THE TESTING OF THE VALIDITY OF BUTTRICK'S HOMILETIC: PREACHING FROM MATTHEW 13

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick[1] has been heralded by Fortress Press as "the most substantial work on the subject since the nineteenth century" and "due to stand as a monumental work in the field of homiletics for the balance of the century."[2] The literature too, quickly embraced Buttrick's methodology as "unrivaled in our time for its sophistication and comprehensiveness."[3] A review of current homiletic literature demonstrates that David Buttrick is one of a number of authors who represent the "new homiletics."

In recent years, literary-critical discoveries about the form and function of Scripture have caused several writers, including David Buttrick, to move away from the rhetorical tradition of Augustine and the deductive method and contend that the inductive method should be advocated. Ralph Lewis considers listener involvement the "key to

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[1]David Buttrick, Homiletic: Moves and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

[2]R. Waznak, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Worship 62 (May 1988): 269.

[3]Donald K. McKim, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in The Reformed Journal 38 (January 1988): 18-22. See also Edward F. Markquart, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Word & World 8 (Spring 1988): 198-201; David L. Larsen, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Trinity Journal 8 (Spring 1987): 117-121; Fracis C. Rossow, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, David Buttrick, in Concordia Journal 14 (July 1988): 323-25; Richard L. Eslinger, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Reformed Liturgy and Music 22 (Winter 1988): 45-47; and Thomas G. Long, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Theology Today 45 (April 1988): 108, 110-12.

explaining and understanding inductive preaching."[4] Fred Craddock goes further, declaring the listener has "the right to participate in that movement and arrive at a conclusion that is his own, not just the speaker's."[5]

The purpose of this investigation is to inquire into the correlation between listener participation and the inductive movement of a sermon. More specifically, an answer to the following question is sought: Will listener participation increase when sermons are modeled after Buttrick's inductive methodology rather than after a more deductive method?

Significance of the Problem

People are thirsting for a message from God that speaks personally to them and to the issues that tear up their days. Preaching has come under considerable criticism in recent years for saying what no one needed to hear. Ralph Lewis asks, "Why don't people listen when we preach?"[6] Haddon Robinson muses: "No wonder sermons are occasionally mocked as `the fine art of talking in someone else's sleep.'"[7]

Preaching the Word of the Lord has played a significant role throughout sacred history. God sent Moses to the Israelites saying, "I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do."[8] This began the prophetic ministry that concluded with John the Baptist and the New Testament prophets.[9] Carrying on the tradition of the prophets,

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[4]Ralph Lewis and Gregg Lewis, Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), 35.
[5]Fred B. Craddock, As One Without Authority (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987), 62.
[6]Lewis, Inductive, 9.
[7]Haddon Robinson, "Listening to the Listeners," Leadership 4 (Spring 1983): 68.
[8]Ex. 4:15.
[9]Mt. 11:13.

Christian preachers proclaim God's message to people. That preaching has a goal: That people can hear and believe the message of the Word of Christ.[10] Thomas Long develops this further by elaborating on Augustine's formula for a good speech. "At the door of Augustine's parish, he would be pleased if people would say, `I learned something today; I was moved by what you said; and, I intend to do something about it.'"[11]

The desire in this research is to carry forth this tradition with the best available strategies. The world is in a state of constant flux. Cultures evolve and patterns of consciousness change. The preacher often reacts by playing catch-up with the congregation. Frequently, the two ships pass in the night. Some sermon strategies that communicated well yesterday, could miss the mark today. The new wave of homiletics centers on impacting today's audience with a message from God.[12] This becomes a message that lives today as it did originally both in form and function, and caused the hearer to respond, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"[13]

Related Literature: Recent Trends in Homiletics

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[10]Rom. 10:14-17.

[11]Thomas Long, The Senses of Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 20. Long is commenting on the statement from, Saint Augustine, On Christian Doctrine, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr. (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1958), 142. Buttrick, Homiletic, 16-17, states the power of preaching by saying, "Christian preaching tells a story and names a name. If narrative consciousness confers identiy, then preaching transforms identity. . . . What preaching may do is build in consciousness a new `faith-world' in which we may live and love!"

[12]Some homiliticians underplay the objective meaning of the text and focus more on impact. This is a result of the "New Hermeneutic" to which they have committed themselves. One need not accept the New Hermeneutic in the effort to preach with meaning and impact.

[13]Lk 24:32.

A survey of the literature reveals that some use the Bible as support for the inductive method.[14] The fact that most of the Bible uses narrative to communicate God's message suggests its preference for the inductive method.

> Generally in the Bible the concrete comes before the abstract, the particulars before the general, the data before the rule. While some decrees and dogma may be found in Scripture, they tend to follow experience, examples and cases in an inductive way rather than precede them in a deductive authoritarian manner.[15]

Lewis and Lewis bridge the gap between text and audience noting that most people learn primarily from induction. "Reasonable induction from experience carries more clout for contemporary listeners than . . ." deduction.[16]

Nelson has demonstrated that the post-New Testament era in homiletics has patterned itself after the rhetoric of Aristotle. He summarizes much of the literature, concluding that the deductive method dominated the pulpit until recent years.[17]

Although overstated, Don Wardlaw agrees:

> Recent theological changes have made it possible to see how preaching since the second century has been clothed mostly in prosaic dress. Prior to that time the controlling structure of Christian preaching was narrative. . . . Narrative regulated sermon design. . . . Church Fathers from Origen to Chrysostom, while endued with the mind of Christ, exegeted and preached with the mind of Plato and Aristotle. . . . The Fathers preached . . . with a rhetoric that Greeks over the centuries had developed into a science of persuasion.[18]

Nelson also surveys the most popular homiletic texts beginning with John Broadus in 1870.[19] He found the dominant method advocated by these texts is clearly the

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[14]Lewis, Inductive, 58-60. See also Dwight K. Nelson, "A Comparison of Receptivity to the Deductive and Inductive Methods of Preaching in the Pioneer Memorial Church," (D.Min. diss., Andrews University, 1986), 37. Both of these authors have surveyed the Bible in detail to substantiate this claim.
[15]Lewis, Inductive, 61. See also p. 43.
[16]Ibid, 25, 32, 43.
[17]Nelson, "Comparison," 77.
[18]Don M. Wardlaw, ed. Preaching Biblically (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 11-12.
[19]John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, rev.

deductive method with the one exception of J. Fort Newton.[20] The popularity of the deductive method can also be seen in my own homiletical training.[21]

Fred Craddock advocates an inductive method for sermon preparation and delivery.

> Even if the adoption of Greek rhetorical forms for sermon outlines was a wise choice in the mission to the Hellenistic world, certainly after nineteen centuries the time has arrived for critical review of sermon form as well as content.[22]

He proposes that the form of the text should be the primary consideration in choosing the sermon form.[23]

Amos Wilder[24] broke new ground for many Biblical exegetes as a champion of the field of Literary Criticism. It is in his work that Craddock unearths rich soil to use as a

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ed., ed. Jessie Burton Weatherspoon (New York: Harper, 1944).

[20]Nelson, "Comparison," 19-23. Other exceptions are: Ozora Davis, The Principles of Preaching (Chicago: 1924); and David J. Randolph, The Renewal of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). H. Grady Davis, Design for Preaching (Phildelphia: Fortress Press, 1958) sorted out the general categories of sermons from the standpoint of functional forms and organic shapes. The fifth (and last) of the organic types of sermon falls under the classification of "A Story Told." He believed that not more than 10 percent of sermons being preached in the middle and late 1950s could be listed in this category.

[21]Charles W. Koller, Expository Preaching Without Notes plus Sermons Preached Without Notes (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1962); H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard and Jesse J. Northcutt, Steps to the Sermon: A Plan for Sermon Preparation (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1963); James W. Cox, A Guide to Biblical Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976); J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1972); and Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980). Robinson, Biblical, 126-27, does introduce the inductive approach.

[22]Craddock, Authority, 153.

[23]Ibid, 143. See also Fred B. Craddock, Preaching, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), 118, 122-123.

[24]Amos Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964).

foundation for his proposal. Amos Wilder also began a new era in parable research that has significantly affected parable research in the past two decades.[25]

It took almost a decade for Craddock's emphasis to gain momentum. In time, subsequent authors brought forth a host of texts advancing the cause of inductive preaching, dialogical preaching and narrative preaching.[26] It was a call for "Biblical Preaching."

David Buttrick follows this recent trend with the most complete text on inductive

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[25]This literary criticism will be examined in greater detail in the section on parables.

[26]Elizabeth Achtemeier, Creative Preaching, Abingdon Preacher's Library Series (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980); Fred B. Craddock, Overhearing the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978); Richard L. Eslinger, A New Hearing: Living Options in Homiletic Method (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987); Donald E. Gowan, Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980); Sidney Greidanus, The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988); Richard A. Jensen, Telling the Story: Variety and Imagination in Preaching (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980); Leander E. Keck, The Bible in the Pulpit (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978); Lewis and Lewis, Inductive; Academy of Homiletics, Preaching and Story (Des Plaines, IL: Cabrini Contact Center, 1979); Edmund A. Steimle, Morris J. Niedenthal, and Charles L. Rice, Preaching the Story (Philadelphis: Fortress Press, 1980); Edmund A. Steimle, "The Fabric of the Sermon," Luther Theological Seminary Review 17 (Spring 1978): 50-55; Thomas G. Long, Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989); Eugene L. Lowry, Doing Time in the Pulpit, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985); Eugene L. Lowry, How to Preach a Parable: Designs for Narrative Sermons, Abingdon Preacher's Library (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989); Eugene L. Lowry, The Homiletical Plot (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980); William D. Thompson, Preaching Biblically: Exegesis and Interpretation, Abingdon Preacher's Library (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981); and Wardlaw, Preaching. Dialogical preaching is seen in Reuel L. Howe, Partners in Preaching (New York: Seabury Press, 1967). Howe is one of the few authors who precede Craddock. Richard Lischer calls for balance in "The Limits of Story," Interpretation 38 (January 1984): 26-38.

methodology to date. He begins his homiletic from the ground up, laying new foundations for the field. One reviewer even compared Buttrick's homiletic to architecture, relating it to a complete new construction.[27]

Buttrick criticizes the deductive approaches, because in either "textual" preaching or biblical "topic" preaching, "preachers are forced to fabricate some sort of sermon design from their own minds."[28] As early as 1981, Buttrick analyzed these approaches describing them as "homiletic systems . . . what might be called a `method of distillation' by which passages are reduced to single propositional `truths.'"[29] He went on to suggest a different tactic, "let us propose questions which a preacher might ask of a passage, questions which may yield different results and which may indirectly suggest a different way of `biblical preaching.'"[30]

He summarizes his call to a new homiletic saying,

> In the past few decades biblical interpretation has moved from the historical-critical paradigm toward other critical approaches, for example, structuralist, phenomenological, rhetorico-poetical. Now homiletic theory is called to similar reconstruction. When a new homiletic, tuned to hermeneutic sensitivity and a tough phenomenological analysis of language, emerges and filters down to the pastor's study, we may see a generation of preachers who find Scripture exciting and who find speaking in grace an act of radical obedience.[31]

David Larsen has critiqued Buttrick's new homiletic. He sees many valuable insights pertaining to the understanding of texts. He then uses Buttrick's own examples as test cases of the validity of this model. Buttrick's theology often aborts the valuable insights gained. His own beliefs about biblical authority and the transcendence of God

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[27]Stephen Platten, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Theology 91 (May 1988): 243-45.
[28]Buttrick, Homiletic, 366.
[29]David Buttrick, "Interpretation and Preaching," Interpretation 35 (January 1981): 48.
[30]Ibid, 50.
[31]Ibid.

leave his sermons simply on the horizontal level. Larsen states,

> But he leaves the preacher no better off in the end. We have at our disposal `the symbols of revelation' but no real revelation at all behind the symbols. There is no commanding sense of the divine given.[32]

Larsen goes on to use Buttrick's Preaching Jesus Christ as a test case. "As one whose `new homiletic' is squarely placed in the `new hermeneutic,' it is not surprising that throughout this work he is historically skeptical and agnostic."[33] It remains a question whether Buttrick has proposed a useful homiletic apart from his hermeneutic. This thesis will seek to answer that question.

Related Literature: Feedback

Acquiring feedback has a long and diverse history covering the fields of Speech, Psychology, Education, Political Science, and Management. Howard Gilkinson and Donald Smith have summarized this research for the field of Speech discussing eleven different categories of measuring options.[34] The first tool of note was Howard

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[32]David L. Larsen, The Anatomy of Preaching: Identifying the Issues in Preaching Today (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989): 28.
[33]Ibid, 168. See also Larsen, review, 117-21. Steimle, "Fabric," 53, believes that purely narrative, parabolic and other types of `experimental' sermons are for the gifted few.
[34]Howard Gilkinson and Donald K. Smith, "Measurement in Speech," in An Introduction to Graduate Study in Speech and Theatre, ed., Clyde W. Dow (East Lansing, MI.: Michigan State University Press, 1961): 276-311. Also summarizing the field of speech measurement is Howard Gilkinson, "Experimental and Statistical Research in General Speech: II. Speakers, Speeches, and Audiences," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 30 (1944): 180-86 and "Indexes of Change in Attitude Behavior Among Students Enrolled in General Speech Courses," Speech Monographs 8 (1941): 23-33; Theodore Clevenger, Jr., "Retest Reliabilities of Ten Scales of Public Speaking Performance," Central States Speech Journal 14 (November 1963): 285-91, and "Retest Reliability of Judgments of General Effectiveness in Public Speaking," Western Speech 26 (Fall 1962): 216-19; Wayne N. Thompson, "An Experimental Study of the Accuracy of Typical Speech Rating Techniques," Speech Monographs 11 (1944): 65-79; and Keith

Woodward's Shift-Of-Opinion Ballot.[35] William Millson tested this ballot and found it useful in measuring change of opinion in audiences.[36]

Wilmer Stevens proposed a rating scale with some limited testing as to its validity and reliability in 1928.[37] This statement accompanied the article:

> [The Editor is so prejudiced against rating scales and `scientific' tests for effective speaking that he has no faith in their value. This article is printed in the hope that it will call forth a general discussion.][38]

Franklin Knower responded forcefully the very next year.[39] He stated that the scientific method was the only course to follow to bring about advancement and respectability to the field. He too offers a scale by which speaker performance can be measured.[40]

Lee Norvelle developed a scale in 1924 which was tested at Indiana University for the next five years.[41] The conclusions of his research indicated the possibility of

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Brooks, "Some Basic Considerations in Rating Scale Development: A Descriptive Bibliography," Central States Speech Journal 9 (December 1952): 27-31.

[35]Howard S. Woodward, "Measurement and Analysis of Audience Opinion," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 14 (February 1928): 94-111. This ballot is an adaptation of a ballot proposed by W. E. Utterback, "Measuring the Reaction of an Audience to an Argumentative Speech," Quarterly Journal of Speech Education 8 (April 1922): 180-83.

[36]William A. D. Millson, "Problems in Measuring Audience Reaction," Quarterly Journal of Speech 18 (November 1932): 621-37; and "Experimental Work in Audience Reaction," Quarterly Journal of Speech 18 (Feb. 1932): 24-25.

[37]Wilmer E. Stevens, "A Rating Scale for Public Speakers," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 14 (April 1928): 223-32.

