.

¹¹⁴Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 175.

Conclusion

The Apostle Paul commanded Timothy to train Bible teachers. He wrote, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2). Contemporary pastors and churches must catch a similar vision for a well-prepared team of non-professional preachers and teachers in the local church. Lay persons typically do not share the same training, resources, and time availability as vocational clergy bring to sermon and lesson preparation. Nevertheless, they have an awesome privilege of handling the Word of God in Sunday School, Bible studies, and various preaching opportunities. Lay men and women must be equipped to be faithful expositors of Scripture, by training in hermeneutics, homiletics, and spiritual life.

CHAPTER 4

A METHOD USED FOR TRAINING LAY PEOPLE TO TEACH AND PREACH THE BIBLE EXPOSITIONALLY

This project involved teaching an eight-week seminar on basic hermeneutics and homiletics, and improving my own expository preaching, using critical input from class members. The seminar supported three project goals of training lay people to teach expositoryly, changing the perception that only professionals can preach expositoryly, and developing a greater emphasis within my personal ministry on equipping the next generation of church leaders. My sermon series fulfilled a fourth project goal, to improve my own expository preaching based upon feedback from a peer group and from seminar students. The series also contributed to the first goal of training lay people to teach the Bible expositoryly. Part of the process of training teachers involves learning by example. The seminar students gained understanding of how to develop expositional lessons by discussing with me the preparation and presentation of these sermons.

This chapter describes the methodology used in training lay persons at Graham Community Church to preach and teach the Bible expositionally. The following chapter interprets the results of that project.

First, I developed the seminar syllabus, which required two months for preparation. I compiled insights of numerous evangelical scholars and supplemented them with my own sermon preparation experience and doctoral study. This fifty-nine page syllabus contained four major sections: parts 1 and 2 defined and described expository preaching; part 3 gave a ten-step method for developing an expository sermon or lesson; and part 4 described practical ways for teachers and preachers to improve their presentation (Appendix 2). These topics gave students a broad overview of biblical homiletics sufficient to orient them to this field of study.

Each student received a three-ring binder with ample room for taking notes during the seminar. Additional handouts were given to students during each session of the seminar, including expository outline examples, articles on preaching and teaching, and supplements to the syllabus. Each student received a copy of Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching*, which they were encouraged, but not required, to read.¹¹⁵ An extensive PowerPoint presentation was developed for each session, which included the seminar outline, pertinent Bible texts, examples and discussion questions.

Second, I scheduled the classes for January and February of 2009. Attendance requirements consisted of eight Thursday evening sessions for a twelve-hour total of formal classroom instruction.

¹¹⁵Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).

Third, I recruited a group of 12 students for the seminar.¹¹⁶ The first 5 students asked to participate attended a Thursday evening men's Bible study which was temporarily replaced by the seminar. Seven additional adults from the church were asked to be involved. All of the students attended Graham Community Church in Laingsburg, Michigan, and all but 1 were church members. I attempted to recruit individuals who represented a cross section of the church in terms of teaching experience and education levels. The group included 9 men and 3 women. Because the seminar was intended to equip both expository preachers and Bible teachers, the class did not address the biblical difficulty of female preachers. Seven of the 12 participants had no prior teacher training and seven had no previous training in Bible study methods or hermeneutics. All 12 participants completed the seminar, although some missed one or two sessions. The classes were video taped and DVD's made available, along with printed copies of the PowerPoint presentation, for anyone who missed a session.

Fourth, students were individually provided with the "Agreement to Participate" form which each student signed (Appendix 1). Participants were also given the "Pre-Seminar Questionnaire" (Appendix 3). This questionnaire contained 9 questions to collect demographic information and assess prior training in teaching the Bible. An additional 15 questions explored the students' understanding of teaching the Bible and exposition. The latter questions asked respondents to evaluate their own knowledge and opinion of teaching the Bible by recording their reaction to 15 statements on a five-point Likert scale (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). Some questions appraised

¹¹⁶Demographic data are reported in Appendix 4.

the students' view of themselves as a teacher, such as "I am confident in my ability to read and understand the Bible," and "I feel that my method of preparation to teach the Bible is adequate." Other questions explored their opinions and understanding of expository teaching, such as "I prefer expository preaching and teaching more than topical teaching" and "Expository teaching or preaching tends to be boring."

During contact prior to the seminar, I encouraged students to begin incorporating principles learned in the seminar into their teaching and preaching opportunities as soon as possible. At the conclusion of the seminar, I attempted to place as many of the seminar students as possible into preaching and teaching situations before the twelve-week project was finished. The individuals who already had teaching responsibilities were urged to think critically about how this course could be used in their ministries. Students who did not have formal teaching responsibilities were assisted to think of ways their new knowledge could be practiced, such as preaching at the City Rescue Mission, leading an adult Bible study, or substituting in a Sunday school class.

Fifth, I preached a two-week series from 2 Timothy 4:2 titled "Why We Teach the Bible" on Sunday mornings, January 4 and 11, 2009 (outlines in Appendix 6). These theological messages were intended to provide a biblical and philosophical background for expositional preaching and teaching.

Sixth, the actual seminar, titled *Expository Preaching and Teaching: Ten Essential Steps to Develop Biblical Messages*, was conducted at Graham Community Church during an 8 week period. The goal of the seminar was to help students understand the make-up and development of an expository message and learn to preach and teach the Bible in an expository style. Eight classroom lectures took place on

consecutive Thursday evenings, January 8, 15, 22, 29, and February 5, 12, 19, 26, 2009 from 7:00 - 8:30 P.M. Time was allowed for personal interaction with students before and after the weekly sessions.

The classes were taught at an introductory Bible college level. I assumed many of the students had no prior training in hermeneutics or homiletics; therefore, terms which could be unfamiliar to lay people were carefully explained and in some cases simplified to benefit each student. During the initial session students were told this seminar would be a condensed homiletics class and would cover much of the same material of a Bible school course, in a rapid fire style. A significant quantity of information was discussed each week. The class syllabus was distributed at the first session, with additional materials and edited syllabus pages handed out weekly. The syllabus was essential to help students take notes and follow the course materials. The classes consisted primarily of lectures supplemented by discussion questions, video examples, and various course handouts.

Class Overview

This overview describes the topics covered in the eight week classroom instruction. The heart of the seminar consisted of ten-steps for developing expository sermons and lessons, with introductory and concluding materials taught in the first and final sessions. The first session asked, “Why Teach and Preach the Bible Expositorily?” I examined both the nature and importance of biblical exposition in the pulpit and church classroom. The first two steps of the expository method were introduced that week: step 1–“Choose the Passage”–described how to select a biblical text for an expository lesson; and step 2–“Observe What Is There”–focused on looking at

the Scripture passage to identify context, key words, ideas, and principles. I encouraged students with no background in hermeneutics to study the inductive Bible study method taught by Kay Arthur. Her book, *How to Study Your Bible*, was made available for students to purchase.¹¹⁷

The second session was titled, “What Does the Passage Mean?” and introduced step 3–“Discover What It Means”–and step 4–“Find Out How It’s Put Together.” The lesson covered simple biblical hermeneutics and emphasized literal interpretation, authorial intent, and the exegetical structure of a passage. The class discussed a basic introduction to biblical genre and the significance of literary type to biblical interpretation. Students were encouraged to use good study tools such as Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and concordances, but not to rely on them before completing their own observation work of the text.

The third session–“What Is the Point Here?”–began by outlining the structure of several biblical texts. Step 5 of the expository method was introduced–“Uncover the Textual Idea.” Students studied the importance of textual unity, as the exegete works to discover the single controlling theme in the study of the biblical passage. This unifying theme was expressed as the textual idea, a sentence of thought which states the main precept of the biblical text. I introduced Haddon Robinson’s expository method which expresses the textual idea in a complete sentence using a subject–“What is the text talking

¹¹⁷Kay Arthur, *How to Study Your Bible* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1994).

about?”—and a complement—“What does the text say about the subject that makes it into an idea?”¹¹⁸

Week 4 was titled, “How Do I Apply This?” The session covered step 6—“Build a Bridge to the Present”—stressing the importance of an accurate and relevant transition of biblical truth to the context of a contemporary audience. I adapted the bridge-building analogy used by both Ramesh Richard and Wayne McDill.¹¹⁹ These authors show that the purpose of the passage must be developed into the purpose of the message by building a bridge from the Scripture to the contemporary world. Students learned that the expository teacher’s primary task is to take *information* about an ancient text and make it relevant to contemporary listeners through *application*. Communication of information alone is *not* teaching.