[38]Ibid, 223.

[39]Franklin H. Knower, "A Suggestive Study of Public-Speaking Rating-Scale Values," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 15 (February 1929): 30-41.

[40]Ibid. He gives twelve reasons as to the value of rating scales and forcefully answers the objections one might have about using these instruments.

[41]Lee Norvelle, "Development and Application of a Method for Measuring the Effectiveness of Instruction in a Basic Speech Course," Speech Monographs 1 (September 1934): 41-65.

establishing a reliable and valid measure of the effectiveness of speaking by the use of a rating scale.

A. H. Monroe, H. H. Remmers, and Elizabeth Venemann-Lyle's work became a foundation for the future for several decades.[42] They emphasized that the audience is the critical factor in determining the effectiveness of a speech. "It is their reactions he is trying to influence: the listener is not only the observer and the critic; he is the scorekeeper and the score!"[43] Their thesis for developing a measuring device was,

> Effectiveness must be measured in terms of the response secured from the audience spoken to. . . . By the statistical analysis of the judgments made by a fair sampling of the actual listeners, a reasonably objective and quantitative measure of the response of the audience should be secured."[44]

They developed the "Purdue Speech Rating Chart" that became the standard. The coefficients of reliability for the average speech class (20 students) was of the order of 0.9 for the traits of "Attention," "Organization," "Enthusiasm" and "General Effectiveness." [45]

In 1941, Alice Bryan and Walter Wilke published the "Bryan-Wilke Scale."[46] They described their tool as a "technique for securing directly from an audience an expression of preference regarding various basic aspects of a speaker's performance."[47]

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[42]A. H. Monroe, H. H. Remmers, and Elizabeth Venemann-Lyle, "Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Speech in a Beginning Course," Studies in Higher Education 29 (September 1936): 5-29.
[43]Ibid, 5.
[44]Ibid, 7.
[45]Ibid, 26-27.
[46]Alice I. Bryan and Walter H. Wilke, "A Technique for Rating Public Speeches," Journal of Consulting Psychology 5 (March 1941): 80-90 and, "Audience Tendencies in Rating Public Speakers," Journal of Applied Psychology 26 (1942): 371-81. One method of its use was presented by Walter H. Wilke even before its publication in "A Speech Profile," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 26 (December 1940): 625-30.
[47]Bryan, "Technique," 80.

The Semantic Differential, developed by Charles Osgood and associates at the University of Illinois, entered the world of scales with great promise. It measured the clusters of associational meanings which become attached to concepts and the words which evoke them. Raymond Smith tested the use of this scale to develop a semantic differential for speech.[48]

In the religious field, most studies relate to the affect a sermon will have on the audience.[49] There are also studies that reflect the effect the feedback has on the preacher.[50] Some studies also relate to the content,

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[48]Raymond G. Smith, "Development of a Semantic Differential for use with Speech Related Concepts," Speech Monographs 26 (November 1959): 263-72; and "Validation of a Semantic Differential," Speech Monographs 30 (March 1963): 50-55.

[49]K. I. Pargament and W. H. Silverman, "Exploring Some Correlates of Sermon Impact on Catholic Parishioners," Review of Religious Research 24 (1982): 33-39; K. I. Pargament and D. V. DeRosa, "What was that Sermon About? Predicting Memory for Religious Messages from Cognitive Psychology Theory," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 24 (1985): 180-93; Dennis L. Price, Robert W. Terry, and B. Conrad Johnston, "The Measurement of the Effect of Preaching and Preaching Plus Small Group Dialogue in One Baptist Church," Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 19 (June 1980): 186-97; James Engel, How Can I Get Them to Listen? (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977); William M. Newman and Stuart A. Wright, "The Effects of Sermons Among Lay Catholics: An Exploratory Study," Review of Religious Research 22 (September 1980): 54-59; William O. Avery and Roger A. Gobbel, "The Word of God and the Words of the Preacher," Review of Religious Research 22 (September 1980): 41-53; Donald J. Ragsdale and Kenneth R. Durham, "Audience Response to Religious Fear Appeals," Review of Religious Research 28 (September 1986): 40-50.

[50]Richard Allen Bodey, "Graduated Sermon Critique Forms for use in the Preaching Labs at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School" (D.Min. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1984); Carl B. Rife, "The Understanding and Utilization of Feedback in the Preaching Situation" (D.Min. diss., Wesley Theological Seminary, 1973); Franklin R. Gillis, "The Role of Feedback in Preaching: Some Methods for Acquiring Feedback from the Congregation" (D.Min. diss., Lancaster Theological Seminary, 1983); Donald Edward Jackson, "Feedback in Preaching

organization and style.[51] These studies offered a variety of response forms that could be utilized to measure the various responses an audience has to a sermon. However, none of them were designed to evaluate any difference to be found in audience reaction to the specific elements pertaining to Buttrick's methodology. Dwight Nelson reached the same conclusion:

> While many standard evaluative forms (questionnaires, surveys, etc.) are offered in the homiletical texts, none of them dealt with a deductive and inductive comparison. In fact, in all the evaluative forms I examined, not one even had a question that sought listener reaction to deduction or induction. Homiletical evaluative forms usually include an evaluation of the sermon's content, the preacher's style and delivery and a host of technical variables important to evaluating the effectiveness of the preacher and his sermon. It became evident that if I wanted to solicit listener reaction to the deductive and inductive methods of preaching, I would have to design a questionnaire rather than borrow one.[52]

Earlier, he had given a basis for this tool:

> The literature identifies three such elements: authority, sermonic structure, and listener participation. While these three significant elements are found in both methods, their usage and implementation vary markedly between the deductive

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Communication" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 1988); and Joe McDaniel and Alan Watson, "A Study of Post-Sermon Discussion Groups: Groups' Self Evaluation" (Guided Research Paper, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1977). General studies that summarize the research on feedback include: Daniel R. Ilgen, Cynthia D. Fisher and M. Susan Taylor, "Consequences of Individual Feedback on Behavior in Organizations," Journal of Applied Psychology 64 (August 1979): 349-71; and R. B. Ammons, "Effects of Knowledge of Performance: A Survey and Tentative Theoretical Formulation," The Journal of General Psychology 54 (1956): 279-99.

[51]Robert S. Cathcart, "An Experimental Study of the Relative Effectiveness of Four Methods of Presenting Evidence," Speech Monographs (August 1955): 227-33; Donald E. Sikkink, "An Experimental Study of the Effects on the Listener of Anticlimax Order and Authority in an Argumentative Speech," Southern Speech Journal 22 (Winter 1956): 73-78; and James T. MaGuire, "A Scale on Preaching Style: Hortatory Vs. Interactive Preaching," Review of Religious Research 22 (September 1980): 60-65.

[52]Nelson, "Comparison," 82.

and inductive approaches. Identifying these variations provides the necessary material for the construction of a standard evaluative form to solicit listener response to both methods of preaching.[53]

Basic Assumptions

The goal of this study relates to increasing listener participation.[54] This assumes that listener participation has value for deepening spiritual development and trust. "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."[55]

Secondly, it is assumed that fidelity to the text and its authority should be maintained. This is opposed to the position that allows the interpreter to shape the message as he chooses for either his own theological concerns or for audience receptivity.[56]

Delimitations

This study will deal primarily with the inductive methodology of David Buttrick. Conclusions will not be drawn about other inductive strategies or about other preachers who employ them. Since this study will be conducted with only one congregation, broad generalizations about the affects of inductive preaching should not be drawn concerning other congregations or other genres.

This study will only consider the genre of parables in Matthew 13. The parables of Matthew 13 demonstrate a variety of form and should prove sufficient for this study.[57]

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[53]Ibid, 27.

[54]For Buttrick, the issue is "hearing." How to get them to hear so words and meanings form in consciousness is the goal of all preaching. Buttrick, Homiletic, 5, 12, 211, 454.

[55]Rom. 10:17.

[56]This is the most common criticism of Buttrick's methodology as reflected in his own examples. Larsen, review of Homiletic, 120.

[57]The wide range of diversity that the genre of parables exhibits will

Other genres may or may not be adaptable to Buttrick's methodology. These other genres could be tested by following the same quasi-experimental design as developed here.

Definition of Terms

The definition of deduction and induction as commonly employed in the discipline of homiletics corresponds with those definitions given in the disciplines of logic and philosophy.

> Whereas deduction moves from the general to specifics, induction moves from specifics to the general. . . . It is the movement in the methods that contrasts them.[58]

Movement is the key word used by Buttrick to describe his technique.

A definition of audience involvement consist of the engagement of the congregation's attention, interests and emotions with the sermon. The "Preaching Response Questionnaire" employed in this study will give evidence to the relative difference of involvement between the inductive and deductive sermon.

Limitations

Several other variables are involved which relate to speaker, audience, setting and subject that affect listener participation. Personality type of speaker and audience, and speaker ethos with the audience are variables not being considered. Other variables not being addressed include the age, sex, education level and socio-economic level of the audience or speaker. This study seeks to explore only one of these variables, namely, the

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be explained in the section on parables. Not all parables lend themselves to the inductive approach and the exegesis of Matthew 13 will demonstrate this conclusion.

[58]Nelson, "Comparison," 12. Nelson gives a comprehensive survey of the homiletical literature demonstrating the agreement in the field on this point. He summarizes the variety of ways that authors have effectively defined these terms.

modeling of sermons after Buttrick's methodology as contrasted with a more deductive form.

The effectiveness of a sermon is not a fixed point. Rather, it is a spectrum, a continuum. Different speakers are effective for different reasons. The feedback gathered (operationally defined as the completion of the "Preaching Response Questionnaire") will only differentiate between the respective traits of induction and deduction which contribute to listener participation. Neither changes in belief, attitude or action; remembering lessons; nor a longitudinal study of how long ratings will be increased will be measured by this feedback.

Methodology

This project will employ a quasi-experimental methodology to test two alternative methods of preaching for listener participation. By presenting the congregation a series of sermons constructed to reflect these two models, the one that elicits greater audience involvement will be determined. Alternating sermon models is the independent variable. The dependent variable will be the audience response to these sermons.

This study will begin with a comprehensive analysis of David Buttrick's methodology as presented in Homiletic: Moves and Structures. From this survey, four sermons (randomly selected from the parables in Matthew 13) will be written. These sermons will be compared with four other sermons on the remaining parables in Matthew 13 modeled after a deductive method that I previously employed. These sermons will be evaluated by my thesis committee to determine whether they conform to the model intended.[59]

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[59]A manuscript will be presented for evaluation before the experiment.

These two sets of sermons will be presented to the Washington Church of Christ, Washington, Indiana, on eight consecutive weeks.[60] Each set of sermons will be internally mixed by random process respectively.[61] Everyone will be given a feedback tool to be filled out and returned by the end of each sermon. Each form will also contain simple instructions explaining the project and the use of the forms.

Feedback measuring audience participation will be based on the form developed by consulting and selecting some questions from several feedback tools found in the literature.[62] This tool was developed for the specific purpose of soliciting listener reaction to the deductive and inductive method of preaching.

Results

Evaluation of the "Preaching Response Questionnaire" will answer the question: Will listener participation increase when sermons are modeled after Buttrick's inductive methodology? It is expected that Buttrick's inductive method will significantly increase listener participation.

Summary

In the following chapter (2), a theoretical Understanding of Buttrick's Homiletic: Moves and Structures will be discussed. Since his methodology is complex, a summary

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Transcribed sermons will be used in the final evaluation process when I report the results.

[60]The Washington Church of Christ averages 120 in attendance. Demographic information will be collected for future considerations.

[61]The parables in Matthew 13 will be paired prior to the ramdom selection. This will give balance that otherwise could not be guaranteed.

[62]Bryan and Wilke, "Audience"; Jackson, "Feedback"; Knower, "Suggestive"; Monroe, Remmers, and Venemann-Lyle, "Measuring"; Nelson, "Comparison"; and Price, Terry, and Johnston, "Measurement."

of his book will be presented. This summary will be followed by a critique.

Since Buttrick's techniques are being tested only for the genre of parables, a history of parable research will be presented (chapter 3). Since recent research on parables greatly influences Buttrick, the implications from this research on preaching will be discussed. An example of parable exegesis will serve as a paradigm for this project.

The next chapter (4) will present the exegesis of Matthew 13. The sermons that follow will reflect both the exegetical work from Matthew 13 and an implementation of Buttrick's methodology discussed above. These sermons were then preached at the Washington Church of Christ in Washington, IN. Data was collected by using the Preaching Response Questionnaire.

The last two chapters (5 and 6) discuss the data drawing pertinent conclusions. These conclusions will bring together and discuss the results of the quasi-experiment and evaluate the use of inductive preaching modeled after Buttrick's methodology for the purpose of increasing audience participation.

CHAPTER II

A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF BUTTRICK'S

HOMILETIC: MOVES AND STRUCTURES

David Buttrick's Homiletic: Moves and Structures has quickly become a classic work in the field of homiletics. Buttrick follows the recent trend toward a new homiletic with the most complete text to date. There are few homiletical textbooks that have explored the subject of phenomenology with such sophistication and comprehensiveness. Although his theories have been praised, they remain untested. Summarizations and critical assessments of his work remain few and limited.[63]

He begins his homiletic from the ground up laying new foundations for the field. He describes his journey toward a new homiletic in an article "On Preaching a Parable: The Problem of Homiletic Method."[64] He concluded his autobiographical tangent by stating:

> I grew curious as to how human consciousness actually did conjoin ideas. The result was a journeying system of "moves" assembled by various "logics." When preached, such sermons did seem to heighten attention and retention in surprising ways. More, a mobile system offered freedom to fulfill intention, to alter models in consciousness, in a word to change minds.[65]

David Buttrick specializes in the phenomenology of language. He writes about rhetoric--about the organization of language so it makes an impact on human consciousness. Buttrick's method is a phenomenological approach in that he begins with the event of what is heard and understood by people. If "faith comes by hearing," the question of

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[63]Eslinger, New Hearing, 133-71, gives the most detailed survey to date of Buttrick's methodology.
[64]David Buttrick, "On Preaching a Parable: The Problem of Homiletic Method," Reformed Liturgy and Music 17 (Winter 1983): 18-19.
[65]Ibid, 19.

what congregations actually hear and experience when a sermon is preached is absolutely crucial. A sermon needs to be formed to function in consciousness much as thoughts themselves form in the mind.[66]

Buttrick criticizes the deductive approaches, because in either "textual" preaching or biblical "topic" preaching, "preachers are forced to fabricate some sort of sermon design from their own minds."[67] As early as 1981, Buttrick analyzed these approaches describing them as "homiletic systems . . . what might be called a `method of distillation' by which passages are reduced to single propositional `truths.'"[68]

He went on to suggest a different tactic, "Let us propose questions which a preacher might ask of a passage, questions which may yield different results and which may indirectly suggest a different way of `biblical preaching."[69] These questions are: "What is the form?" "What is the `Plot,' Structure or Shape?" "What is the `Field of Concern?" "What is the `logic' of Movement?" "What is the Addressed `World?'" "What is the passage trying to do?"[70] He words this last question later: "What is the language trying to do?"[71] He considers this last question as the first step to "homiletical obedience."[72] Intentionality of the text then has equal status for biblical preaching as does content.[73] He cautions that sermon form "need not be bound by biblical form: The how and why of form is more important than the form itself. . . . In preaching, deep

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[66]Buttrick, Homiletic, 211-17. For Buttrick, the issue is "hearing." How do you get them to hear so that words and meanings form in consciousness is the goal of all preaching.
[67]Ibid., 366.
[68]Buttrick, "Interpretation," 48.
[69]Ibid, 50.
[70]Ibid, 50-54.
[71]Ibid, 54.
[72]Ibid, 58.
[73]Ibid.

structures and performative purposes take precedence over form."[74] He summarizes his call to a new homiletic saying,

> In the past few decades biblical interpretation has moved from the historical-critical paradigm toward other critical approaches, for example, structuralist, phenomenological, rhetorico-poetical. Now homiletic theory is called to similar reconstruction. When a new homiletic, tuned to hermeneutic sensitivity and a tough phenomenological analysis of language, emerges and filters down to the pastor's study, we may see a generation of preachers who find Scripture exciting and who find speaking in grace an act of radical obedience.[75]

He divides his book into two parts; the first titled "Moves" and the second titled "Structures." "Moves" are blocks of thought on a "single notion" or a "single conceptual idea." Buttrick contends that a congregation cannot concentrate for more than three or four minutes on any "move," yet it takes about three minutes for a move to form in consciousness. Within a "move," there is a weaving of three different strands of thought: (1) theological reflections; (2) "oppositions" or intellectual blocks in the minds of the congregation; and (3) experiences which we all share in common.[76]

A move will be opened and closed with simple conceptual language related to the meaning of the sermon's structure. Then, internal to the move will be a weaving of conceptual language with illustration or imagery related to the lived experience of the congregation. This image will be given a point of view as it is developed; it is after all an orienting of the communal consciousness toward a "seeing" of what is being spoken of.[77] Buttrick outlines exact details about how images form in consciousness and construction of moves so the congregation can participate with the preacher. These guidelines include sections on image grids, illustrations, introductions, conclusions, language, style and

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[74]Ibid, 56. He states also in the note, "I argue in this section contra Randolph, Renewal.
[75]Ibid.
[76]Buttrick, Homiletic, 33.
[77]Eslinger, "Review," 47.

point of view.[78]

A single idea is to be "imaged"; the audience needs to see what you are speaking about. Preachers today must search the language of human conversation and find images and metaphors to proclaim the gospel anew.[79] In this age one may need to find new symbol and story, a new language with which to speak central Christian affirmations. One must discover the metaphor of today that communicates to this culture. This involves translation of metaphor that is analogous but more compelling.[80]

The second half of the book concerns "plotting":

> All speaking is structural and, therefore, may be termed plotting. . . . Because preachers are not merely expressing themselves--gushing forth--but are concerned with the forming of a congregation's faith consciousness, they will be fairly deliberate in designing the plots (moves) of their sermons.[81]

The key to preaching for Buttrick is to ascertain how to structure the movement of sermon language so certain patterns of understanding form in the consciousness of the hearers. The structure of the sermon will follow the structure of the text. Maybe not in content, genre, or organization but the sermon will function as the text functions in consciousness. "Sermon structures ought to travel through congregational consciousness as a series of immediate thoughts, sequentially designed and imaged with technical skill so as to assemble in forming faith."[82] Sequences of plots may be replotted, amplified, reduced or rearranged with altered logic. The limitations of replotting lies with

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[78]Eslinger, Hearing, 156-57 gives an excellent summary of these guidelines for developing the internal form of a move.
[79]Markquart, Review, 198.
[80]David Buttrick, Preaching Jesus Christ: An Exercise in Homiletic Theology, Fortress Resources for Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988): 15-17.
[81]Buttrick, Homiletic, 293.
[82]Buttrick, "Interpretation, 55.

intentional fidelity ("intentional obedience").[83]

Plots are determined by intentions. Buttrick states: "the idea of intention (not authorial, but in and of the language) piqued the suspicion that sermonic speech should be designed `to do' in congregational consciousness."[84] Language is performative, it does something in human consciousness. In preaching, preachers replot plots and reintend intentions for a new world in consciousness.[85] This is not, "What did the text mean?" but, "What does the text prompt us to say now."[86] Find a model "that will relate contemporary interpretation to both original meaning and somehow, original intending."[87] The "moves" and "plots" should arise from the nature of Scripture which produce different fields of understanding.[88]

There are also "moments" in consciousness termed: "Immediacy," "reflection," and "praxis." Symbols function in consciousness in different ways. Since Scripture functions in these different ways, sermons also are plotted to work in human consciousness to shift congregational consciousness. "Immediacy": To shift in congregational con-

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[83]Buttrick, "Preaching a Parable," 20.
[84]Ibid, 19. See also Buttrick, Homiletic, 273.
[85]Ibid., 301. Replotting is for the purpose of meeting a new world in consciousness. "If the world intended in scripture does not appear to be alive in our age, (often analogous) other states of mind may be at hand." Ibid., 303.
[86]Ibid., 273.
[87]Ibid, 274. His three step model is given on 276-78.
(1) Biblical texts are addressed to communal consciousness and not to individuals. (2) The consciousness the texts address is the "double" consciousness of being-saved-in-the-world.
(3) Speaking of God, the Bible tells stories and singles out symbols. Thus, the Bible must be interpreted within an interaction of story and symbol.
[88]McKim, Review, 21. Buttrick outlines in detail how one develops a sermon script from text (replotting plots) in his chapter "Structures," Homiletic, 305-17.

sciousness with immediate force. "Reflection": To produce a reflective field of meaning. "Praxis": To move the congregation from the situation at hand to theological contemplation, to some new understanding or course of future action.[89]

Analysis

Caution needs to be employed with Buttrick for allowing his theology to dominate his methodology. His theology is rooted so deeply in the "New Hermeneutic"[90] that he easily dismisses the historical-critical analysis of the text.[91] When the audience hears the text read, a field of understanding will emerge in the present tense. For the preacher to

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[89]Detailed definitions of these modes are given by Eslinger, Review, 46-47.

[90]A simple definition of the New Hermeneutic is: The interpreter enters into dialogue with the text in order to be subjectively confronted by language and events from a different historical context. The interpreter seeks the original "language event" so that it can be translated to today with the same impact. When the language from a biblical context touches one's life in a meaningful way, it becomes truth for that person. A detailed explanation can be found in, Anthony C. Thiselton, "A New Hermeneutic," New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods, ed. I. Howard Marshall (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977): 308-33. Thompson, Preaching, 66, states: "One of the most valuable insights of the `new hermeneutic' is its emphasis on the text as `language event.'. . . The concerns of Gerhard Ebeling and Ernst Fuchs, seminal thinkers in the `new hermeneutics' school of thought, lift the principle of language to that of prime importance of understanding the Scriptures. Both the presuppositions and the elaborations of the `new hermeneutics' view of language raise serious questions about its conclusions, but it has provoked biblical interpreters into a useful study of the role of language."

[91]Excellent sources for exegetical methods are: Thompson, Preaching; Gordon D. Fee, New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983); and Greidanus, Modern. A critique of Literary Criticism is found in Scot McKnight, Interpreting the Synoptic Gospels, Guides to New Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988): 121-38.

refer to a historical past is to split the focus of the congregational consciousness.[92] This leaves the congregation with no historic faith and Scripture is only used secondarily. His symbols of revelation leave no revelation at all and no sense of the divine.[93] Nowhere is his opposition to the past hermeneutic as clearly stated as when he says:

> We cannot endorse a prohibition against human hermeneutics prompted by some odd notion of the purity of the gospel. . . . Besides, there is no certifiable pure Christian faith for us to embrace.[94]

Larsen states that the validity of any approach lies within the examples proposed.[95] Buttrick states:

> . . . the Gospels were written by resurrection faith.[96] After nearly two centuries of historical-critical research, we still cannot certify the sure facts of Jesus' life. . . . Can anyone say for certain what is "original Jesus" and what is subsequent ecclesial reflection.[97]

Buttrick believes the problem of authority is a problem of history. Since scripture is a product of history, demythologizing (translating from one world view to ours) becomes part of every preacher's task.[98] "The mere fact that scripture is datable questions our affirmations of scriptural authority."[99] Buttrick goes on to propose a new model for

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[92]Eslinger, Review, 46.
[93]Larsen, Review, 119. See Buttrick, Homiletic, 113-16 for his definition of revelation. For example, he does not see God working in history, and revelation only occurs as symbol in which we interpret life.
[94]Ibid., 418. The clearest example of his hermeneutics is found in his discussion of the resurrection on p. 400. He strongly asserts that these narratives give us no description of the actual accounts. See also Buttrick, Preaching Jesus Christ, 57-68.
[95]Larsen, Anatomy, 28-29.
[96]Buttrick, Preaching Jesus Christ, 23.
[97]Ibid, 12. Buttrick, Homiletic, 248, defines Scripture as: "The language the church used to describe the nature of being-saved."
[98]Buttrick, Homiletic, 241.
[99]Ibid, 242. Buttrick uses 1 Cor. 1:10-30 as a model for authority. Authority is wisdom and power which is found in the cross. The message of the cross (void of historical content) brings faith to consciousness to a being-saved community.

hermeneutics leaving the audience without a word from God. Objective history is left behind and faith only comes on a symbolic level because the historical Jesus cannot be recovered.[100]

Although Buttrick infers that historical research is valid by using historical-critical methods for many of his examples,[101] he attacks "original meaning" and the application of such for today.[102] He distinguishes between "history" and "plot" noting that Scripture is "calculated plot."[103] This separates content from plot. He states that "structure of consciousness" is the constant for faith and not the "content of consciousness."[104]

At its simplest, Buttrick poses the hermeneutic question this way: "How can words written in an earlier age to a different people have anything to say to us today in a twentieth-century time and place?"[105] He criticizes the historical-critical method--as a

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[100]Larsen, Anatomy, 29.
[101]Buttrick, Homiletic, 220, uses an example to illustrate how historical language can be used to form in consciousness in the present-tense.
[102]Ibid, 259, 265-67. He states that scripture is to be understood by "story" and "symbol." As the being-saved-in-the-world community faces new situations in new ages, Christ too will be reinterpreted in ever-new ways. Our awareness of being-saved-in-the-world interprets revelation.
[103]Ibid, 285. His definition of history would exclude all documents that claim to be historical. All history involves a selection and ordering of events. No historical account details in fullness an exact accounting of time and space of what actually took place. Greidanus, Modern Preacher, 88 states: "The inspired biblical authors did not, of course, write their interpretations of events according to the standards of modern, Western exactitude. To require such precise accuracy and objectivity is to impose on the authors of the Bible the limitations and fallacies of nineteenth-century standards of history writing. If the term `organic inspiration' means anything at all, it is that God used the authors of Scripture in the framework of their own times."
[104]Ibid, 269.
[105]Ibid, 264.

model it "is simply not true."[106]

Edgar Krentz summarizes the historical-critical method and maintains it is the best alternative for interpreters.[107] "Historical criticism respects the historical gap and uses a method to determine as precisely as possible the significance of the words for the people then."[108] Next, he places this interpretation into our history so the impact of Christian ideas shine out.[109] He introduces this field of study by stating:

> The fundamental rule of biblical exegesis is that the interpreter must be obedient to the text itself; that is, he or she must allow the texts to determine their interpretation. . . . History and exegesis are by no means the same: history tries to reconstruct the past while exegesis attempts to unfold the meaning of texts.[110]

Richardson and Schweitzer summarize the steps of the historical-critical method as follow: (1) the determination of the text; (2) the literary form of the passage; (3) the historical situation, the Sitz im Leben; (4) the meaning which the words had for the original author and hearer or reader; (5) the understanding of the passage in the light of its total context and the background out of which it emerged.[111] These steps are necessary for all historical documents, not just the biblical ones.

The goals of the historian are: (1) to present a "corpus of ascertained fact" that answers the questions "What actually happened, and why?"[112] (2) to understand the

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[106]Ibid, 265.
[107]Edgar Krentz, The Historical-Critical Method (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975): 61, 87-88. See pp. 63-67 for the fruits of the historical-critical method. He recognizes that this method is not the only valid way to read a book. Literary Criticism also has value for a document does have ongoing life in the present, 71. See Long, Preaching, 11-22.
[108]Ibid, 61.
[109]Ibid.
[110]Ibid, v-vi.
[111]A. Richardson and W. Schweitzer, ed., Biblical Authority for Today (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951): 241-44.
[112]Krentz, Historical-Critical, 35.

events in order to interpret them.[113] The historian is handicapped by his sources and cannot know all there is to know. Sources lead to a selection of what can be known. This selection is guided by what questions are being asked.[114]

> Historical criticism serves the historian's need for valid, reliable evidence by enabling him to establish whether or not testimony actually was given by a competent and reliable witness. It is a method for collecting all possible witnesses to an era or event, evaluating what they say, relating the findings to one another in a coherent structure, and presenting the conclusion with the evidence.[115]

The historian cannot be deluded by thinking that he can see anything in its original frame of reference. The historian does not have the objectivity of the natural sciences. He must look through the lenses of his own age.[116] Therefore, he must follow rules (which is called criticism) subjecting evidence to questions. The goal is to hear the original sense of the witnesses to determine the meaning of the text had for its first hearers at the time of original composition (intended sense).[117] By using the techniques of textual criticism, philological studies, literary criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism and historical criticism, the dynamics that are at work in the production of the texts can be understood.[118]

Buttrick's association with Literary Criticism comes to view while discussing the

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[113]Ibid.
[114]Ibid, 37.
[115]Ibid, 41. For greater depth in the historical methods see, Marc Bloch, The Historian's Craft, trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Vintage Books, 1953). He defines the task on p. 23, "Modern scientific history is systematic knowledge of the past, its object is man's activities in time, space, and society, expressed in a coherent report. It deals with real events and real men (not abstractions), and the causes of their activities and their influence."
[116]Ibid, 42, 47.
[117]Ibid, 44.
[118]Ibid, 49-51. The interpreter must recognize his limitations. See Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" Existence and Faith, ed. Schubert Ogden (New York: Meridian Books, 1960): 291.

polyvalent meanings of words.[119] Words can either violate the author's intent or realize the author's intent beyond the author's own awareness. This will allow the interpreter to tap into new meanings for new and different audiences. The only limits are: "Is it true?" and "Is it helpful?"[120]

E. D. Hirsch gives the definition of autonomous language as: textual meaning which has nothing to do with the author's mind but only with his verbal achievement, that the object of interpretation is not the author but his text.[121] Using Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner as an example, Buttrick states:

> Can Coleridge's poem mean much more than Coleridge knew or intended? . . . Today we may read and find meanings which, clearly, could not have been in the poet's mind when he wrote. Is meaning locked into a particular time, place, and consciousness of composition, or may we extend so as to propose new meaning which may be `valid?'[122]

If the doctrine of semantic autonomy is true, then any reading of a text would be valid, since any reading would correspond to what the text "says" for that reader.[123] Original meaning and authorial intent set limits. If subjectivity is the only alternative, then original intent, as much as it is discernable, is the objective point of control.[124] Authors may change their view of their own text (the significance of that text for them), but the meaning they originally intended has not changed.[125] The proper control for all

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[119]Buttrick, Homiletic, 270-71.
[120]Ibid.
[121]E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Validity in Interpretation (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967): 224-35. Buttrick, Homiletic, 474, shows knowledge of Hirsch's work.
[122]Buttrick, Homiletic, 269-70.
[123]Hirsch, Validity, 10.
[124]Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible For All Its Worth: A Guide To Understanding the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books Zondervan Publishing House, 1982): 26.
[125]Hirsch, Validity, 8.

hermeneutics is found in the original intent.