The fifth session was titled, “What’s the Big Idea?” Students learned step 7—“Develop Your Lesson’s Big Idea”—and step 8—“Construct a Lesson Framework.” I explained Haddon Robinson’s concept of the “big idea,” which is the practice of restating the textual idea in a contemporary manner so that it both accurately reflects the Bible and meaningfully relates to listeners.¹²⁰ The resulting big idea is a simple and direct statement describing the sermon’s purpose. The class looked at several examples of textual ideas and practiced rewording them into homiletic big ideas.

¹¹⁸Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 66-70.

¹¹⁹Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 77-93; Wayne McDill, *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1994), 120-132.

¹²⁰Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 31-44.

Students learned the importance of developing a clear outline to provide the expository lesson framework. The group became aware that a good expository outline accurately reflects the structure of the passage; provides a logical path for the mind; unfolds the teaching of the text; is contemporary in application; and develops the propositions of the lesson. I explained that the homiletic outline normally follows the same structure as the exegetical outline developed in step 4, but is reworded in contemporary fashion. I also showed the class alternate shapes for expository sermons and lessons, such as inductive, deductive and inductive-deductive outlines.¹²¹ Finally, the group discussed the importance of teaching biblical narrative and challenges of developing a good sermon outline from the historical passages of Scripture.

Week 6—“How Do I Fill in the Blanks?”—covered the process of illuminating the truth of the biblical text through explanation, illustration, and application. Step 9 of the expository method—“Use Pictures to Illustrate and Apply”—was introduced. Students learned that the skeleton of the message, the outline, must be filled in with three components. First, expository messages need explanation. Good explanation helps listeners understand the truth of the text through restatement, description, word studies, argument, definition, facts, quotations and other supporting materials. Second, expository messages need illustration. Stories and analogies enable a listener to identify with the truth of the text. Students discussed benefits and sources of effective teaching illustrations. Third, expository messages need application, which describes the attitudinal and behavioral implications of the biblical text.

¹²¹Ibid., 125.

Session 7 asked, “How Do I Start and Stop?” The class studied effective sermon introductions and conclusions in step 10 of the expository method, “Take Off and Land.” Students learned the significance of the introduction to the development of the message. I explained useful types of sermon openings and cautioned students concerning common mistakes teachers and preachers make in introducing their messages. Students were also urged to plan their conclusion carefully, as it is the expositor’s responsibility to direct listeners to application and to ask for a response.

The final session, week 8, summarized the previous seven weeks in a session called, “How Can I Improve?” The class was encouraged to pursue two homiletic goals. The first goal, “Teach So People Will Listen,” addressed fundamental principles of lesson development and delivery not previously covered in the expository method section. I exposed the group to nine oral and physical communication skills, such as eye contact, gestures, appearance, and the use of voice. The class was also told that expository preachers and teachers must seek the Holy Spirit’s anointing for ministry effectiveness.

The second homiletic goal was “Aim for Excellence.” Students learned to plan ahead for teaching and preaching, to use time well, to use notes effectively, and to seek peer evaluation. I also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using PowerPoint projection during preaching and teaching.

Each session was supplemented with one or two short video interviews of well known expositors to encourage students in the value and work of expositional preaching. These two to five minute videos reinforced the week’s lesson and allowed students to hear articulate voices present reasons for biblical preaching. John Piper, for example,

urged listeners, “Don’t Waste Your Pulpit.”¹²² Bryan Chapell discussed, “What Is the Future of Expository Preaching?” and David Helm asked, “What is biblical preaching? What is its purpose?”¹²³

Student Application of Seminar

Students were urged, but not required, to apply the instruction of the seminar in various ministry settings. I interacted with several students during and after seminar sessions to assist them in developing expository lessons and sermons. Students applied the seminar method in several contexts, such as children’s ministry, adult Bible study, preaching to teens and adults, and teaching in a local college. Because of the group’s diverse gifts and ministry responsibilities, no single forum would have adequately assessed the effectiveness of the seminar for helping students teach and preach. Two instruments, a post-seminar focus group and the post-seminar questionnaire, asked students to describe their teaching experiences since the beginning of the seminar. A report and evaluation of student efforts at practicing seminar principles is presented in chapter 5.

Expositional Preaching Evaluation

¹²²John Piper, “Don’t Waste Your Pulpit” [on-line]; accessed 12 January 2009; available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xiad6nKJCw>; Internet.

¹²³David Helm, “What is biblical preaching? What is its purpose?” *The Gospel Coalition* [on-line]; accessed 25 February 2009; available from <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/resources#>; Internet; Bryan Chapell, “What Is the Future of Expository Preaching?” *The Gospel Coalition* [on-line]; accessed 25 January 2009; available from <http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/resources#>; Internet.

A second main component of my work involved students evaluating my sermons during a six-week period. The sermon evaluations served two purposes to achieve project goals. First, students' observations and critiques helped me to improve my own expository preaching. Second, requiring students to evaluate my preaching created opportunities during the seminar to discuss my sermon preparation process, my attempts to practice the method I taught, and my failures and successes in the pulpit.

The students assessed, by means of sermon evaluation forms (Appendix 5), six consecutive Sunday morning sermons which took place January 18 through February 22, 2009, the final six weeks of the seminar. Students returned evaluation forms weekly so that I could make adjustments as critiques warranted. The evaluated messages were part of an ongoing expository series from the Book of Romans that I began at Graham Community Church in January, 2007. The first three messages were developed from Romans 11:17-36 and the final three from Romans 12:1-8 (outlines are in Appendix 6).

The Romans messages were selected for evaluation for several reasons. First, the widely varied themes in these Scripture texts led to diverse sermon emphases which included the future of Israel; how God deals with his enemies; the sovereignty and glory of God; transformed thinking; and spiritual gifts. Second, part of this passage has interpretive difficulties, particularly Romans 11:17-32. This challenge allowed students to evaluate how I addressed the hermeneutical and applicational problems of preaching a difficult Scripture. Third, because Romans 12:1-8 was familiar to many students, they were able to discuss how they might personally have handled the exposition of this passage. Fourth, as a long-time practitioner of systematic exposition through books of the

Bible, I desired that students evaluate my typical preaching rather than a unique series of messages created for this project.

Post-Project Evaluation

The post-seminar evaluation (Appendix 5) was distributed and completed. Additionally, a focus group discussion was held with seminar students on Thursday, March 26, 2009. The month between the conclusion of the seminar and the focus group meeting was intended to allow students time to put the expository method into practice in various ministry venues and also to reflect on the value of the seminar. The purpose of the focus group was to evaluate the seminar as well as the personal teaching and preaching experiences of students. The focus group discussed the questions listed in Appendix 3.

Statistical Evaluation

The quantitative answers from the Pre-Seminar Questionnaire and the Post-Seminar Questionnaire were compiled and compared in order to assess the seminar's effectiveness in changing the students' understanding and attitude regarding expositional preaching and teaching.¹²⁴ Questions in the two forms were identical for the purpose of evaluating student growth. Each form contained fifteen questions graded on a five-point Likert scale. These questions were tabulated in spreadsheet form to demonstrate the arithmetic mean. At the close of the project, 350 points of recorded data disclosed the students' attitudinal and cognitive change. Change in responses were analyzed and used, along with focus group comments, to evaluate student skill development during the

¹²⁴Questionnaires may be seen in Appendix 3, data in Appendix 4.

course. Demographic data from the questionnaires, which measured students' prior training and teaching experience, were compiled and used to analyze class composition. Data regarding student teaching experience and education were compared with the students' knowledge of expository preaching based on questionnaire responses.