Hirsch argues for the author as the primary standard in determining interpretation. If words do not reflect the

author's meaning, then whose?[126] The critic becomes the author of the meaning.[127] Meaning is an affair of consciousness, not words. Almost any word combination can represent more than one complex of meaning. Meaning derives either from somebody meaning something by it, or somebody understands something from it.[128] Hirsch demonstrates that validity of interpretation is found by saving the author and showing that the prevailing arguments against the author are questionable and vulnerable.[129]

Authors write to communicate ideas so what they mean will be accessible.[130] Buttrick claims there might be meaning in the writings that the author was unaware (authorial ignorance due to being unconscious of his meaning). Hirsch would respond: (1) there is a difference between knowledge of a man's meaning and knowledge of the subject area. (2) it would require authorial confirmation to be valid.[131] "What has been denied here is that linguistic signs can somehow speak their own meaning--a mystical idea that has never been persuasively defended."[132] Linguistic norms at the very least impose limitations on verbal meaning. "Verbal meaning is whatever someone has willed to convey by a particular sequence of linguistic signs and which can be conveyed (shared) by means of those linguistic signs."[133] The goal of interpretation, after

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[126]Ibid, 3.
[127]Ibid, 5.
[128]Ibid, 4.
[129]Ibid, 6, 13.
[130]Ibid, 18.
[131]Ibid, 20-21.
[132]Ibid, 23.
[133]Ibid, 29. Hirsch does allow unconscious meaning as long as it lies

considering all the evidence and the conclusions the evidence requires, is to increase the probability that this is what the author meant.[134] Then the interpreter can determine what it means for today.[135]

Buttrick himself limits the canon by excluding the Psalms and other hymnic material for preaching purposes. Larsen is correct by asserting Buttrick's need to alter his homiletic in some way to accommodate this valuable material.[136] Buttrick narrows this canon further by stating: "If there are passages which cannot be preached without launched expeditions into historical background or lengthy critical excursus, they may not belong in the homiletic `canon.'"[137] How many texts this would exclude is uncertain; however, the historical-critical interpreter would be rendered virtually textless.[138] Thomas Long identifies why Buttrick limits the text when he states:

> Do ideas really get formed in human consciousness in the way Buttrick claims they do? They can, I suppose, but surely not in every case. Buttrick wants every move to state the idea, to develop the idea, and then to restate the idea. Some of the best ideas I have . . . simply did not `happen' in my consciousness that way. What Buttrick has done is to produce an abstract schematic description of one way of thinking and to declare that process as normative for each section of a sermon. Less direct, more poetic ways of coming to understanding get washed

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within the boundary that determines the particular verbal meaning that is being considered, 51, 220-21. See also his concept of "horizon" which defines in principle the norms and limits which bound meaning represented by the text, 223.

[134]Ibid, 207.

[135]Ibid, 209.

[136]Larsen, Anatomy, 152.

[137]Buttrick, "Interpretation," 55.

[138]Buttrick's own solution in Homiletic, 220 may give an escape for the historical interpreter. "Almost always, blocks of past-tense language can be avoided. The trick is to remember that past events are present in consciousness. A language that relates to consciousness will lead to work with present-tense." Past-tense description can almost always be brought into present consciousness. Buttrick's example here is excellent.

away.[139]

The text is not limited to only one way forming ideas in consciousness. The text uses a variety of forms that may or may not fit Buttrick's model.

Buttrick's Methodology Applied to Parables

When dealing with parables, Buttrick again contends that the traditional (rational) homiletic of the past falters. "Point-making," "situational" sermons, and "conversational" sermons miss the power of the original "language event."[140] Parables have structured plots which produce a movement in consciousness enabling transformation of conviction.[141] To reduce the parables to a single "point" turns them into static propositional truths, frustrating their intentional force.[142]

Buttrick describes his methodology as applied to parables as follows:[143]

> What parables may do is to let us enter them on our terms, to find at the outset our own rather stock understandings of self, world, and God; then, suddenly, to disrupt our world so that in the end we find ourselves translated into a mysterious new world, dimly grasped, forced to change--to rethink our lives before The Mystery.[144] Add it up: Traditional "Enlightenment" homiletics cannot cope with parables. If, as many scholars suppose, parables are in some sense prototypical words of Jesus, then Christ's own preaching judges our homiletic procedures

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[139]Thomas Long, The Witness of Preaching (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989): 104. Long goes on to state that not all sermons should be a string of ideas. "There are ideas involved to be sure, many of them, but these ideas are so woven into the fabric of memory and experience, grief and hope, that they cannot be sorted out and should not be reduced to a single concept."

[140]Buttrick, "Preaching a Parable," 18.

[141]Ibid, 17.

[142]Ibid.

[143]Ibid, 21, Buttrick states that if it is possible for parables to be plotted, then this method is available to other kinds of biblical rhetoric. All biblical language travels intentionally by different kinds of logic, therefore, by designing different kinds of sermons with variable homiletic strategies the preacher can fulfill different intentions.

[144]Ibid, 17.

inadequate. Somehow or other, we must search out a new way to speak.[145] Contrary to the usual understanding of parables, many reflect uncommon practices of everyday life and odd details. "While not every parable contains a surreal detail, a touch of the bizarre, a breach of reality, a `verfremdungeffect' (`alienation effect'), many, many do."[146] The unanticipated intrusion of the surreal threatens our typical world and dissolves our conventional wisdom.[147] Here Buttrick's existential bent becomes overtly apparent.

Parables are then to be interpreted as a "paradox of analogy and anti-analogy."[148] Thereby our world is judged by "The Mystery" thus shattering our world.[149] "Preachers who themselves may lust for clear propositional truths must offer none when preaching parables."[150] Instead, the preacher must allow the intentional language of the "present tense" power of the parable to form in consciousness in order to give rise to new levels of meaning.[151]

Buttrick explains that texts are "plotted." This enables him to follow his theological posture by abandoning the historical understanding of the text.

> Thus, preaching could be liberated from an over-zealous biblical historicism and begin to pay attention to "plots," trying to get at the hermeneutic consciousness that once upon a time conceived them . . . . "Plots" in their particular sequential logic were acts of interpretation, and that pericopes could be replotted freely into sermons for a more modern age without losing track of the Gospel.[152]

The preacher needs to give up the idea of original meaning so the "present-tense" power

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[145]Ibid, 18.
[146]Ibid, 17.
[147]Ibid.
[148]Ibid, 21.
[149]Ibid.
[150]Ibid.
[151]Ibid. See also Buttrick, Homiletic, 351-54.
[152]Buttrick, "Preaching a Parable," 19.

of the parable can speak.[153]

The intentional language of parables leads to a "second stage" christology, celebrating the Risen Christ.[154] Since this is the hermeneutic that transmitted the parables to the church, life comes again to these historically worn stories. Parables live in the consciousness of a Risen Christ who reigns over his Kingdom now.[155]

Buttrick's method offers great potential for preachers today to reach their audiences with a relevant life changing message from God.[156] "Buttrick compels us to think long and hard about what is happening inside the heads of listeners as we preach."[157] However, his own view of Scripture and the parables in particular, strip the words of Jesus of their divine authority. Who is Jesus if there is no certifiable historical content concerning his life and teachings? The authority of the language event is found only in the Lordship of Jesus who is both incarnate and glorified.

Conclusion

Buttrick's methodology is found to be challenging. If he is right about the nature of language and how it forms in human consciousness, then all preachers need to evaluate their homiletic. Many traditional practices will be abandoned. Most preachers, however, do not have the educational background necessary to implement many of his strategies.

Although his theological presuppositions about the nature of Scripture are rightly criticized, It is doubtful that they diminish his valuable contribution concerning language

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[153]Ibid, 21.
[154]See also Buttrick, Preaching Jesus Christ, 69-80.
[155]Buttrick, "Preaching a Parable," 21.
[156]See Buttrick's example of a sermon on a parable in, Homiletic, 158-63. This sermon could be preached in most congregations in America.
[157]Long, Witness, 103.

function. Those who caution against Buttrick's homiletic do so on the two fronts: (1) his hermeneutic gives rise to faulty handling of the text. This has been the primary criticism of this paper. (2) He fails to give documentation for his assertions concerning the nature of language.[158] Although some have expressed doubt based on their own philological views, no one in the homiletical field to date has critiqued Buttrick openly by producing evidence contrary to his theories about how language functions. Further research needs to be done to verify these assertions. Any theological persuasion should be able to apply these strategies with the same results. Larsen is wrong by using Buttrick's examples as the proof of the homiletic. Even his sermon on the resurrection could be preached in most congregations.[159] Almost all of Buttrick's theories concerning language (not his hermeneutic) can be applied to the preacher's homiletic methods.

It is the aim of this project to test Buttrick's methodology. If his theories of how language functions are valid, then one should be able to implement his methods so that the results he describes occur in congregational consciousness. The next chapter will discuss a genre of literature, parables, that should prove to be an acceptable starting point. Due to the extensive amount of parable research and the application of that research in preaching, this genre will provide a serviceable medium to assess Buttrick's methods.

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[158]The decision to exclude the documentation was made by Fortress Press and not David Buttrick according to John A. Melloh, review of Homiletic: Moves and Structures, by David Buttrick, in Worship 62 (May 1988): 267.

[159]One sermon is not a criterion for judging the impact of the new hermeneutic on congregational faith. The key question is: What is the long-term impact on faith for a congregation that only hears sermons void of historical content?

CHAPTER III

PARABLES AS MATERIAL FOR INDUCTIVE PREACHING

Critical testing of David Buttrick's methodology must begin somewhere. The parables of Matthew 13 provide an assortment of variety within the genre of parable and will serve here as a suitable starting point. Buttrick has much to say about this genre, consequently, applying his methods to parables will be guided by a breadth of his own writing. Since others have also written extensively on the parables, not far removed from Buttrick's own thinking, the chasm between theory and practice will not prove too great.

Parables have held a special place in the hearts of preachers. Even a brief examination historically of sermons will uncover the love of parables by preachers and the use of the deductive method as the sermon structure of choice. However, explanation is not the standard procedure used by Jesus when telling parables. The Church through the centuries has explained the parables to the point of eliminating both the form and function of the genre. This one-sided emphasis demands a re-evaluation and consequently a restoration of the genre of parable in our pulpits.

Through the centuries men have buried the parables under years of diverse interpretations.[160] The Church Fathers followed the allegorical method championed by

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[160]There are many excellent works which summarize the history of parable research. E. C. Blackman, "New Methods of Parable Interpretation," Canadian Journal of Theology 15 (January 1969): 3-13. Wilfrid J. Harrington, "The Parables in Recent Study (1960-1971)" Biblical Theology Bulletin 72 (October 1972): 219-41. Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Major Trends in Parable Interpretation" Concordia Theological Monthly 42 (October 1971): 579-96; and "The Parables of Jesus In Current Research" Dialog 11 (Spring 1972): 101-7. Norman Perrin, "The Parables of Jesus as Parables, as Metaphors, and as Aesthetic Objects: A Review Article," The Journal of Religion 47 (October 1967): 340-46. Robert H. Stein, "The Parables of Jesus in

Origen.[161] During the Reformation years, Luther and Calvin rejected the allegorical methodology opting for only a literal level.[162] Yet allegory was still the method of choice among scholars. Not until Adolf Jülicher, however, did the one level approach dominate. Jülicher believed a parable was only a single metaphor with only one point of reference and the details of a parable should not be pressed for meaning for they add only local coloring and background.[163]

C. H. Dodd sought to place the parables of Jesus into their original setting. He introduced the concept of "weapons of warfare" in which Jesus sought to defend himself and attack his audiences' prejudices.[164] This often entailed changing the setting and audience as given by the Evangelist. Trying to reconstruct the third Sitz im Leben is both problematic and hypothetical.[165]

Recent Study," Word & World 5 (Summer 1985): 248-57. Especially note Warren S. Kissenger, Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1979).

[161]Origen On First Principles 4.1.11-12; 4.2.4, 8, introduced the three-fold method of interpretation taken from I Thess. 5:23 which sees the "body" of a text as the literal meaning, the "soul" of the text as the moral meaning and the "spirit" of the text as the spiritual meaning. It is this third category which gave rise to the allegorical method. This continued throughout the Middle Ages with the addition of a fourth level of interpretation called the "heavenly level."

[162]Stein, Introduction, 49.

[163]Stein, "Recent," 249, points out the shortcomings of Jülicher. G. B. Caird, The Language and Imagery of the Bible (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), 160-65, has done an excellent job defining the terms allegory and parable, showing that they are not mutually exclusive terms. He critiques Jülicher, demonstrating six short-comings. Jülicher was mistaken when he limited the parable to only one point of comparison (which usually coincided with his own theological bent). Caird, Language, 165, successfully demonstrates that allegory is not equal to allegorizing.

[164]C. H. Dodd, The Parables of the Kingdom, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1961), 32.

[165]Stein, "Recent," 251.

Jeremias relied heavily upon the work of Dodd and set the standard in Form Criticism for parable study. He focuses on what he considers to be later editorial emendations to the text believing the Early Church adapted the parables, arrested them from their original contexts, and used them for their own purposes.[166]

These form critical approaches have duplicated Jülicher's mistake by reducing the parable to either a moral point or eschatological point.[167] Parables are more dynamic and demanding than mere propositions.[168] When you reduce the parable to proposition then you have lost both the form and the power of the parable. Wilder argues that the relationship between the form and content of a parable is inseparable. He condemns the methods which state that the message can stand independent of the form.[169] Via sees the one point approach as destroying the aesthetic nature of the parable along with its function and effect.[170]

The methods of the Form Critics depends on their own hypothetical

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[166]Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, trans. S. H. Hooke (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), 18. Jeremias gives ten examples of how the early church adapted the parables: (1) Translating them from Aramaic to Greek. (2) Representational changes. (3) Embellishments. (4) Influence of the Old Testament and of folk-story themes. (5) Change of audience. (6) Hortatory use. (7) Influence of the church's historical context. (8) Allegorizing. (9) Through the collection and fusion process. (10) By changing the setting. Craig L. Blomberg, Interpreting the Parables (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990): 79-94, critiques nine of these proposals citing their limitations.

[167]Archibald M. Hunter, The Parables Then and Now (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 148. See also Blomberg, Interpreting, 34.

[168]Charles E. Carlston, "Changing Fashions in Interpreting the Parables," Andover Newton Quarterly 14 (March 1974), 227.

[169]Stein, "Recent," 253.

[170]Dan Otto Via, The Parables, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 90, 92.

reconstructions. This is why different scholars find different "one point" points.[171] When you reduce the parable to its one propositional point, the application then is made with reduced didactic language and the parable form is expendable.[172] The organic unity of the parable with each part contributing to the nature of its point is lost.[173]

Jesus' audience was a diverse group. The correlation of a single audience to a single idea is not valid. The one idea approach truncates the parable even for those who originally heard it.[174] This reduction of the parable to one propositional truth continues in today's pulpit watering down the genre's power.[175]

The "New Hermeneutic" has also affected parable research.[176] Ernst Fuchs emphasized Jesus' understanding of human existence, an existential interpretation of the text.[177] There is necessary involvement of the author in the text he has created, giving power to the text itself. This new word of Jesus then confronts the hearer with what it

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[171]Ibid., 3.
[172]Robert W. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic, and The Word of God (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), 135.
[173]Ibid, 147.
[174]Ibid, 149.
[175]This is seen in Eta Linnemann, Jesus of the Parables, trans. John Sturdy (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1966), 24, when she states that the "picture-part" of a parable and the "reality-part" should not be mixed. To make points from the "picture-part" is to assume too much. The "reality-part" consists of only one point and contains the purpose and intent of Jesus. Kenneth Ewing Bailey, Poet and Peasant, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), 40, also states this with the term "single response" of the hearer.

Blomberg, Interpreting, 138-44, brings a proper balance to the discussion by noting the value of both the metaphorical and the propositional use of language.
[176]The classical classification of stylistic laws that govern popular narrative are summarized in Linnemann, Jesus, 12-16, citing Rudolph Bultmann, History of the Synoptic Tradition (Oxford, 1963).
[177]Jack Dean Kingsbury, "Ernst Fuchs' Existentialist Interpretation of the Parables," Lutheran Quarterly 22 (November 1970): 382.

truly means to be human.[178]

This approach gave rise to Structural Analysis (the study of the deep structures of meaning below the surface of the narrative and the patterns that operate unconsciously in the author's mind) and the Aesthetic Critical Perspective (artistic similes and metaphors which become language events).[179] It is the second of these that concerns this present study. Although Dodd does not represent this school of thought, he does introduce the seed thought when he states:

> The parables, however, have an imaginative and poetical quality. They are works of art, and any serious work of art has significance beyond its original occasion. No pedantry of exegesis could ever prevent those who have "ears to hear," as Jesus said, from finding that the parables "speak to their condition." Their teaching may be fruitfully applied and reapplied to all sorts of new situations which were never contemplated at the time when they were spoken. But just understanding of their original import in relation to a particular situation in the past will put us on right lines in applying them to our new situation.[180]

Via believes the parables are self-standing creations of art possessing a beauty and power in and of themselves, independent of their author and having a life of their own. Because of the autonomous nature of the parables, the intent of the author is neither necessary or desirable.[181] The original author may not have known the full implications

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[178]Norman Perrin, "The Modern Interpretation of the Parables of Jesus and the Problem of Hermeneutics," Interpretation 25 (April 1971): 144.

[179]Robert H. Alberts, "Perspectives on the Parables, Glimpses of the Kingdom of God," Word & World 4 (Summer 1984): 439.

[180]Dodd, Parables, 195. Aesthetic Criticism is seen in the works of Wilder, Early, and Funk, Language. Norman Perrin, Jesus and the Language of the Kingdom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980). John Dominic Crossan, In Parables (New York: Harper & Row, 1973). Representing Aesthetic Criticism in its extreme form is Via, Parables. These men each follow their own blend of Literary Criticism and Redaction Criticism with Via rejecting all historical studies. As a precursor to these men see Geraint Vaughan Jones, The Art and Truth of the Parables (London: SPCK, 1964).

[181]Via, Parables, 77. The term autonomous used in this context means: Parables have no point of reference with the author or setting. Since

of his work due to the nature of language. The text may contain meanings of which the author was not aware.[182] Therefore, form can be lifted and transposed into images of our perennial human experience. This existential interpretation seeks the patterns of human behavior, the paradigms of existence and the picture of God's relation to man. These truths have timeless significance and applications beyond the historical reference.[183] This literary approach allows the parables to make their own impact upon the hearer in every new culture apart from the author's original intent.[184] According to the new literary critical view, language is subject to historical change and may be different in various situations.[185] It is difficult, therefore, to specify once and for all what parables mean.[186] The metaphor is creative of meaning and the bearer of that very reality to which it refers. It is a language event not because it is a parable of Jesus but simply because it is a parable.[187] The language event is different for different people because of its polyvalent nature. It engages the hearers and compels them to participate in an existential ex-perience. This open ended nature of the extended metaphor is the reality that encounters the hearer bringing him to the place of decision.[188]

This does bring the reader back to the present form of the text without the reconstructions of the Form and Redaction Critics. However, the original level of

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they stand independent, it is the internal meaning that has significance.

[182]Ibid, 32.

[183]Perrin, Jesus, 163.

[184]Stein, "Recent," 253.

[185]Perrin, Jesus, 163.

[186]Funk, Language, 135.

[187]Robert H. Stein, An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981), 66.

[188]Ibid, 67. See Via in Parables, 72-74 for a complete description of the aesthetic nature of the parable.

meaning intended by the author is necessary to understand the metaphorical level.

> It may make little difference whether a particular poet is Marxist, a Fascist, or even a non-political aesthete. It does matter that the parables of the New Testament have a context in the Christian faith.[189]

We have a cultural bridge to cross. Jesus gave the parables to a particular people in a given cultural setting living in a specific time in history. Parables did not exist for their own sake like fairy-tales, riddles, or songs, but were composed to serve a particular purpose.[190] The language event is first a historic event that cannot be stripped of its context as an eternal truth. The historical form is not accidental and neither is the setting coincidental.[191] "What is meant" must be the first step before "what it means." Exegesis comes before hermeneutics. Without this, the language event only becomes a creation of the exegete.[192] Jesus' statement, "He who has ears" is not equal to, "Let anyone find whatever meaning is contained in this literary form." Nor is it, "Let the hearers be interpreted by this metaphor as they will." Jesus explained in Mk. 4:33-34 that he had a meaning in mind.[193]

The avoidance of the historical context opens the doors for a host of interpretations.[194] The historical setting places boundaries and gives direction for crossing that cultural bridge. A fusion of these two methodologies is needed so the

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[189]Carlston, "Changing," 232.
[190]Linnemann, Jesus, 8.
[191]Ibid, 33.
[192]Bailey, Poet, 29. Linnemann, Jesus, 34, states that without the historical background the hermeneute will only yield theological utterances or moral demands that may or may not be equal to the original meaning. The modern setting will often interfere and prejudice by clouding the true meaning of the text.
[193]Stein, Introduction, 68. Wilder, in Early, 93, states, "We must go all the way in this matter of context and see them in Jesus' own situation. Then their real authority and power emerge." Jesus' faith and vision give power to the parable.
[194]Stein, Introduction, 69.

parable can impact the hearer as a Word from God. Today's preacher needs the historic, aesthetic and the existential understanding of the text. Any of these left to themselves will lead to a faulty interpretation in one direction or the other.

Definition of Parable: Then and Now

For a complete understanding of parable the term mashal must be examined.[195] By following the definition of mashal it is seen that the parables of Jesus are flexible and cover a large range of forms.[196] The mashal has a poetical nature that calls the hearer to an understanding that is different from the explicit rhetoric. This is often done by holes in the narrative which leave the hearer with unanswered questions.[197] The impact of the mashal is seen in its capacity to combine brevity of form that often leads to two possible paradoxical interpretations by the describing of the complex and often ambiguous and contradictory nature of human reality.[198]

Dodd gives an excellent definition for parable:

> At its simplest, the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.[199]

Many parables are normal concerning their expectations (e.g., good servants are rewarded and bad servants are punished). Each can know and expect such orderly

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[195]For a complete discussion of "mashal" see Wilder, Early, 72, and David Stern "The Rabbinic Parable: From Rhetoric to Poetics," Society of Biblical Literature 1986 Seminar Papers, 631-43. The definition for "mashal" meets the purpose of the paper for it is the variety of forms that need imitating in the pulpit. The example in Mt. 20 (discussed below) is a definite narrative parable.
[196]Wilder, Early, 72.
[197]Stern, "Rabbinic," 642-43.
[198]Ibid.
[199]Dodd, Parables, 16.

outcomes.[200] The normalcy of some parables, however, is not apparent and even contradicted. There is a reversal that takes place. The Vineyard Parable is the clearest example.[201] Jesus was perceived by the multitudes to speak as one having authority, not because they saw him as divine, but because of the impact of his words.[202] He appealed to their family backgrounds, vocations or present situations by weaving homespun tales of intrinsic interest. In so doing He could communicate in a vivid fashion on multiple levels of meaning.[203] The parables are effective tools to bring about behavioral change on multiple levels.[204]

The parable uses a variety of techniques in various combinations. Recurrent plot-patterns, reversal, rhetorical hyperbole, rhythm, assonance, chiasmas, parallelism, inversion and parabolic ballad are some of these techniques.[205] Narrative parables usually exhibit common characteristics: (1) There are three principle characters. (2) There is evidence that it is carefully composed. (3) There is the use of simple vocabulary often in direct discourse leading to a concise plot. (4) There is little embellishment to the story lines or characters.[206] Parables follow the pattern of: opening, development, and crisis-

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[200]John Dominic Crossan, "The Servant Parables of Jesus," Society of Biblical Literature 1973 Seminar Papers, 2:98.
[201]Ibid, 99.
[202]Linnemann, Jesus, 34.
[203]Vance L. Shepperson, "Paradox, Parables, and Change: One Approach to Christian Hypnotherapy." Journal of Psychology and Theology 9 (Spring 1981): 7.
[204]Ibid.
[205]Amos N. Wilder, Jesus' Parables and the War of Myths, ed. James Breech (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 93. Bailey, Peasant, 44. Bailey also gives seven steps needed to identify structure within parabolic narratives on p. 74.
[206]Robert W. Funk, "The Narrative Parables: The Birth of a Language Tradition," in God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honour of Nils Alstrup Dahl, ed. Jacob Jerrell and Wayne A. Meeks (Oslo: Universtetsforlaget, 1977), 43-44.

denouement. The development and crisis-denouement are marked, as a rule, by temporal sequence phrases.[207] This everyday picture asks, "What is wrong with this picture?" The shock of turning the everyday upside down is done by intensification, hyperbole and paradox.[208]

Existential Possibilities for Preaching[209]

A parable is not merely a sign or an example illustrating meaning but is a bearer of the very reality contained in it. It grasps the listener. The listener not only interprets the parable, the parable also interprets him or her. It urges the hearer to respond. The parable itself (not just the meaning) enacts the language event.[210] The parable triggers the will and the affections as well as the reason thus provoking response.[211] The surprising element woven into a realistic narrative suggests that the divine dimension crosses everyday reality to produce a crisis of ultimate importance in the midst of the ordinary. Our existence depends on whether we will accept the divine element.[212] The impact of a

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[207]Ibid.
[208]Funk, Language, 158, 161.
[209]Kingsbury, "Current Research," gives a review of the positive value of the existential approach. He also shows some criticisms on p. 107. The most relevant criticism to this discussion is the separating of the parable from the historical context, thus making it a free-floating aesthetic object.
[210]Stein, Parables, 254. Wilder, Early, 71, quotes Gerhard Ebling on this point. "The art of the parable . . . is none other than that of bringing the hearer face to face with what it is to be human and thereby to make clear what it means for God to draw near."
[211]Robert W. Funk, "Phenomenology of Language and the New Testament," The Journal of Bible and Religion 34 (July 1966): 206. Eduard Schweizer, "Preaching on the Parables," Biblical Preaching: An Expositor's Treasury, ed. James W. Cox (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 358, states: "The hearer must experience on the conscious and the subconscious level."
[212]Via, Parables, 154-55.

parable is much like a well crafted joke. The punch line hidden in the sleeve suddenly pops out and cannot be anticipated. It is not business as usual. There is either momentary or permanent disorientation caused by that element that has jabbed through the pretensions of the audience.[213] This reversal causes the logic of the everyday to be broken by the logic of the parable. This opens the door for a radically new reality.[214] The hearer not only is informed about reality but also participates in it. Jesus has involved the listener in His own inner faith.[215] The parable is not finished until the listener is drawn into it as an active participant either implicitly or explicitly making judgments about the matter at hand.[216] A parable goes deep into man's psychological patterns rooted deep in his subconscious.[217]

Jesus' words often bridged over deep opposition. He started with "that's how it

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[213]William G. Doty, "The Parables of Jesus, Kafka, Borges, and Others, with Structural Observations," Society of Biblical Literature 1973 Seminar Papers, 2:133.
[214]Ibid, 132.
[215]Wilder, Early, 84-85. This is what Linnemann, in Jesus, calls "interlocking." There is a representation of the listener's point of view. Then the claim of the narrator is made. These "interlock" creating the possibility of a new understanding, a change of existence, a new life.
[216]Funk, Language, 133.
[217]Wilder, Parables, 94. Shepperson in "Paradox," and Paul Deschenes and Martha L. Rogers in "A Systems View of Jesus Christ as Change Agent," Journal of Psychology and Theology 9 (Summer 1981): 128-35, have done an excellent job describing how Jesus has used indirect communication strategies (e.g., reframing, reordering, reshaping the question) to effect change. He encounters people on the earthly level (first order) to effect them on a heavenly level (second order). Once a person makes the conceptual shift, he will receive the message of Jesus with joy. The Pharisees resisted because they felt they were already at the second level. Shepperson, 134, goes on to say: "Change agents need to emulate Christ in their dealings with people. Christ is the ultimate change agent and left us 2000 years ago a clear example as to how change is possible."

is." The movement away from the normal is often quite subtle. Finally the "that's how it is" is shattered by the parable. Many received this with joy opening the door from this world to the other world. Yet the Pharisees responded, "that's not how it is."[218] There are two possible responses: "Crucify him, this man is blaspheming God." Or, "Truly this is the Son of God."[219]

The parable demands a decision. The hearer will be affected to the core and cannot remain the same because of his acceptance or rejection.[220] Crossan states:

> The parables of Jesus are not historical allegories telling how God acts with mankind; neither are they moral example stories telling us how to act before God and towards one another. They are stories which shatter the deep structure of our accepted world. . . . They make us vulnerable to God. It is only in such experiences that God can touch us, and only in such moments does the kingdom of God arrive. My own term for this relationship is transcendence.[221]

It is necessary to gain intellectual insight into the New Testament events as they happened in the past in order to justify one's faith with full knowledge of the facts. It is also necessary to bring the parables to bear on one's life today.[222] The parable then engages the individual existentially at an intuitive level bringing the hearer into an experience of the Kingdom itself.[223]

Good preaching has communicated the proper exegesis of parables for thousands of years by thousands of preachers. There is endless data that has been tediously and competently gathered by scholars. Yet much of this information, as it leaves the pulpit,

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[218]Funk, "Phenomenology," 205.
[219]Linnemann, Jesus, 41.
[220]Jan Lambrecht, Once More Astonished (New York: Crossroads Publishing Company, 1983), 4.
[221]John Dominic Crossan, The Dark Interval: Towards A Theology of Story (Niles, IL: Argus Communications, 1975), 121-22. Crossan overstates his case neglecting the multi-faceted nature of parables.
[222]Lambrecht, Astonished, 17.
[223]Alberts, "Perspectives," 440.

rarely affects the lives of those in the pew. Much of this exegesis would better serve the church by remaining in the notebook.[224] The preacher must fuse together scholarly integrity, New Testament truth and the existential concern so the message Jesus intended for the original audience can be a message communicated today. Most scholarship (imitated in the pulpit) reduces the parable to a proposition. This divorces the poetic form from the message and causes the dynamic to be lost. Parabolic preaching must break the traditional chains which systematic theology has placed around these homilectical ideas.[225]

When a parable is interpreted by propositions the impact will be softened and the function will not be the same. It is like explaining a joke. The beauty of "how it works" is that "you get it." The listener is hooked.[226] The original hearers had an immediate identification with the points of reference that caused them to catch the point--or be caught by it. The task today is to recapture the punch of the parables by finding similar points of reference in the modern setting.[227]

In preaching, the parable must be permitted to be parable, allowing the metaphor to disturb the pew so new life can be found. Jesus used this form as a vehicle to carry a life changing message. He used parable for more than pedagogical strategy. He used parable not merely to hold attention or because He needed a good illustration. The nature of the rhetorical form itself evoked the nature of the Gospel by revealing the mysteries of life, demonstrating spiritual realities, and mediating His own faith.[228]

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[224]Mark Thomsen, "A Parabolic Theology for Preaching," Dialog 19 (Summer 1980): 201.
[225]Ibid, 202-3.
[226]Fee and Stuart, How to, 126.
[227]Ibid.
[228]Wilder, Parables, 71.