To determine strengths and weaknesses in my expositional preaching, the quantitative answers from the Sermon Evaluation Form (Appendix 5) enabled personal assessment. Each form contained 17 questions graded on a five-point Likert scale, and student evaluators were to appraise the sermon in light of the questions. Tabulated results, in spreadsheet form, revealed the arithmetic mean. Questionnaires produced 1,023 points of recorded data which were compiled to bring out both strengths and weaknesses in my preaching. These data were to assist me to identify areas of my preaching ministry that need improvement. The lowest arithmetic mean pointed to areas in which student evaluators felt my preaching was weakest.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT ANALYSIS

This chapter provides an analysis, evaluation and reflection on the project of training lay people at Graham Community Church to preach and teach the Bible expositively.

Data Analysis

The data yield two different types of evaluation. The first type concerns the growth of the students themselves during the project and the second deals with my strengths and weaknesses as an expository preacher.

Growth of the Students

The data consisted of three types of information gathered after the conclusion of the project seminar. First, students completed two identical questionnaires, one pre-seminar and a second post-seminar (Appendix 3). The questionnaires contained fifteen questions graded on a five-point Likert scale and four questions with written answers. The results were compared and analyzed for attitudinal change during the course of the project. Second, students completed post-seminar evaluation forms which asked them to

describe their class experience and personal benefit (Appendix 5). Third, students participated in a post-seminar focus group one month after the completion of the seminar to discuss their personal learning and teaching experiences resulting from the seminar (Appendix 3).

Objectively assessing data about student growth is difficult, but several significant elements point to personal development in both attitude and understanding by student participants. Comparing Pre-Seminar Questionnaire responses to the Post-Seminar Questionnaire reveals positive change in every category of questions, as summarized in Table 1.¹²⁵ The survey reflects the most significant attitudinal change in two general areas: confidence in personal skills, such as Bible study and interpretation; and the students' desire to do public expository teaching or preaching. Students also showed improved understanding of the nature of expository teaching and preaching.

Table 1: Data from pre-seminar questionnaire and post-seminar questionnaire summarized

	Weighted Pre-Seminar Mean (5 Max)	Weighted Post-Seminar Mean (5 Max)	% Change (of Max)
Confidence in Personal Skills: Bible Study	3.74	4.28	+10.8
Bible Interpretation	3.18	3.91	+14.6
Personal Qualifications	3.23	3.34	+2.2
Understanding Expository Teaching:	3.62	3.76	+2.8

¹²⁵Appendix 4 is a more complete presentation of data.

Preference for Expository Teaching:	4.08	4.25	+3.4
Desire to Do Expository Teaching:	3.46	4.08	+12.4
Totals:	3.52	3.89	+7.4

Students responded to two questions for the purpose of rating their self-perception of their Bible study and lesson preparation ability. Prior to the seminar students indicated a high confidence in their Bible reading skills (4.08 on a five point scale). This response increased 6.1 percent (to 4.33) following the seminar. Students gave a more modest response when asked prior to the seminar about their method of preparation to teach (2.67). Following the seminar this response increased a substantial 34.1 percent (to 3.58), indicating an appreciable change in self-confidence in their lesson development ability. Students were also surveyed concerning their personal desire to speak before a group. Following the seminar student desire to teach publicly increased 11.7 percent (3.50 to 3.91).

Student knowledge of the philosophy and practice of expository teaching also improved during the seminar. Students were asked twelve questions about exposition, including hermeneutics, the lesson main idea and application, and the qualifications of a lay person to do expository teaching and preaching. On almost every question, students showed an increased understanding of exposition and teaching. Students expressed a greater desire for textual rather than topical preaching (21.4 percent increase); a single teaching point (15.0 percent increase); and application as a part of good teaching (question 9: 12.0 percent increase; question 15: 13.0 percent increase). Students also expressed a significantly higher recognition of the importance of discovering authorial intent in a passage (24.8 percent increase).

The questionnaire and student responses were not thorough enough to give a complete picture of what students learned during the seminar. Nevertheless an across-the-board change in questionnaire responses during the course of the seminar suggests the class had a positive affect on student comprehension about biblical exposition.

Student answers were sorted demographically according to whether the respondents had previous training in teaching methods and hermeneutics. Overall results were statistically similar for both groups.¹²⁶ Students without prior training show a greater increase in personal confidence about their Bible reading (Question 1 revealed a 10.7 percent increase following the seminar) and their desire to speak publicly (Question 2 revealed a 12.5 percent increase following the seminar). Students with previous training showed no change in these categories.

Responses to most other questions showing pre-to-post seminar changes were similar with both groups, with two notable exceptions. When asked if personal application is optional in a good Bible lesson (Question 9), the students without previous training showed a 23.1 percent improvement as compared to no change with the other group. Following the seminar, both groups showed similar responses on this question (trained was 1.40, non-trained was 1.43). This finding seems to indicate that the previously trained group was already convinced of the importance of application in a Bible lesson, but new students became convinced through the seminar. When asked if expository preaching tends to be boring, both groups indicated they disagree, but the non-

¹²⁶See Table A2 in Appendix 4, “Data from Students with Previous Training Compared to Students Without Previous Training.”

trained group was less certain than the trained group (trained was 1.20, non-trained was 1.57).

The significance of this demographic comparison based on prior training must not be overstated. The group not trained prior to the seminar did show more movement in their question responses, however not a great amount more. The results seem to indicate a cognitive benefit for all students, whether or not they have received previous education in teaching and Bible study methods.

Four questions called for written responses regarding the definition and nature of expository preaching. Even before the seminar, most students gave simple but good descriptions of expository preaching, such as “Finding the meaning of the passage and communicating that to the audience,” and “It’s preaching that explains the Scriptures that are being taught like the original author intended.” These definitions were not noticeably improved following the seminar. A possible explanation is that during the course of my regular Sunday sermons I periodically describe and defend expository preaching, so students understand the concept. In addition, students who volunteered to take this seminar on expository preaching were probably predisposed to understand and favor this homiletic method.

When asked what kind of skills the students believed would make them better Bible teachers, written responses modified noticeably following the seminar. The first questionnaire had a variety of general answers such as better study habits, more devotion to God, and a better understanding of the Bible. The second questionnaire indicated a change in attitude. Students stated their desire to find the intended meaning of the text, to learn how to do hermeneutics, and how to apply the text to listeners. Responses show

that students developed an improved understanding of the nature of good exposition—that preaching requires more than just a passion for God and good communication skills, but also an ability to find the meaning of a biblical text and how to apply it.

The post-seminar evaluation forms and the post-seminar focus group indicated the students felt the class was profitable. The responses expressed the personal sentiments of seminar participants, and as such the data are not quantitatively measured. Students expressed a variety of opinions concerning the seminar and skills they learned. Written and oral remarks cited class strengths such as, “practical methods were given and explained,” and “gives a good overview of what is required to teach and preach expositoryly,” and “all of it was applicable.”¹²⁷ When students were asked what they had learned, several identified a new understanding of how to recognize what God is saying in a particular passage. Students also commented on a new appreciation for developing life application from a text, asking “What attitude, action, or affection should I change as a result of the truth of Scripture?”

Third, several of the individuals who took the seminar have begun or plan to begin ministries using skills taught in the class. In the post-seminar evaluation, certain students described using their new skills in teaching. One student stated that he teaches several times a year and he looks forward to incorporating newly learned skills into lesson development. In the evaluations and focus group discussions, students commented that they used the seminar teaching to develop expository lessons for use in adults Bible studies, Sunday School, the city Rescue Mission and Sunday Church services.

¹²⁷Direct quotes are from the Post-Seminar Evaluation questionnaire, Appendix 5.

Fourth, several students have expressed an interest in further instruction on homiletics and hermeneutics, both in the focus group and informally following class sessions. Students made queries about a follow-up course explaining expository teaching in more detail.

On the negative side, some of the students have no plans to teach in the short-term future. The seminar did not require public ministry of the participants. When asked in the post-seminar evaluations how they would implement what they have learned, a frequent answer was “personal study habits.”