The problem arises because the parables are set in a different cultural background. Therefore, the past has explained the parables propositionally so the atypical nature (the surprise, the punch-line, the impact) is not felt. The analytical approach has robbed the parable of the very substance that makes it effective. In preaching, the audience needs that element restored.[229]

Secondly, the language of the 20th century has changed. The allusions (points of reference) no longer reach by themselves to today. Although the parables of Jesus have been passed down, the language event has not. The pulpit must find a way to repeat the same language event. The parable should once again puzzle, provoke and surprise so decision will occur. This is the task of exposition. Historically, how did the language event affect the original hearers? What were the points of reference that touched their lives? Imitate that event through Christian preaching. When the Word of God comes alive, the change of existence is possible for man. He moves from unbelief to faith.[230]

How can the modern preacher create the same awareness of a direct and personal message of Jesus' original parable? Jesus accomplished this task by allowing the audience to overhear His story. There was recognition that the story was about someone else and not directly addressed to him so he listens. Once inside the story, the door closes. The door closes not by direct application, but by identification.[231] The point of entry into the story is crucial. One must enter through the right angle. With whom did the original audience identify? This is the intended perspective. As the original audience

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[229]Norman A. Huffman, "Atypical Features in the Parables of Jesus," Journal of Biblical Literature 97 (1978): 220.
[230]Linnemann, Jesus, 33.
[231]Greidanus, Modern, 176.

heard, so must we hear.[232] The sinners, the disciples and the enemies all heard different points due to the different personal contexts in which they encountered Jesus. What are the personal contexts of today's audience?

The sermon today will often imitate the wide variety of biblical forms so people will respond.[233] The vehicle (the genre, the form) is important. One would much rather drive a Mercedes than a Yugo. Yet the man of the twenty-fifth century might not realize the difference. Once the difference is explained the opportunity to strike is over. The pulpit needs to imitate the form of parable so the effect is not lost in translation. A dynamic equivalent for today is needed to bridge the cultural barrier so the original dynamic is felt.

Should a new contemporary parable be created in the image of the old? It is wiser to stay with the original at some point during the sermon even if explanation is needed. Jesus spoke with authority because of his life, death and resurrection. Today, the preacher can only witness to that authority.[234] Yet there is great latitude to the homiletical craft that gives ample opportunity to seek a dynamic equivalent. Properly understood, parables will be as demanding, threatening, rebuking, encouraging and promising today as they were then.[235]

An Example: Matthew 20:1-16

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[232]Ibid, 179.
[233]Thomsen, "Parabolic," 201.
[234]Schweizer, "Preaching," 252.
[235]One final thought about preaching parables. There is an urgent need today to respect the silence of parables. What is the intentional silence? Is the silence coincidental? Is the silence significant? If exposition leads to making points that come from silence, then the preacher needs to revise his exegetical methodology.

The first step with any parable is to ask two questions relating to theme and plot. Plot: How will this turn out? This is the discovery of the development of the story. Theme: What is the point? This is the point that Jesus intended and how it impacted the first audience.

Next, the background of the parable needs to be investigated.[236] Dodd and Jeremias redirect the parable to a different audience. They believe the parable was originally addressed by Jesus to the Pharisees.[237] Therefore the parable is addressing the theme of Jesus' acceptance of sinners and the opposition He felt because of this. This assumption is not provable. This approach states that the Early Church as reflected in Matthew related this parable to Peter's question so it would be applicable to the Church of his day. The original audience can be discovered by seeing the context as given by Mark and compared to Luke. Jeremias desires to remove the influence of the Church (i.e., Matthew).[238] This is creating a context where the exegete decides where the story best fits as

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[236]For Mt. 20:1-16 these studies need to be consulted: J. D. M. Derrett, "Workers in the Vineyard: A Parable of Jesus," Journal of Jewish Studies 25 (February 1974): 64-91. Derrett shows how typical and atypical this parable is in light of the Jewish background. He also gives very good Talmudic studies. He finds a rational explanation for all that took place as coinciding with common practice. Philip Culbertson, "Reclaiming The Matthean Vineyard Parables," Encounter 49 (Autumn 1988): 257-83. Culbertson explains the background of the concept of work as known by the Romans, Egyptians, Greeks and the Jewish sources of the Talmud.

[237]R. E. Brown, "Parables of Jesus," in New Catholic Encyclopedia, ed. William J. McDonald (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 10:987.

[238]Jeremias, Parables, 29-31. Although conservative preachers shy away from Redaction Criticism, they often preach this same point allowing the assumed theme to determine deductive points. This is done by lifting the parable out of its context given by Matthew on a less supportable assumption than the Redaction Critics.

opposed to Matthew's opinion.[239] Via also rips the parable out of context to maintain the autonomy of the art form.[240] Via then concludes that it is an attack on any legalistic-merit system found in any age.[241]

In the context of the passage, this parable follows on the heels of the question of Peter in Mt. 19:27. The disciples were expecting something special because they were the ones who were following Jesus first. They wanted reward for their sacrifices. Matthew also follows the parable with the request of James and John's mother in Mt. 20:20-28. This does not exclude Pharisees or the crowds in the audience for the rich young man is mentioned in Mt. 19:16 and little children in Mt. 19:13.

This section of Mt. 19:1-30 and 20:17-34 does parallel Mk. 10:1-52. Matthew inserts this parable at Mk. 10:31 (Mt. 19:30) and concludes with the repetition of the saying in Mt. 20:16 only now in the reverse order.[242] Matthew, therefore, makes a unique point concerning the Twelve.[243]

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[239]This is seen in Dodd, Parables, 95. This is done in spite of his own warning against it in his introduction, 15.
[240]Via, Parables, 149-51.
[241]Ibid, 148. Another interpretation that has no basis from the text concerns the proper labor-management relations in the Christian context. There are no moral judgments about the wage agreed to for a day's work or the idleness of the last hired. Diedrick A. Nelson, "Matthew 20:1-16," Interpretation 29 (July 1975): 283. This is similar to Jülicher's moralizing approach.

An interpretation that does deal with the context as given by Matthew states that the first readers were the Jewish Christians who felt they should be first based on the teachings of Paul found in Eph. 1:12 and Rom. 1:17. Matthew is saying that race, social status, bank account nor membership in any religious group counts for anything in the Kingdom. All are in the Kingdom by miracle alone. John G. Strelan, "Sermon Study: Matthew 20:1-16," Lutheran Theological Journal 20 (May 1986): 21.
[242]Fee, How To, 114.
[243]There are ten kingdom parables in Matthew that use the introductory formula "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ." This is

The value of literary criticism is seen in Robert Funk's work which is summarized here.[244] The parable is introduced with a temporal sequence phrase "a landowner who went out early in the morning." What follows in vv. 1-7 is the opening and the development. Then in v. 8 the temporal sequence phrase is repeated "When evening came" to introduce the crisis-denouement.[245]

In Act I (vv. 1-7) there are five scenes where the repeated phrases show the development. When the phrase order differs, it invites renewed attention and shows significant development of the story has taken place.

Scene i:

a. Went out to hire.
b. Agree for a denarius a day.
c. He sent them into the vineyard.

Scene ii:

a. Went out to hire.
c. He sent them into the vineyard.
b. Agreed to pay what was right.

Scene iii: and Scene iv:

He did the same.

Scene v.

a. Expanded.
b. Omitted.
c. Repeated.[246]

In Act II there are verbal relationships with Act I. Here are five relationships with the Act I term given first: dikion--adiko, denarius--denarius, hupagete--hupage,

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better understood as "The kingdom of heaven is like the case of . . ." The object of comparison is the whole situation. Brown, New Catholic, 287.

[244]Funk, "The Narrative," 43-50.

[245]Ibid, 45. The switch between Mt. 20:1 "landowner" and 20:8 "owner" Funk sees as a common feature with little significance. Yet the absence of the term when he is addressed by the full-day workers shows the intensity of their dismay.

[246]Ibid, 46.

apodidomi--didomi, protoi--eschatoi.[247] The assonance and euphony of this parable are common in Greek rhetoric.[248]

Crossan demonstrates the chiasm of the parable as follows:

20:1	20:8
20:2 (first)	20:9 (last)
20:3-4	
20:5	
20:6-7 (last)	20:10-13 (first)[249]

The landowner's actions are not explained in order to keep the listeners listening. The fairness of this man is recognized by the audience.[250] He states that he will pay whatever is right to the second group. Most would think this means a fair fraction of the original amount. Hiring the last workers for one hour is not common practice. He hires them based on their plight rather than their usefulness. The scenes between the first group and the last are needed so the story would not seem improbable. This leads the audience along by degrees until the crisis-denouement.[251] The tension between the full-day workers and the landowner develops even before it is explicitly stated.[252] At first there would be wonder in v. 9 at the payment of a denarius to the last workers by the audience.[253] The first workers must have felt a sense of joyous anticipation. That feeling

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[247]Ibid, 47.
[248]Ibid, 48-49 give several examples of assonance and euphony in Greek literature.
[249]Crossan, "The Servant," 104.
[250]Stein, Introduction, 125. He also states that a denarius was generous yet necessary for the support of life. Nowhere in the text is the landowner urgent about his crop. This would even go against the theme of generosity, for his payment in the end to the last workers is not recompense for helping him out in his time of need. Both Lev. 19:13 and Deut. 24:14-15 would be understood by the audience.
[251]Huffman, "Atypical," 209. An owner could not continue to operate this way and remain in business very long. The surprise (the departure from the norm) here may be hyperbole.
[252]Fee, How To, 130.
[253]The owner's generosity is seen by his giving the amount necessary

is quickly replaced by shock.[254] They see this as a threat to their understanding of fairness. They wanted an application of the merit system (equality of exchange). Reward should be exactly proportionate to achievement. They felt they deserved the reward.[255] They did not think he should be stingy to the others but that they should be given a bonus for enduring the heat of the whole day.

The equality of exchange system operates today. If you work shorter hours, you get less pay. If you work longer hours, you get overtime. If one hour is equal to one denarius, then twelve hours is equal to twelve denarii. The first hired were angry and rightfully so. What seemed to be generous is now arbitrary. How can one hour of easy work be equal to twelve hours of hard, hot work? Where is the justice for the conscientious, the faithful, the hard working? Where is consistency and dependability if rewards are issued arbitrarily? How will the master respond? Surely, he will see and do right. If he responds with generosity to the first workers, what could be a better way of illustrating God's gracious generosity?[256]

The landowner's response was clear and firm. He acted justly. He has the right to do with his money as he sees fit. His goodness was at no one's expense. How can you grumble against goodness? It is because of their own jealousy, envy and self-centeredness.[257] He acted with perfect justice with some and paid the agreed upon

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for the sustaining of ones family even though it was beyond the expected.
[254]Nelson, "Matthew," 284.
[255]Via, Parables, 152.
[256]Nelson, "Matthew," 283-87.
[257]Linnemann, Jesus 85. She discusses the textual question concerning the meaning of "evil eye." She sees it to mean even more than our word envy. It is an antonym of goodwill. She does not give a synonym.

amount. With others he acted with compassion by giving what is necessary for a family's daily needs.[258] Grumbling only occurs when you compare blessings. If you keep your eye focused on God's blessings and not on what your neighbor gets (keeping records for God), then you will rejoice with the generosity of the owner.[259]

The legalistic understanding of existence by the full-day workers caused them to be expelled with the words, "Take your pay and go." They ended up being estranged from the source of grace.[260] God does not behave in expected ways. He does not deal with men by the principles of equality of exchange (eye for and eye), but by grace. If he did, who then could be saved! A person can only accept the grace of God when he is willing to accept the reality of a different perspective, because the thoughts and ways of God are not man's thoughts and ways. As long as we insist on the equality of exchange, we will not be able to accept grace. This is what the kingdom is like.[261]

The parable does not give a conclusion. Did the workers take their denarius and go home mad? Or did they repent?[262] Then the maxim is added, "So the last will be first, and the first will be last."[263] This statement is not intended to talk about order of salva-

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[258]Strelan, "Sermon," 19.
[259]Helmut Thielicke, The Waiting Father, trans. John W. Doberstein (James Clarke & Co., 1959), 122-24.
[260]Ibid, 153.
[261]Nelson, "Matthew," 290.
[262]Linnemann, Jesus, 12.
[263]The longer version of this verse is handled well in Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), 51. Most see the entire verse as an addition of Matthew that was not originally spoken by Jesus in connection with this parable. They see this as a floating verse found in various contexts in the Gospels. This is best argued by Linnemann, Jesus, 85, who follows Jeremias. "Matthew simply used a known statement of Jesus to show how the parable should be interpreted." Strelan, "Sermon," 19, states, "A comment added by the Evangelist for the sake of furthering his readers' understanding of the Lord's words."

tion, the rank of disciples, or the reversal of that rank. The parable gives meaning to the phrase and is proverbial for the equality of God's grace being given to all without partiality. At this time the disciples needed to hear this message. They, too, reflected the merit system. They wanted to push aside the children in Mt. 19:13-15. They did not comprehend the interaction between the rich young man and Jesus. They wanted to sit at the right and left of Jesus in Mt. 20:20-28. Yes, the Pharisees do have problems with Jesus' accepting sinners (Mt. 11:19). Those mentioned in Mt. 19:13-15; 20:29-34; 21:14-16; and 21:28-32 are all in the kingdom due to compassion. They wanted to kill him for this type of parable (Mt. 21:45-46). Yet, it is the disciples in this case who have problems accepting God's rationale for grace. They are hard pressed to accept a grace that would require Jesus' death (Mt. 20:17-19).

When preaching this parable, there will be many in the pew who reflect the attitudes of the full-day workers. Through an inductive process, they need to identify with these workers. They should be led to ask, "Who are the one-hour workers in our lives?" "Who are the twelve-hour workers?" When a comparison is made to God's goodness, man's lack of perfect goodness is offended. If man was truly good and loving, he would rejoice with those hired last. Questions for today are, "How legalistic are we?" "Is our thinking still "under law" or "under grace?"[264] This shock, this offense, is the language event that the sermon must seek to repeat.

From this survey of parable research, it is observed that the parables have

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Crossan, In Parables, 112, gives four reasons to see Mt. 20:15-16 as additions. However there is a need to deal with the text as a whole given by Matthew. It is presuming too much to think we are better redactors than Matthew.