Student Evaluation of My Preaching

These data consisted of two types of information collected from the sermon evaluation forms (Appendix 5). First, quantitative data were based on seventeen questions which graded the student evaluators’ assessment of my preaching based on a five-point Likert scale. These questions covered a wide scope of sermonic issues including homiletic style and message content. Second, five questions called for written answers which identified certain sermon characteristics as well as the evaluators’ personal comments and suggestions. In addition, numerous students wrote unsolicited remarks next to the five-point questions. Six of my sermons were evaluated by seminar students who returned a total of 62 sermon evaluation forms. The five-point graded questions yielded 1,023 points of data. The arithmetic mean for the 6 messages was 4.48 on a 1-5 scale (89.6 based on a 100 percent scale), as seen in Table 2.

Three areas of assessment scored lowest and fell into the 85.0 to 89.0 percent ranking. These dealt with my use of an interesting introduction, effective use of sermon illustration, and life-application of the text. Responses to the following queries show I

most need improvement in sermon illustration: “The introduction got my attention” at 86.8 percent positive and “The sermon used illustrations that explained the text in an understandable way” at 85.8 percent.¹²⁸ Both scores address my skill and use of

Table 2: Data from sermon evaluations

	Mean (1 Minimum, 5 Max)	% of Max Score
Organization:		
Introduction	4.38	87.6
Structure	4.57	91.4
Content:		
Central Point (Big Idea)	4.48	89.6
Explanation	4.50	90.0
Illustration	4.29	85.8
Application	4.44	88.8
Delivery:		
Oral	4.57	91.4
Physical	4.55	91.0
Totals:	4.48	89.6

illustration to make the sermon interesting and engaging. Evaluation inquiries about application, such as “I believe I can better apply this passage to my life after hearing this sermon” (4.44 or 88.8 percent) show I also need to improve in the application component

¹²⁸Direct quotes are from the Sermon Evaluation form, Appendix 5.

of the sermon. Data indicate I explain the meaning of the text well, but must do better at illustrating the relevance and application of the Scripture. Evaluators seem to desire my preaching to engage their imagination and emotions as well as their intellect.

Written answers by student evaluators were more difficult to measure objectively, but proved very helpful for pointing out areas in my preaching that could use correction. Because they did not require statistical analysis, these comments were especially useful for making preaching improvements during the six-week evaluation period. Student evaluators returned a total of 237 responses to five written questions on each sermon evaluation form. In addition, they returned 29 unsolicited remarks recorded alongside the five-point questions.

The evaluators' constructive criticism pointed out four particular areas for improvement. First, some noted problems with the usage of my voice and the speed of my presentation. One comment said, "More variety in volume of your voice would be good. Sometimes you speak loudly for lengthy stretches." Others remarked that I "rushed through reading of Scripture verses—made words unclear," and "This material moved pretty fast," and "The ending seems rushed."

Second, some evaluators expressed concern about my use of time and choice of theological emphases, particularly concerning controversial issues. One commented, "Maybe too little time on the restoration of the Jews," and another stated, "I would have liked a little more explanation about the unbelief of Israel." These opinions are difficult for me, as the preacher, to assess because some evaluators undoubtedly had personal interest in particular doctrinal matters, such as end-times theology. It is hard for me to know from these remarks if my sermon was theologically unbalanced or if student

evaluators had a doctrinal bias. I must, however, heed the caution to give adequate time in the sermon to doctrinal issues in the biblical text that could raise questions in hearer's mind.

Third, certain student evaluators expressed a desire for more application. Responses stated, "More time should have been spent on the 'So, then . . .'" and "Practical applications and illustrations would be helpful." Data show that my preaching is strong in explanation but weaker in illustration and application. In graded responses, I scored 88.8 percent on sermon application and 85.8 percent on illustration which indicates definite room for improvement. A change in the allocation of my sermon time may be in order, devoting a higher priority to illustration and application.

Fourth, sermon evaluators were asked, "What would you identify as the 'Big Idea'?" Responses show that many evaluators could not identify my sermon big idea well enough to write it down word for word.¹²⁹ Most students wrote out broad themes that expressed the main theological teaching from the message, but a significant number of evaluations did not state the homiletic big idea clearly. For example, my sermon on Romans 12:2 developed this big idea: "Real life change that worships God begins with a transformed mind." Approximately half of the evaluators were able to identify this sentence correctly, but others recorded statements, such as "We should be growing and changing according to God's Word," or "Only God can change lives by changing our

¹²⁹I taught student evaluators this definition, "The 'big idea' is the textual idea (a sentence expressing the passage theme) restated in a way that accurately reflects the Bible and meaningfully relates to listeners in an applicational way. It is a simple and direct statement describing the sermon's purpose."

minds.” I am thankful student evaluators understood the general theme of the message, but the big idea was not presented clearly enough for all listeners to be able to express it.

On a more positive note, most written comments were gracious and affirming. Students expressed thankfulness for the sermons and described personal growth from the messages. In the Likert scale portion of the evaluations, I rated 4 out of 5 to 5 out of 5 in every category. A few strengths included my biblical accuracy, use of gestures, and, as one expressed, the message was “very convicting without feeling beat up.” These strengths are certainly the Holy Spirit’s accomplishment, for which I thank God.

Evaluation of the Project Goals

This project sought to accomplish four primary goals which established the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of the project. The first goal was to train lay people at Graham Community Church to teach the Bible expositively. This goal was especially suitable for this particular local church. Bible teaching is emphasized at Graham Church, yet there is an inadequate number of teachers, especially teachers of adults. While the ability to teach the Bible is a combination of spiritual gifting and a lifetime of training and experiences, this seminar was intended to introduce lay students to biblical homiletics in order to develop new teachers. Many lay people who teach do not use biblical exposition, and others simply do not know how to put together a simple sermon or lesson. The seminar objective was to give participants a basic understanding of expositional preaching and teaching, and provide them confidence that any Christian who is gifted by the Spirit to teach can practice these skills. The ten steps for developing an expository message which students learned in the seminar enabled students to teach positionally in a variety of venues at Graham Church, such as AWANA, Adult Sunday

School, Bible studies, Sunday night home groups, youth groups, and personal devotional times with their families. During the post-seminar focus group, several students reported using the expository method. For example, one participant was writing a Bible study for women on Philippians, and another developed an expositional message to present before the church youth group.

This goal of teaching lay people to preach and teach the Bible expositively was a qualified success. During the eight sessions students received a broad overview of the subject matter, and did not acquire a great deal of skills to address hermeneutical challenges or difficulties of teaching certain genre of Scripture. Nevertheless, students learned to both recognize and begin to utilize a sound expositional approach to the teaching and preaching of the Bible. Even students who do not preach or teach on a regular basis are better equipped to identify solid exposition in sermons, curriculum, and books.

The second goal of this ministry project was to change the perception by many in Graham Community Church that expositional preaching is possible only for those who have a formal Bible college or seminary education. Prior to the seminar, nearly all the pulpit preaching in this church was done by myself, other staff members, or seminary graduates in the church. Graham Church needs to develop a foundation of people who view themselves as capable to preach expositionally in order to encourage ministry development and training.

The accomplishment of this goal is difficult to measure because it deals with personal attitudes. A goal is not useful unless it is specific, attainable, and measurable. Data indicate, however, an attitudinal change which indicates that this goal was

accomplished. A progression in student thinking was recorded in differing answers between the pre-seminar questionnaire and post-seminar questionnaire. Prior to the seminar, when asked if the respondent would like an opportunity to speak before a men's or women's group, six answered affirmatively.¹³⁰ Following the seminar, eleven students answered that they desired to speak publicly, indicating a significant change in willingness to attempt preaching or teaching. In addition, students recorded a more positive response regarding their preparedness to teach the Bible. Answers to questions about personal confidence in Bible study skills improved 10.8 percent following the seminar.¹³¹ Question responses dealing with the understanding of Bible interpretation showed a 14.6 percent improvement. While these measurements are not definitive, they show a positive progression in the students' thinking concerning lay people serving as preachers and teachers.