[264]Stein, Introduction, 127-28.

undergone numerous hermeneutical approaches. This background will enable the exegete to understand better Buttrick's own approach to the parables discussed in chapter 2. The parables also provide several theological and hermeneutical webs that need to be untangled before one attempts preaching them in today's pulpit. One obstacle that needs to be overcome is the classification of different forms found in the genre of parable. Matthew 20 served as just one example of exegeting a common form of parable (narrative). Matthew 13 has been selected due to the variety of forms found in this single text. Chapter 4 discusses both the exegesis of this text and the homiletical decisions made to implement Buttrick's methodology.

CHAPTER IV

EXEGESIS OF MATTHEW 13

The genre of parable covers a multiplicity of forms. Matthew 13 provides both variety and quantity of parables to serve as a paradigm for studying Buttrick's methodology. The parables of the Sower and Weeds are detailed narratives with accompanying allegorical interpretations. On the other end of the sprectrum, the parables of the Mustard Seed and Leaven provide short similes with no accompanying explanations. These eight parables also divide neatly into at least three sets of twin parables furnishing a natural design for testing.

Matthew 13 is the third of the five major discourses that give this Gospel its distinctive flavor. These discourses are marked out by the use of the formulae kaì égéveto hote étélesen ho 'Insous.[265] This is the only one of the five that begins by addressing the crowds rather than the disciples.[266] Matthew 13 contains eight parables

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[265]J. D. Kingsbury, The Parables of Jesus in Matthew 13: A Study in Redaction-Criticism (London: S.P.C.K., 1969): 15, demonstrates the unity of 11:1-13:53 by noting repeated formulae. The significance of this unity will be noted below. R. T. France, The Gospel According To Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 231, correctly asserts that verse 53 both concludes the teaching and leads into the following narrative stating, "there is no paragraph break, and the following verses will describe a mixed reaction to Jesus' teaching which amply illustrates much of the teaching in the preceding parables about men's response to the kingdom of heaven."

Gary Allen Phillips, "Enunciation and the Kingdom of Heaven: Text, Narration and Hermeneutic in the Parables of Matthew 13" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1981), 253-63, exposes many of the weaknesses of Kingsbury's methodology. Jack Dean Kingsbury himself uses a different methodology in Matthew as Story (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988). Phillips provides an example of an alternative approach and critique of historical-critical exegesis.

[266]D. A. Carson, Matthew, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 8

put together to form a unit presenting the "secrets of the kingdom".[267] Matthew utilizes the word "parable" for the first time here and gives detailed explanations to three of them. In each case, Jesus illuminates an aspect of the kingdom by comparing it to a familiar image in everyday life. The comparison makes a strange facet of the kingdom familiar to those who are able to discern the message.

R. T. France gives the following useful outline:

Introductory parable:
    The Sower (1-9)
    [Interlude: The purpose of parables (10-17)
        Explanation of the Sower (18-23)]
Three parables of growth:
    The Weeds (24-30)
    The Mustard Seed (31-32)
    The Yeast (33)
    [Interlude: The purpose of parables (34-35)
        Explanation of the Weeds (34-43)]
Three further parables:
    The Treasure (44)
    The Pearl (45-46)
    The Net with explanation (47-50)
Concluding parable:
    The Householder (51-53)[268]

(Grand Rapids, MI: Regency Reference Library, 1984): 300. Kingsbury, Parables, 24, notes that the disciples are addressed in vv. 10-23. Verse 36 breaks this narrative into two sections with clear evidence that the last half (36-52) of the discourse is directed to the disciples only.

[267]Birger Gerhardsson, "The Seven Parables in Matthew XIII," New Testament Studies 19 (1973): 27. Carson, Matthew, 300, argues for the unity of 13:1-13:53, maintaining that Jesus gave all these parables on one occasion. Pálin links the parabolic discourse with the preceding controversies. The setting of 13:1 and 13:36 implies a specific scene.

[268]R. T. France, Matthew: Evangelist and Teacher (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1989): 132. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, The Gospel According to Matthew, The International Critical Commentary, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 370, agrees with this three-fold division noting the similar introductions of vv. 24, 31 and 33 and the

The immediate context finds its beginning at 11:1. Opposition to Jesus' ministry has been mounting. The religious leaders from all sides have become hostile to the point that even unholy alliances with the Herodians are formed. John has died; Jesus has been driven from the synagogue; Jesus' own family has shown misgivings about him. The growing division cultimates in the sharp contrast between true disciples and all others in 12:46-50. Chapters 11 and 12 show conclusively that Jesus has been rejected as the Messiah.[269] How can some accept and some reject the message of Jesus? The parables will provide some explanations.

J. D. Kingsbury calls the following parabolic discourse the great turning point in Jesus' ministry.[270] Due to this rejection by Israel, Jesus turns away from the Jews and toward his disciples.[271] Before this shift in emphasis in Jesus' ministry, he addresses the crowds with a parabolic apology. Both the form and content of this section teach that the "Jews are no longer privileged people to whom God imparts his revelation, but instead stand under judgment for having spurned the Messiah."[272]

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introductory clauses of vv. 44, 45 and 47. This creates a pattern: parable or parables + added material (including an interpretation). Most commentators desire to divide the material between verses 35 and 36. However, there can be no division here for it ignores 13:10. It also places in different sections the parable of the tares and its interpretation. Daviess goes on to demonstrate the parallel nature of 13:10-23 with 13:34-43.

[269]Kingsbury, Parables, 15-16.

[270]Ibid., 31.

[271]Ibid, 131. Jesus continues to teach the crowds, however, throughout the entire gospel (Mt. 4:23; 9:35; 13:54; 15:10; 21:23; 22:16; 26:55). Kingsbury on pp. 25-28, too, is cautious about allowing this text to be the only one to judge the crowds. He notes that Matthew uses the term "crowds" differently throughout the Gospel and usually is positive in nature. However, here, Matthew focuses on the fact that they stand beyond the ones who follow.

[272]Kingsbury, Parables, 31.

The disciples ask why Jesus speaks to the crowds in parables. They did not ask about their meaning. Why is revelation given to some and not to others? The opponents of Jesus (represented by the crowds in this context) do not perceive these secrets because their hearts are hard.[273] Parables function both to conceal and reveal revelation. The opponents are placed in sharp contrast with the disciples because of their cold response to the message of Jesus.[274] There is no definition of parabolic speech given but a portrait of the judgment against the Jews for having responded to the message negatively.[275] Is. 6:9-10 is used as a typological fulfillment. Jesus places himself in a similar prophetic role, meeting a similar unresponsiveness in those of his hearers who are not disciples. These parables therefore underline the division which Jesus' mission has created among those who hear. Carson summarizes:

> The secrets of the kingdom are revealed in the message of the parables. That God would bring in his kingdom was no secret. All Jews looked forward to it. The new truth, now given to men by revelation in the person and mission of Jesus, is that the kingdom has in fact entered the world, the age to come has already dawned.[276]
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> On the other hand, this discourse centers on the theme "instruction in the secrets of the kingdom" (13:11). What is withheld from Israel is given to the disciples.[277] These

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[273]Ibid., 49.
[274]Ibid., 37.
[275]Ibid., 50. France, Gospel, 223, agrees commenting on verse 15: "The Greek reads literally `with their ears they have heard heavily and their eyes they have closed' thus placing the blame for their unresponsiveness not on the prophet but on the people themselves. The emphasis is not on either the purpose or the result of Jesus' speaking in parables, but rather on the existing situation within which it took place."
[276]Carson, Matthew, 307.
[277]Kingsbury, Matthew As Story, 137, indicates two revelations not given to Israel but given to the disciples. First, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are revealed in the parables. Kingsbury identifies five mysteries revealed to the disciples. Secondly, the insight into the identity of Jesus as Son of God (Mt. 14:33; 16:16).

secrets are revealed in the parables.

The introductory formulae for the kingdom parables occur fifteen times in Matthew including seven times in chapter 13. The introductory parable of the Sower is the one exception. The others begin with: homoía éstín he basileía tõn oúpanõn followed by a dative. An exception to this is found in verse 24 where homoía éstín is replaced by the corresponding homoióthe. The parables of the Pearl and the Net have the adverb pálin indicating repetition binding them together.[278] The introductory phrase means "The kingdom of heaven is like," or "It is the case with the kingdom of heaven."[279] The comparison is made with the entire narrative plot and not just one single point.

Two Sitz im Leben are relevant when interpreting these parables. Jesus, on a primary level, addresses the crowds for apologetic purposes. Matthew, on a secondary level, addresses the church of his day for a more paranetic purpose. The church has heard the Word as a recipient of divine revelation much in the same way that the disciples did, and identifies accordingly with the disciples who know and do God's will.[280] Through these parables of Jesus, Matthew instructs the church to be sons of the kingdom who meet the demands of total commitment and are spared the Judgment that is awaiting those who reject the message.[281] The following analysis of each parable will reflect both a historical interpretation and a modern day application.

The Sower

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[278]Gerhardsson, "Seven," 17-18.
[279]Kinsbury, Parable, 20.
[280]Ibid., 90, 132, 136.
[281]Ibid., 129. Stein, Introduction, 105, supports this two-fold viewing of the parables and defends Matthew as one who does not change the interpretations of the parables but applies them to new situations.

> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop--a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown" (Mt. 13: 3-8).
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> "In our world of big supermarkets, agricultural surpluses and mechanical farming, we are far removed from the fragile agricultural economy of first century Palestine."[282]

Yet all those who would hear Jesus were familiar with the images Jesus used in his parables. The message of Jesus antagonized the religious leaders. The crowds missed the significance of the messiah and sought a wonder worker. Jesus responded with everyday stories designed to impact those with receptive hearts.

The Sower exemplifies an allegorical parable.[283] This is the first of three parables with Jesus' own explanation.[284] The Sower is a parable of contrast, a feature common to all parables of growth, accentuating both failure and success.[285] The contrast lies between

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[282]David Wenham, The Parables of Jesus (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989): 42.

[283]Kingsbury, Parables, 33.

[284]Jeremias, Parables, 62, discounts the interpretation as authentic words of Jesus. He sees the interpretation as a later church creation. Dodd, Parables, 19, agrees that not only did the Evangelist give us the interpretation, but also missed the point of the original parable. He states on p. 181 that the interpretation is not consistent with itself. It does not fit the parable. The church reinterpreted the sayings and parables of Jesus to suit its changing needs. Dodd states on p. 13, the reason they missed the point is their use of allegorical methods as seen in these interpretations. Via, Parables, 8, also opposes the use of the interpretation because he classifies it as allegorizing by Matthew. He gives the example of the birds being equated with Satan, stating this goes beyond the image of the natural and understandable symbolism inherent in the parable. Blomberg, Interpreting, 226, rightly disagrees saying the allegorical interpretation is a ready-made explanation that fits naturally with the parable.

[285]Kingsbury, Parables, 35.

the seeds that perish and the seeds that produce fruit. Scenes 1-3 represent those hearts that bear no fruit. Scene 4 represents the honest hearts that produce an abundant crop.[286] Matthew also contrasts the Jews who reject the mission of Jesus with the disciples/church who respond positively to that mission.[287]

Interpreters disagree by choosing different points of the parable to focus their attention. The most common attention is given to either the sower, the soils or the seed. When an interpreter discounts Jesus' own interpretation and chooses to avoid allegorical methods, he usually focuses on the seed. Since parables customarily reach their culmination at the end of the story, this parable focuses on the abundance of grain that the seed sown last is producing.[288]

> In spite of all the hazards and losses Jesus is saying, the farmer reaps a splendid crop. In spite of all frustrations and failures, God's rule advances, and his harvest exceeds expectations.[289]
> However, Jesus is speaking the parable to the crowds and not to the disciples.

The interpretation given by Jesus corresponds to his explanation found in verses 10-17. He does not give a one-to-one correspondence to every little detail but allows the allegorical points to emerge naturally from the story.[290]

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[286]Ibid., 33.
[287]Ibid., 35.
[288]Kingsbury, Parables, 32. A. M. Hunter, The Parables Then and Now (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971): 36, calls this "the rule of end stress."
[289]Ibid. Buttrick agrees in both his method of interpretation and his final conclusions, as seen in his sample sermon in Homiletic, 158-63. Caird, Imagery, 166, agrees with the idea that the disciples needed the encouragement due to the initial hindrances and frustrations. He states the interpretation concentrates attention on the human responsibility and not on God who will bring ultimate success.
[290]Carson, Matthew, 312. To counter the example given above, Carson, p. 313, mentions that birds are regularly used to symbolize evil, demons, and Satan. Carson cites two examples: Sanhedrin 107a and Rev. 18:2.

When the interpreter allows Jesus' own explanation to be the control, the spotlight focuses on the soils' depicting the people's response to the preaching of the kingdom.[291] Jesus' message about the kingdom will receive a varied reception among various people. Each person must examine his own response to that message.[292] The fault lies not in the message or the messenger but in the receptive attitudes of those who receive it. Some will respond, making the harvest rich. Others will not begin or will fail to produce a crop for various reasons.[293] The parable compels the hearer to ask, "What kind of soil am I?" The parable encourages the hearer not to be like the seed that falls on the path. Don't be like the seed growing so shallow that it cannot take root. Weed out those thorns in your life. Be good soil and give God a chance to do his work in you.[294] This is a message that requires your fullest attention. If the term "deceit" is understood, Jesus warns that the worries about worldly things are so subtle you may not be aware they are choking your spiritual life.[295]

Homiletical idea:[296] In many ways the parable of the Sower summarizes Jesus' intent of revealing the mysteries of the kingdom in these parables. How does one explain the failure of the Jews as a group (or anyone) to come to faith? Opportunity does not

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[291]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 376, gives five reasons why the emphasis is upon the soils.
[292]Ibid., 312.
[293]France, Matthew, 219. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 384, points out that each group of seeds shows advancement over the other previous groups. The lifetime of various seeds becomes greater as one moves forward toward the parables climax.
[294]Hunter, Parables, 38.
[295]Carson, Matthew, 314.
[296]Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 97, states, "In light of the audience's knowledge and experience, think through the exegetical idea and state it in the most exact, memorable sentence possible." The central idea should be stated so that it relates to both the Bible and the audience.

guarantee response. The problem of Israel's failure does not lie with God. It lies rather with people who are free to harden their hearts.[297] Mt. 13:19, 23 emphasizes the need not only to hear the Word, but also to understand it. Sermonic point:[298] Let us all receive the Word of God with understanding.

The Weeds

> Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, `Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did the weeds come from?' `An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, `Do you want us to go and pull them up?' `No,' he answered, `because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the seeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn'" (Mt. 13:24-30).[299]

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[297]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 403.

[298]Although many will use the terms "homiletical idea" and "sermonic point" interchangably, I am using the former to express a summary of the exegetical point and the latter to express the central idea as it relates to the audience.