The third goal of this ministry project was to develop a greater emphasis within my personal ministry on equipping the next generation of church leaders. For fourteen years I have modeled expositional preaching at Graham Community Church, and on several occasions I have taught hermeneutics and preaching to pastors in Ukraine. I have failed, however, regularly to train others in this local church how to preach and teach. One respondent to the post-seminar questionnaire asked, "Why did you not teach us this stuff sooner?" It is a considerable ministry shortcoming, which this seminar helps to correct. The completed seminar curriculum, syllabus, PowerPoint presentations, and

¹³⁰"Agree" or "Strongly Agree."

¹³¹On a 1-5 Likert scale. See Table A2 in Appendix 4.

handouts are now ready so that the class may be repeated without significant additional preparation, other than scheduling and student recruitment.

The fourth and final goal of this project was to improve my own expository preaching, based upon feedback from seminar students. Continuing evaluation and personal growth in homiletic skills is a must for any minister of the gospel. At first, this goal seemed disconnected from the rest of the project. It became apparent, however, that my evaluations and my transparency concerning my homiletic method and its accompanying challenges created numerous teachable moments during the seminar. Assessment of my preaching provided a mutual benefit to me and to the seminar participants.

Evaluation of the Project Process

Evaluation of the Seminar

Overall, the seminar yielded significant benefits to students as well as to Graham Community Church, and it successfully accomplished several project goals. However, improvements should be made when the course is taught in the future.

Three significant weaknesses were mentioned by seminar participants. First, several students commented on the difficulty of retaining the large amount of information covered in the class. One student stated the course “covered a lot of stuff in short time,” and another said, “I had a hard time keeping up.”¹³² Another participant wrote that the seminar taught “too much information in too short a time period.” Unquestionably, several of the lay people in the seminar found the pace of the course overwhelming. On

¹³²Direct quotes are from the Post-Seminar Evaluation questionnaire, Appendix 5.

the other hand, during the focus group some students expressed the opinion that the seminar was well-balanced and not too detailed. A few commented that the seminar should have moved faster, contradicting those who felt rushed. Questionnaires showed that educational backgrounds of students varied widely, two with only high school, eight with some college experience, and four with graduate school. Students also came into the course with significantly different levels of teacher training. Prior classroom experience may have shaped student expectations and abilities, and must be taken into consideration in developing a future seminar. Some of the students had not attended college and seemed unprepared for this pace of instruction. This seminar may have attempted to accomplish too much in the time allowed. One student commented in the evaluation, "I would like a class on expository teaching and preaching for dummies." A student body which has little secondary classroom experience will need a slower pace of instruction.

The focus group raised two additional considerations regarding the students' ability to keep up with the rapid instruction. Some students stated they followed my teaching for the first hour, but the final thirty minutes was difficult. A break during the class would have helped. Also, several commented they had trouble following the teaching on days when their vocational jobs were stressful and they came to class tired. A break time or a weekend instruction schedule could help with this challenge.

The second primary weakness of the seminar was the lack of time for in-class discussion and exercises. One student commented, "It would be interesting to share the different ideas people have for handling the texts." Another stated the seminar needed, "More time for teacher/student interaction and Q & A." One student said he "would have liked more examples, but I know there were time limitations." In the focus group, several

students expressed regret that more practical exercises were not assigned for students to exegete passages and produce homiletic outlines.

These first two weaknesses could be corrected by one of two potential solutions. First, the class could be stretched to a longer period of time, covering twelve to sixteen weeks. However, some students might not desire to commit for such a long session. During the focus group, some students stated that they would not have made the commitment to a longer seminar because of their busy schedules. Second, perhaps a better solution, the seminar could be split into two parts. The first seminar would cover the background and basis of expository preaching and basic exegetical hermeneutics.¹³³ The second seminar would teach the actual preparation of the sermon or lesson following the exegetical work on the passage. If the schedule were lengthened by either of these alternatives, the pace of the class could be more relaxed, interactive, and could involve more student exercises and examples.

The third weakness related to the syllabus, which was not presented in a manner that allowed students to follow the notes easily. One student remarked, “The class materials did not have an easy flow to them.” The original syllabus was handed out to students prior to the beginning of the seminar. During my weekly preparation to teach each session of the seminar, I created supplementary pages and handouts. The addition of extra materials sometimes confused students. Because of the supplements, page numbers did not always flow in a clear manner. Additionally, some students expressed frustration that the seminar PowerPoint outline format varied from the syllabus outline. A few

¹³³Introductory matters and steps 1-5 of my expository method (Appendix 2).

students requested me to print the PowerPoint outlines for their notebooks. This weakness could be easily corrected. A future seminar syllabus would be significantly revised, better organized, and consistent with the projected notes.

The primary strength of the class was related to the first weakness mentioned above. The wide breadth of information taught about expository homiletics gave students a rich, practical exposure to expository sermon development. The expository method presented was useful for any Bible student. Martyn Lloyd-Jones remarked concerning his own approach to sermon development, “Every preacher should believe strongly in his own method; and if I cannot persuade all of the rightness of mine, I can at least stimulate them to think and to consider other possibilities.”¹³⁴ By God’s grace, that will be true of this class. One student stated, the seminar “gives a good overview of what is required to teach and preach expositoryly.” Another commented, “The steps taught for preparing a good expositional lesson were clear, practical, and well-explained.” Several students remarked that they never realized how much was involved in developing an expository lesson. One said, “I thought the ten main topics were very extensive—I wouldn’t have guessed there were this many steps in the process.” A future seminar on expositional preaching and teaching must find the proper balance between overwhelming students with more information than they can assimilate, and providing a broad overview of the homiletic process in a timely manner.

Evaluation of My Expository Preaching

4. ¹³⁴Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980),

The process of evaluating my expository preaching was enlightening, but could use improvements. First, student evaluators did not turn in all their evaluation forms, and many were not returned in a timely manner. Of 78 forms provided for students, only 62 were returned. Some came weeks after the sermons were preached, which made them less useful for making corrections during the project. Perhaps an online evaluation form on the church website would facilitate an improved response. Second, the number and length of comments on evaluation forms decreased noticeably from the beginning of the project until the end. Students appeared less willing to take time to carefully critique my preaching after several weeks. Third, many evaluation forms contained general remarks of praise, but little in the way of specific critique. In retrospect, I should have spent more time explaining to students the importance and nature of the evaluations, and asking for honest, helpful criticism.

Theological Reflection

Training followers of Christ to preach and teach the Bible expositionally is essential to the healthy spiritual growth of the local church. Church leaders must reproduce their own preaching and teaching skills in the lives of congregational members. Without adequate teacher training, church members will be prone to immaturity, spiritual instability and doctrinal deviation (Eph 4:12-14). It is impossible for the local church to grow toward maturity without the development of teachers within the body (Heb 5:12-14). To grow spiritually, churches must grow Bible teachers.

In many local churches, the task of preparing future preachers of the Scripture has been delegated entirely to Bible colleges and seminaries. The result is the professionalization of the preaching ministry and a reluctance on the part of many lay

people in local churches to preach or teach. Too often, seminary trained, vocational pastors shoulder most of the burden of preaching and teaching without experiencing the joy of developing the next generation of church leadership from within the church. This project solidified my long held personal conviction about the importance of mentoring and training others to do ministry. Every church must expect leadership to train lay people to rightly divide the Word of God, teaching them how to do a sound biblical hermeneutic. Churches must also prepare and encourage lay people to prepare expository lessons and sermons that communicate God's Word accurately, interestingly, and with spiritual conviction.

Topical preaching and teaching has its place in the church. Theological and personal questions should sometimes be addressed from a systematic approach to the whole counsel of God. However, a topical approach, which relies on the preacher for its theme and structure, seems to be unwise for the local congregation's normal diet. Biblical exposition communicates the meaning of the biblical text more reliably. It also trains both speaker and listener to find God's message in the passage through a practice of proper hermeneutics and exegesis.

My own expository preaching has been a testimony to the Apostle Paul's words that God works "through the folly of what we preach" (1 Cor 1:21). Although my preaching is limited by my own significant human frailties, God by his sovereign grace chooses to use my inadequate preaching to magnify his great name. When I preach the Word of God expositionally, even though I am weak and have much room for improvement, I can boldly proclaim, "Thus says the Lord," on the authority of the text. God speaks supernaturally through the faithful preaching of the Scripture by the

energizing of his Holy Spirit. As Paul said to Timothy, the proclamation of God's Word is fundamental to Christian ministry:

I 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, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. (2 Tim 4:1-2)

Paul instructed his young protégé that preaching and teaching the Bible is at the heart of what it means to shepherd God's flock. What better way to preach the Word than to faithfully communicate the Spirit-breathed Scripture expositionally? The obedient preacher will teach the Bible as God gave it, section by section, consistent with its context, faithful to authorial intent, and empowered by God's Holy Spirit.

In Paul's parting words to the church leadership at Ephesus, the Apostle reminded them of his faithful teaching ministry. He then exhorted the Ephesian elders to care for the church under their stewardship:

Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all of you, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. (Acts 20:26-28)

The church is precious, purchased by Jesus' blood, and it requires and deserves nothing less than faithful nurturing through sound, expository teaching of the Word of God.

Personal Reflections: What I Learned about the Ministry and Myself

This project taught me many valuable lessons about God, my ministry, and the flock which the Lord has entrusted to me. I learned that many lay people are eager to learn the process of developing an expository message and skills which are useful to improving their present teaching abilities. Before this project, I had been woefully

negligent in obeying the biblical mandate by reproducing my passion and training in exposition (2 Tim 2:2). This process made me realize how critical it is for seasoned preachers to train others, and how spiritually fulfilling that training process can be. The seminar, while involving a significant amount of preparation and work, produced great joy for me as I saw lay students understand and begin to practice exposition. When I observed the post-seminar evaluation forms, which indicated a number of students were now eager to practice Bible teaching in a public forum, it was an illumination to me of the truth of Scripture about the essential importance of equipping lay people for ministry. I have a strong desire that the balance of my ministry time must be more effectively used to multiply the knowledge and skills of expository preaching.

This project also confirmed my personal conviction that my preaching must never rest on my present training and gifts. There is a necessity for ongoing improvement and growth. It is especially important that I rely increasingly on the power of the Holy Spirit accessed through prayer, submission, and fidelity to the Scriptures. By teaching the mechanics of exposition, and receiving evaluation of my own preaching, I came to realize even more how much the sovereign God uses weakness to magnify his greatness (1 Cor 1:27).

Finally, this project has made me even more thankful for the privilege of being a vocational preacher of the Word of God. During the post-seminar focus group, one student remarked, “This class made me jealous of what you do for a living, studying the Bible.” The pastoral ministry is the greatest honor, and the fruit produced in the lives of listeners is its greatest joy.

Conclusions

The Apostle Paul's description of the last days' culture in 2 Timothy 3 is frighteningly similar to troubles confronting the contemporary church in America. In verses 1-4 Paul describes a series of narcissistic sins which characterize the degenerate people of the end times, including the love of self, the love of money and the love of pleasure. Then, in verse 5, Paul indicts those selfish people as "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power." Sadly, that same statement could be made of many evangelical churches in our land. They declare an allegiance to the God of the Bible and his Word, but one might never know it by a cursory examination of the content of their pulpit messages. The power of the clear, unadulterated teaching of the Bible has too often been replaced by self-help religion, pop-psychology, the prosperity gospel, or dry, unchallenging preaching.¹³⁵ As a result, surveys show evangelical church attenders have a woeful ignorance of Bible doctrine, and many have bought into the post-modern philosophy of tolerance and moral relativism.¹³⁶ This tragedy is compounded by the fact that more information about the Bible is available than ever before through publications and electronic media, yet the typical person in the pew simply does not know the Scriptures.

What can the leadership of the local church do to remedy the defection from biblical literacy which plagues our nation? First, the answer is found in the simple,

¹³⁵Albert Mohler is one observer who indicts contemporary evangelical preaching. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., "The State of Preaching Today," *Commentary by R. Albert Mohler, Jr.* (28 August 2006) [on-line]; accessed 31 March 2009; available from <http://albertmohler.com>; Internet.

¹³⁶A recent poll suggests 57 percent of American evangelicals believe that many religions, not just Christianity, can lead to heaven. Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, *U. S. Religious Landscape Survey* (2008) [on-line]; accessed 9 March 2009; available from <http://religions.pewforum.org>; Internet.

biblical pattern of church leadership training others to teach the Bible. When men and women are not educated about how to teach and preach expositionally, too often they develop topical lessons which gravitate to listener's wishes rather than biblical mandates. My contention is that a church which does not prepare the next generation to teach the Bible expositionally runs the grave risk of losing the knowledge of God's Word entirely. One only has to look at Europe where the church has been overrun by secularism to consider the cost of biblical illiteracy. Church leadership must make the commitment to prepare "faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Only by passing on the knowledge of biblical, expository preaching can the tide of false teaching be stemmed.

Second, pastors must commit to excellence in biblical preaching. Good preaching, enabled by the Holy Spirit, is not only interesting and compelling, but—most important—it is nourishing to the soul of the preacher and his listeners. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has correctly said, "The most urgent need in the Christian church today is true preaching."¹³⁷ He goes on to point out that reformation and revival were historically always heralded by renewed preaching.¹³⁸ In order for the church to be restored to spiritual health, preachers must invest the time and energy necessary to preach well. Good expository preaching is *hard work*. Paul declared, "I worked harder than any of them" (1 Cor 15:10), and later stated,

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me (Col 1:28-29).

¹³⁷Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers*, 9.

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, 24-25.

The reward is worth the effort. To witness the conversion and growth of believers in Christ is the fruit of a faithful teaching and preaching ministry.

As a consequence of this project, I plan by God's grace to conduct this expository teaching and preaching class every two years at Graham Community Church. It is my desire to equip the saints for the work of ministry, thereby multiplying my ministry far beyond what I could accomplish personally. Several individuals at the church have already expressed an interest in another class. In addition, I plan to honor student requests that I develop classes on hermeneutics and on preparing a theological Bible study.

When I taught teacher training and homiletics to lay pastors in Ukraine, language and cultural divides presented challenges, but the need for biblical education was great. I plan to revise the seminar curriculum for use in cross-cultural ministry by simplifying terminology, changing illustrations, and defining and explaining certain concepts which may differ on the mission field. By God's grace I will return to Ukraine next year to teach this same course in a very different culture.

Implications for Further Study

This project has opened my eyes to the hunger at Graham Community Church for training in Bible study, teaching and preaching. As a result, it created in me a desire to better understand hermeneutics so that I can effectively teach Bible study methods to potential teachers in the church. For this project I studied several organizations which train lay people to study the Bible and teach, including Kay Arthur's "Precept

Ministries.”¹³⁹ My hope is to better learn the dynamics of personal exegesis and develop a similar program for Graham Community Church.

I also plan to study homiletics and to work on improving my exegetical and preaching skills. Through this project, and the seminary classes which led up to it, I developed an interest in the various genre of Old Testament literature. Preachers have neglected a number of Old Testament books because their literature types are often hard to preach effectively. This difficulty presents a challenge to me. Having completed fourteen years at Graham Community Church, it is my desire, if God should allow me fifteen more years of pulpit ministry, to preach expositively through every book of the Bible.

My continued study of homiletics will focus on preaching biblical genres which are difficult to develop into Christ-centered, relevant, biblical sermons. In particular, I desire to learn how to better proclaim the message of poetic books, Old Testament narrative, and apocalyptic literature.

The American church has long valued vocational preachers and teachers who have Bible college and seminary level training in expository homiletics. However, the vast majority of lay people cannot pursue collegiate studies because of jobs, families, or financial commitments. This study has demonstrated one way the church can supply training for lay people willing and gifted to teach the Bible. The passion to preach and teach Scripture expositionally must be entrusted “to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2).

¹³⁹*Precept Ministries International* [on-line]; accessed 4 February 2008; available from <http://precept.org>; Internet.

APPENDIX 1

AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to train lay people to preach and teach the Bible expositively. This research is being conducted by Michael Hixson for the purposes of the Doctorate of Ministry project paper. In this research, you will be asked to critique and evaluate sermons, participate in classroom instruction, and fill out survey forms to evaluate your knowledge and understanding of expository preaching and teaching. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported, or will your name be identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.*

Name: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 2

CLASS SYLLABUS

- I. What Is Expository Preaching and Teaching? 1-3
- II. Why Teach Expositionally? 4-5
- III. Ten Steps to Develop an Expository Sermon or Lesson. 6-51

This section broke down further into ten sections describing an expository method:

- 1. Choose the passage
- 2. Observe what is there
- 3. Discover that it means
- 4. Find out how it's put together
- 5. Uncover the textual idea
- 6. Build a bridge to the present
- 7. Develop your lesson's big idea
- 8. Construct a lesson framework
- 9. Use pictures to illustrate and apply
- 10. Take off and land

- IV. Teach So People Will Listen. 52-59

This section broke down further into four sections:

- 1. Lesson development
- 2. Lesson delivery
- 3. Anointing of the Holy Spirit
- 4. Aim for excellence

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRES AND FOCUS GROUP

Questionnaires

The Pre-Seminar and Post-Seminar Questionnaires were identical.

The following nine questions gather demographic information only.

1. I am () male () female
2. My age group is () 25 or under () 26-39 () 40-55 () 56-70 () 70 or over
3. I am a () Graham Church member () church attender, but not a member
4. My education is () High School () Undergrad degree () Grad or post-grad degree
5. I have taught Sunday School or taught a Bible Study
() Never () Once or twice a year () Several times a year () Regularly
6. I have preached in church or spoken before a group or men or women
() Never () Rarely () Occasionally () Frequently
7. I have taken formal teacher training of some kind (Mark all that apply)
() At church () In college () For a Bible study () Never
8. I have taken training in Bible study methods or hermeneutics (Mark all that apply)
() At church () In college () For a Bible study group () Never
9. How competent do you feel to study and discover the correct meaning of a typical biblical passage
() Very skilled () Modest skill () Some ability () Small ability () No ability

The following fifteen questions assess your present understanding of teaching the Bible. Please read each question carefully and mark the response that most accurately conveys your understanding or opinion at this time.

1. I am confident in my ability to read and understand the Bible.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
2. I would like the opportunity to speak before a men's or women's group.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 3. I feel that my method of preparation to teach the Bible is adequate.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 4. The lesson outline and purpose should come from a chosen topic more often than from the selected biblical text.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 5. The Bible is meant to be understood.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 6. Any part of the Bible is profitable to teach.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 7. I prefer expository preaching and teaching more than topical teaching.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 8. The important element in interpreting the Bible is how the reader feels about the passage.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 9. A good Bible lesson may or may not have personal application.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 10. I feel unqualified to speak publicly because I am not a pastor.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 11. Expository teaching or preaching tends to be boring.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 12. A person who has not had Bible School training is probably not able to do expository preaching or teaching.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
 13. Every Bible passage has one main point which must be taught.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

14. It is important when preparing a lesson first to determine what is the meaning intended by the author of the Bible text.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
15. A Bible lesson does not necessarily need much application or illustration if its purpose is to teach Bible truths.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

Please answer the following questions in a sentence or two.

1. What do you find the most challenging part of teaching the Bible? What is the most rewarding?
2. What kind of skills do you believe would most help you to be a better Bible teacher?
3. In your understanding, what is expository preaching?
4. Why do you think so many preachers and teachers make human interest subjects their topic instead of carefully teaching the Bible?

Post-Seminar Focus Group Questions

1. When I mention the word “expository preaching,” what comes to your mind?
 Follow up: Has your understanding changed? How?
2. In your opinion, is it important for a Sunday School teacher or Bible study teacher to know how to teach expositoryly?
3. Were the seminar sessions helpful to you?
4. Were the sessions too long or too brief?
5. Were the sessions too detailed or too elementary?
6. What would you change about this seminar if you were leading it?
7. As a result of this seminar, are you more or less likely to think that a lay person can do good expository preaching? Why?
8. Do you personally feel more inclined to teach or preach as a result of the seminar?
9. Some of you have had opportunities to teach or preach since the seminar concluded. How did that go? Has your teaching or preaching changed as a result of the seminar?

10. Would you be interested in taking a follow-up seminar which goes into more detail on how to study the Bible in order to more accurately teach God's Word?

Follow-up questions will be asked, but they will all be within the framework of the original questions.

APPENDIX 4

SEMINAR QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

Student Demographic Data from Questionnaires

1. Gender: Male–9 (75%), Female–3 (25%)
2. Age: 26-39 yrs.–2 (17%); 40-55 yrs.–8 (67%); age 56-70 yrs.–1 (8%); over 70 yrs.–1 (8%)
3. Membership: Church members–11 (92%); Non-member–1 (8%)
4. Education: High School–2 (17%); Undergrad degree–6 (50%); Grad or post-grad degree–4 (33%)
5. Previous teaching experience in church: Never–1 (8%); Once or twice a year–4 (33%); Several times a year–3 (25%); Regularly–4 (33%)
6. Previous preaching experience: Never–2 (17%); Rarely–3 (25%); Occasionally–6 (50%); Frequently–1 (8%)
7. Previous teacher training: At church–2 (17%); In college–3 (25%); Bible study–2 (17%); Never–7 (58%)
8. Previous hermeneutic training: At church–1 (8%); In college–3 (25%); Bible study–1 (8%); Never–7 (58%)
9. Felt confident to find meaning of passage: Modest skill–5 (42%); Some ability–7 (58%)

Table A1: Data from pre-seminar and post-seminar questionnaires compared

Question	Pre-Seminar Mean (5 Max)	Post-Seminar Mean (5 Max)	% Change
1. Confidence reading and understanding Bible	4.08	4.33	+6.1%
2. Desire opportunity to speak before group	3.50	3.91	+11.7
3. My preparation method is adequate	2.67	3.58	+34.1
4. Lesson should come from a topic not text	2.33	1.83	-21.4
5. The Bible is meant to be understood	4.83	4.92	+1.9
6. Any part of the Bible is profitable to teach	4.75	4.83	+1.7
7. I prefer expository preaching to topical	4.08	4.25	+4.2
8. Important to interpretation is how one feels	1.25	1.25	0
9. A good lesson may not have application	1.67	1.47	-12.0
10. Unqualified to teach because not a pastor	1.83	1.83	0
11. Expository preaching is boring	1.25	1.47	+17.6
12. Without Bible school one cannot do exposition	1.67	1.5	-10.2
13. Every Bible passage has one teaching point	3.33	3.83	+15.0
14. Authorial intent must be determined first	3.67	4.58	+24.8
15. Bible lesson need not have application	1.92	1.67	-13.0

Table A2: Data from students with previous training compared to students without previous training

This table compares student Pre-Seminar and Post-Seminar questionnaire responses based on respondent's previous teacher training and hermeneutic training. Seven students reported no previous teacher training or hermeneutic training and five students reported previous teacher training and hermeneutic training. Percentage change is based on students responses on a maximum of five.

Question	With Previous Training			No Previous Training		
	Pre Seminar	Post Seminar	% Change	Pre Seminar	Post Seminar	% Change
1. Confidence reading Bible	4.20	4.20	0%	4.00	4.43	10.7%
2. Desire opportunity to speak	3.80	3.80	0%	3.43	3.86	12.5%
3. My preparation adequate	2.20	3.60	63.0%	2.57	3.57	38.9%
4. Lesson should come from topic	2.00	1.80	-10.0%	2.43	1.86	-23.5%
5. Bible meant to be understood	5.00	5.00	0%	4.71	4.86	3.1%
6. Any part of Bible is profitable	4.80	4.80	0%	4.86	4.86	0%
7. Prefer expository preaching	4.40	4.40	0%	3.86	4.14	7.3%
8. Impt. to interp. how one feels	1.20	1.20	0%	1.28	1.28	0%
9. Lesson may not have applic.	1.40	1.40	0%	1.86	1.43	-23.1%
10. Unqualified to teach	1.80	1.80	0%	1.86	1.86	0%
11. Exp. preaching is boring	1.40	1.20	-14.2%	1.14	1.57	37.7%
12. Cannot do exposition	1.60	1.40	-12.5%	1.71	1.57	-8.1%
13. Passage has one teaching point	3.60	3.80	5.5%	2.14	2.29	7.0%
14. Authorial intent determ. first	4.00	4.60	15.0%	4.00	4.57	14.3%
15. Lesson need not have applic.	1.80	1.40	-22.2%	2.00	1.86	7.0%

APPENDIX 5
EVALUATIONS

Post-Seminar Evaluation Questionnaire

Students completed these evaluation questions after the eight-week seminar.

1. This seminar has been helpful to me.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
2. This seminar should be offered regularly to church members.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
3. This seminar seemed more like an introduction than a complete class.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
4. I have taken formal teacher training of some kind (Mark all that apply)
() At church () In college () For a Bible study () Never
5. I have taken training in Bible study methods or hermeneutics (Mark all that apply)
() At church () In college () For a Bible study group () Never
6. How competent do you feel to study and discover the correct meaning of a typical biblical passage
() Very skilled () Modest skill () Some ability () Small ability () No ability
7. What were the strengths of the class?
8. What were the weaknesses of the class?
9. What are some of the most significant things you have learned in this class?
10. What topics or skills do you wish this class had covered that it did not?
11. What are your plans for implementing what you have learned?

Sermon Evaluation Form

Students used the following questions to evaluate six of the teacher's sermons.

Sermon Title: _____

Bible Text: _____

1. The introduction got my attention.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
2. The introduction led naturally into the subject of the sermon.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
3. What would you identify as the "Big Idea" (central propositional statement) of this sermon?
4. The structure or outline of the sermon was clear.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
5. The "Big Idea" was related to all the points of the outline.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
6. The points of the outline clearly related to each other.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
7. The "Big Idea" and outline were derived from the biblical text, and not forced on the text.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
8. The sermon taught the biblical meaning of the passage.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
9. The sermon gave adequate explanation of the context.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
10. The sermon used illustrations that explained the text in an understandable way.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
11. The preacher made specific application from the biblical text to the congregation.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree
12. The sermon met tangible needs in the lives of the audience.
 Strongly Disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly Agree

13. The sermon was inspiring/encouraging and/or convicting.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
14. I believe I have a better understanding of the passage after hearing this sermon.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
15. I believe I can better apply this passage to my life after hearing this sermon.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
16. What were one or two clear applications that were made to the lives of the audience?
17. The preacher used his voice well.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
18. The preacher used movements and gestures well.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
19. The preacher maintained eye contact with the audience.
() Strongly Disagree () Disagree () Undecided () Agree () Strongly Agree
20. Please describe any physical distractions or bad habits which the preacher used.
21. Please describe any part of the sermon in which the preacher used too much time or too little time.
22. What general comments or suggestions could you make concerning the content and delivery of this sermon?

APPENDIX 6

SERMON OUTLINES

Sermon on Expository Preaching

This sermon outline was preached over two Sunday mornings at Graham Community Church at the beginning of the seminar. This message expounds 2 Timothy 4:2 and explains the purpose of preaching the Bible expositively.

Sermon 1 and 2: *Why We Teach the Bible: parts 1 and 2, 2 Timothy 4:2.*

Big idea: Biblical preaching and teaching is not simply about God, it reveals God and his will.

Six reasons why we teach the Bible at Graham Church:

1. Revelation: The Bible is where I meet God.
2. Authority: The Bible always tells me the truth.
3. Consistency: The Bible never changes.
4. Power: The Bible changes lives.
 - A. The Word of God Creates.
 - B. The Word of God Controls.
 - C. The Word of God Convicts.
5. Sufficiency: The Bible has all I need to follow God.
6. Glory: The Bible magnifies God.
 - A. The aim of good works and godly living is the glory of God.
 - B. The way people are equipped to do good works is by teaching the Bible.
 - C. The goal of all our teaching and preaching is to give glory to God.

Sermons for Evaluation

The following six sermons were preached on Sunday mornings at Graham Community Church for evaluation by seminar students.

Sermon 1: *Grafted Into God's Tree, Romans 11:17-24.*

Big idea: *Don't you dare become proud of your spiritual victory... God did it all.*

A living parable: Pruning the olive tree. v. 17

1. Be humble about your relationship with God. v. 18-22
 - A. Don't forget you're a dependent. v. 18
 - B. Don't overlook your vulnerability. v. 19-20
 - C. Fear the pruning hand of God. v. 20-21
 - D. Catch a vision of the two sides of grace. v. 22
2. Don't lose sight of God's power to restore his people. v. 23-24

Sermon 2: *Why Does God Save His Enemies? Romans 11:25-32.*

Big idea: *In every mystery of life, trust God to work all things to exalt the greatness of his mercy.*

1. God's plan is bigger than just you. v. 25
2. God always keeps his Word. v. 26-27
3. God never takes back his grace. v. 28-29
4. God magnifies the greatness of his mercy. v. 30-32

Sermon 3: *The Glory Is All God's, Romans 11:33-36.*

Big idea: *Be overwhelmed by the Lord's mercy and worship God.*

1. Give glory to God because he owns everything.
 - A. God doesn't need anything.
 - B. God owes no one anything.
 - C. All we receive from God is a grace gift.
 - D. All we can give God is our worship and praise.

2. Give glory to God because he knows everything.
 - A. God's decisions cannot be second-guessed.
 - B. God's plan is beyond our evaluation.
 - C. God's thinking is past our understanding.
 - D. God cannot be told what to do.
3. Give glory to God because everything owes its existence to him.
 - A. God is the source of all things.
 - B. God sustains all things.
 - C. God is the goal of all things.
4. Give glory to God because that is your purpose for living.

Sermon 4: *Worship God with Your Life*, Romans 12:1.

Big idea: *God saved you to build a life of worship to him.*

1. Build a worshipful life on the foundation of the mercy of God.
2. Build a worshipful life through the offering of your body to God.
3. Build a worshipful life by a passion for what pleases God.

Sermon 5: *God Transforms*, Romans 12:2.

Big idea: *Real life change that worships God begins with a transformed mind.*

God glorifying transformation happens as you:

1. Resist getting molded into the shape of this age.
2. Are changed from the inside out.
3. Learn to recognize what God expects from you.
4. Please God by always doing what's best, his perfect will.

You can change!

Sermon 6: *Don't Think So Much of Yourself, Romans 12:3-8.*

Big idea: *A life of worship is most clearly visible in the way that we think about others.*

1. Think Humble. v. 3
2. Think Team. v. 4-5
 - A. Diversity.
 - B. Unity.
 - C. Interdependence.
3. Think Ministry. v. 6-8

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ABSTRACT

TRAINING LAY PEOPLE AT GRAHAM COMMUNITY CHURCH, LAINGSBURG, MICHIGAN, TO PREACH AND TEACH THE BIBLE EXPOSITIONALLY

Michael Carey Hixson, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2009
Robert A. Vogel, Faculty Supervisor

This project trained lay people at Graham Community Church, Laingsburg, Michigan to preach and teach the Bible expositively and improved the author's expository preaching. Chapter 1 gives the introduction to Graham Community Church and the region in which it resides. The demographics of the church and the kind of people in it indicate that it would be amenable to an in-depth training seminar to equip laymen to more accurately teach the Bible in an expository format.

Chapter 2 discusses biblical and theological issues involved in training laymen to teach Bible exposition. This chapter analyzes selected Old and New Testament passages which give examples of expository preaching and give imperatives for Christians to disciple others to teach the Scripture.

Chapter 3 examines historical models of expository preaching and evaluated contemporary examples of training lay people to do biblical exposition, and proposed a short-term training program for lay people in expository preaching and teaching.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology used in training lay persons at Graham Community Church to preach and teach the Bible expositively. This project involved teaching an eight week seminar on basic hermeneutics and homiletics, and using critical input from class members to improve the author's expository preaching.

Chapter 5 provides an analysis, evaluation and reflection on the project of training lay people at Graham Community Church to preach and teach the Bible expositively.

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