[299]According to Jermias, Parables, on p. 224, Zizánion is a poisonous weed which is related to wheat and in the early stages of growth it is hard to distinguish from it. Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 2d ed., rev. William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 339, states that this word is supposedly Semitic in origin meaning a troublesome weed in the grainfields ("probably darnel"). Michael Zohary, Plants of the Bible (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 161. "Darnel (Lolium temulentum), which is a member of the grass family and resembles wheat-like grass. A weed in whose grains lives a poisonous fungus, it grows exclusively in grain fields through the Middle East. Its grains have been found in a 4,000 year-old Egyptian tomb." France, Matthew, 225, adds the obvious from the parable that the weeds are virtually indistinguishable from the wheat until the ears form. In the case of heavy infestation, the stronger roots of the darnel would be tangled with those of the wheat, making selective weeding

Imagine the hearer of Jesus nodding his head in agreement that here was a wise man. He has just learned what to do if he himself ever faced such an agricultural crisis. This hearer missed the point. He has mistaken the literal point for the metaphorical point.[300] Yet it is easy also to miss the metaphorical points by limiting Jesus to just one point. Often interpreters allow rules of language and definitions of terms to determine what Jesus could or could not have meant. Assumptions about the use of allegory by Jesus have limited scholars from hearing yet another parable.

Dodd and Jeremias again discount the interpretation of this parable as an addition of the early church.[301] Jeremias sees the point of the parable as an encouragement for the disciples to be patient because the time of separation has not yet come. God will bring this separation in his own time.[302] Matthew thus makes this parable an allegorical description of the Last Judgment which warns the church against false security.[303]

There is no reason to dismiss vv. 36-43 as words not originally spoken by Jesus. Jesus gives this parable an allegorical interpretation which Matthew employs for the church. No less than seven elements of the parable are directly equated with "spiritual" counterparts.[304] When an element of the story has no parallel interpretation, then the interpreter must refrain from creating a meaning of his own.

If left alone and uninterpreted, the parable would yield the same conclusions.

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impossible.
[300]Crossan, In Parables, 64
[301]Dodd, Parables, 183. He cites Paul doing the same thing in 1 Cor. 4:5. On p. 184, he encourages the reader to forget the interpretation as much as possible. Jeremias, Parables, 79-80. He states further on pp. 84-85, that Matthew has changed the setting, audience and point of the parable to suit his own purposes for the church in his day.
[302]Jeremias, Parables, 85.
[303]Ibid. See also Kingsbury, Parables, 109.
[304]Blomberg, Interpreting, 197.

Blomberg summarizes these conclusions as follows: First, God permits the righteous and the wicked to co-exist in the world, sometimes indistinguishable from one another, until the end of the age. Second, the wicked will eventually be separated out, judged and destroyed. Finally, the righteous will be gathered together, rewarded and brought into God's presence.[305] Jesus is not arbitrarily allegorizing every detail, but spelling out the natural referents. The symbolism of the farmer, wheat, and weeds would be commonly understood. The identity of the other referents (God's enemy as the devil, the Word being preached throughout the world, the harvesters as the angels) all figure regularly in many descriptions of final judgment.[306]

Many themes from the previous parable are carried forward. "Both parables make it plain that while the victory of God's kingdom is sure, the way from here to there is hampered by unbelief and its effects."[307] Both parables explain about Jesus' rejection and the dilema this causes for faith. While the Sower parable focuses upon human responsibility, the present parable gives the evil one shared responsibility.[308]

The stress of the parable centers around the instructions given by the owner who urges patience because the final hour of judgment has not yet come.[309] The task of the disciple does not involve the separation of the good from the bad.[310] Let good and evil co-exist in the present age for God will separate them in the future age. Premature action

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[305]Ibid., 198.
[306]Ibid., 199. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 427, states, "Jesus meets the disciple's request by compiling a list of seven allegorical equations. After the first equation, each thereafter begins with ò dé or tó dé."
[307]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 408.
[308]Ibid.
[309]Jeremias, Parables, 85.
[310]Stein, Introduction, 144.

will only damage the crop and curtail growth.[311] The purpose of the sowing is to reap a good crop. The purpose of the non-weeding is to protect that crop.[312] Servants are to maintain their concern for the crop. The owner's harvest will not be frustrated for the fruit will be gathered inspite of the hindrance caused by the enemy.[313] The fruit represents those who have obeyed the will of God.[314]

The process of weeding can be found in various forms in society.[315] The judicial system weeds out the undesirable in society for the protection of the rest. The church disciplines those who are immoral and divisive for the preservation of God's community. Yet Jesus admitted freely-and-easily all sorts of immoral people into his company.[316] The Pharisees desired to establish a pure community, a holy remnant. The name Pharisee even means separatist.[317] They proved more particular than God himself. In opposition to this, Jesus encourages patience. God's people are to be gathered around Christ and not a sect propagating opinions.[318] The ones who are to harvest (who are to do the separating), are different than the servants.[319] Jesus himself tells the disciples that the field is the world and does not equate it with the church.[320]

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[311]Wenham, Parables, 58.
[312]William G. Doty, "An Interpretation: Parable of the Weeds and Wheat," Interpretation 25 (April 1971): 189.
[313]Ibid., 191.
[314]Kingsbury, Parables, 97. The term "righteous" is defined by seeing how the term is used throughout the gospel.
[315]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 410, includes in Jesus' purpose a strong protest against the tendency of the Pharisees, the Qumran community, and the Zealots to excommunicate. God's forbearing nature and judgments belong to the future.
[316]W. B. Martin, "Tares and Wheat," The Expository Times 70 (December 1958): 89-90.
[317]Ibid.
[318]Ibid.
[319]Stein, Introduction, 145.
[320]Kingsbury, Parables, 97. Carson, Matthew, 324-26, agrees stating

Kingsbury summarizes:

> The secret this parable reveals about the kingdom of heaven is that this kingdom, as a present reality, has confronted all Israel in the Word of proclamation. But since all Israel has not responded to the Word in faith and obedience, this people has come to be divided into two camps: true Israel, which lives under the kingly rule of God, and unbelieving Israel, which lives under the rule of Satan. Not until the End of the Age and the coming of the Son of Man is there to be any forcible change of this state of affairs.[321]
> Homiletical idea: In a world of evil, it is easy to want God to intervene right now.

Sometimes the temptation to do God's judging is strong. However, Jesus advocates patience because God will act in due time. Sermonic point: Let us be patient by allowing God to bring about justice.

The Mustard Seed[322]

> He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches" (Mt. 13:31-32).

Kingsbury recognizes the twin nature of the parable of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven stating that both are similitudes. He defines similitude: "A comparison of two relationships that are of essential importance for understanding its message."[323] He

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the term kingdom is flexible enough to be used here as the world. The kingdom of the Son of Man is an earthly realm over which he rules in the present and comes to judge in the future. Stein, Introduction, 146, also sees the field as the consummation of the kingdom of Christ at his second coming.

[321]Kingsbury, Parables, 76.

[322]Zohary, Plants, 93. "Brassica nigra, source of the most important condiment black mustard, which has long been extensively cultivated and was in Biblical times the source of mustard-seed oil and a medicament. . . . The black mustard is an annual herb with large leaves clustered mainly at the base of the plant. Its central stem branches abundantly in its upper part and produces an enormous number of yellow flowers and small, many-seeded linear fruits."

[323]Kingsbury, Parables, 81, 85.

explains the contrast for both parables with the terms "small" and "large."[324] The point is not in the smallness of the beginning or the final greatness of the future. W. D. Davies emphasizes that the function of the comparison is the realization the two go together. Despite all appearances between the minute beginning and the grand culmination there is an organic unity.[325] The first truth effects the second. The kingdom is a result of God's activity in Jesus and his disciples.[326]

Jeremias interprets the parable as follows: "Out of the most insignificant beginnings, invisible to the human eye, God creates his mighty kingdom, which embraces all the peoples of the world."[327] The birds perching in the branches emphasizes the huge extent of this kingdom which has developed from such an unimpressive beginning.[328] This message addresses those who have trouble seeing or recognizing the kingdom of God as a present reality. It becomes prophetic about the church by reassuring those who are now discouraged.

Dodd emphasizes the final size of shrub that affords shelter to the birds. "The time has come for all to flock to the kingdom for shelter."[329] Dodd ignores the proverbial

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[324]Ibid.
[325]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 416.
[326]Ibid.
[327]Jeremias, Parables, 149.
[328]France, Matthew, 227. Blomberg, Interpreting, 85, emphasizes that most commentators want to see the incorporation of the Gentiles being represented by the birds. Blomberg favors allegorical interpretation but states in this particular case the birds in the tree are merely a detail which emphasize the surprising size of the final product in light of the tiny beginning. Paul Ricoeur, "Listening to the Parables of Jesus," Criterion (Spring 1974): 20, also notes the unnatural and unexpected growth of the seed as the surprising element. These last two interpreters have expanded the simple contrast beyond what the text indicates by the use of the words "surprising," "unexpected," and "unnatural."
[329]Dodd, Parables, 191. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 420, supports the

understanding of the smallness of mustard seeds.

Robert Funk has a most engaging interpretation.[330] He utilizes Ezek. 17:22-24 as the background for this text.[331] He emphasizes the common Jewish understanding of the future kingdom being represented by a mighty cedar and not a lowly mustard scrub. The parable thus becomes an irony about Israel's future destiny portrayed as a most unsuitable bush. For Funk, the change of the expected image shatters the world of the hearer. He concludes, "The kingdom therefore is a venture of faith."[332] Funk's use of the Old Testament allusion diminishes the more obvious reading of the text. To emphasize the smallness of the mustard tree compared to the cedars of Lebanon is to make the opposite comparison of the one Jesus intended.

Homiletical idea: The kingdom may not be what you anticipated. It may begin unnoticed, but it will grow beyond all your expectations. God will establish his kingdom which will provide you the promised shelter.[333] Sermonic point: God's rule is alive and active today even if one cannot always observe its presence.

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idea of the birds nesting and not perching. He notes that when this term applies to people it denotes "dwelling."

[330]Robert Funk, "The Looking-Glass Tree Is for the Birds," Interpretation 27 (January 1973): 3-9.

[331]See also Ezek. 31:5-6; Dan. 4:12, 21; Ps. 80:8-11; 104:12.

[332]Ibid., 7. Funk rightly asserts on p. 5 that those who argue on a botanical level about the size of the mustard seed have missed the point. One example of this argumentation is found in John A. Sproule, "The Problem of the Mustard Seed," Grace Theological Journal 1 (1980): 37-42. He argues exegetically and botanically that Jesus was not merely using the language of accommodation or even proverbial language when he called the mustard seed the "least" of all seeds. It was indeed the smallest garden-variety seed known to man in Bible times.

[333]Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 97, states, "When an idea is a universal principle applying to anyone at any time, then the statement of the homiletical idea can be identical to the exegetical idea."

The Leaven

> He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid into three measures of meal until the whole was leavened" (Mt. 13:33).

Jeremias equates the meaning of this parable with the Mustard Seed, "out of the most insignificant beginnings, invisible to human eye, God creates his mighty kingdom, which embraces all the peoples of the world."[334] He calls it a parable of contrast: The "tiny morsel of leaven" is "absurdly small in comparison with the great mass of more than a bushel of meal."[335] The parable, therefore, addressed the doubts of those who hesitated to believe that the kingdom of God could issue from the insignificant beginnings of Jesus' ministry. For the church, it becomes a prophecy of assurance announcing the spread of the gospel and the growth of the church.[336]

Dodd claims that Jesus' ministry is comparable to leaven working in dough: It works from within, without external coercion, "mightily permeating the dead lump of religious Judaism."[337] "The emphasis must lie upon the completion of the process of

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[334]Jeremias, Parables, 149.
[335]Ibid., 148.
[336]Ibid., 149. Stein, Introduction, 94, agrees with Jeremias in emphasizing the contrast and denying that the point has anything to do with portraying a process. The insignificant beginning of the mission of Jesus is what the audience did not understand. Kingsbury, Parables, 85, 87, adds: The point is found by understanding the relationship of the small beginning with the significant influence and glorious fulfillment of the end. He emphasizes the culmination of the effect of leaven on the dough. France, Matthew, 227-28, emphasizes the hidden yeast in the dough as relating to the inconspicuous way the Kingdom of Heaven begins. "In Jesus' ministry this was a real issue: For . . . it affected the credibility of an announcement of God's reign which had apparently little to show for it; for the disciples there was the natural impatience to see God's kingdom in all its glory, and the total eradication of all that opposed it."
[337]Dodd, The Parables, 155-56.

fermentation. The period of obscure development is over; . . . the kingdom . . . has now come."[338]

Although Robert Funk resists historical exegesis, he rightly criticizes the above methodology of Jeremias and Dodd.

> According to Jeremias, the parable contrasts insignificant beginnings with great issue. The tiny morsel of leaven is thus contrasted with the huge mass of dough. How do we know that it is just these details which convey the point, while the leaven and the dough themselves are incidental? Dodd, again, fastens on the process of fermentation as the clue to the point: Like leaven working in dough, the kingdom works in the world. . . . Dodd has elected a different detail from which to adduce his point, and, one might suppose, with equal justification, since the process of selection appears to be arbitrary.[339]

The parable of the leaven at first glance has lost its punch. The words sit on the page lifeless, stale and flat. Is it the parable that has lost its impact or modern sensitivities that have gone dead? The scene is common enough in everyday life. Anyone who has observed bread made recognizes the scene. Leaving behind the "one-point" method, perhaps the following allegorical insights will bring freshness to the understanding so people can hear again the parable.[340]

The word "hid" stands out in the context of putting yeast into dough. How is the kingdom "hidden" in the world?[341] Elsewhere in the Gospels, "hidden" has special meaning.[342] Hiddenness belongs to the essence of the kingdom. The unusual amount

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[338]Ibid., 154.
[339]Robert Funk, "Beyond Criticism in Quest of Literacy: The Parable of the Leaven," Interpretation 25 (April 1971): 154.
[340]Jesus used the allegorical method of interpretation when he explained the parables of Matthew 13. See also Matthew Black, "The Parables as Allegory," Bulletin of John Rylands Library 42 (1959-60): 273-87, and Blomberg, Interpreting, 29-46.
[341]Is this just an incidental detail meaning "mix" (NIV)? Carson, Matthew, 319, supports the NIV reading wrongly citing BAGD, 216. The primary meaning given in BAGD is "hide."
[342]Mt. 11:25; Lk. 10:21; 17:21; Mt. 13:44; Mk. 4:11-12. The identity of Jesus was hidden to those who would not see. Through the message

of meal, "three measures," may have significance to the original readers. Jeremias estimates three sëàh as about fifty pounds of flour, or enough to make bread for more than a hundred people.[343] This amount could suggest a feast corresponding to the great banquet of the kingdom.[344]

The original readers might possibly recognize this as an allusion to the Old Testament stories of Abraham, Gideon, and Hannah.[345] All three episodes contains a visitation of the Divine. No housewife ordinarily would bake such an enormous amount of bread. The allusion to this vast amount of dough indicates a Theophany. The kingdom permeating the world is unlike any ordinary human situation but represents an extraordinary divine reality. However, there is no indication in the parable itself that this is the case. The more natural reading of the parable corresponds with the interpretation given for the Mustard Seed parable.

Leaven has other connections in Scripture.[346] Scripture often regards leaven as a

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and ministry of Jesus, the kingdom arrived hidden from the antagonist. The kingdom did not come to rule over physical places but to rule spiritually over men's hearts. Through Jesus, the nature of God's kingdom was revealed. Rudolf Meyer, "Kpúpto," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eedrmans, 1964), 3:973, states, the divine is primarily and essentially hidden and accessible only through revelation. This is especially true concerning the kingdom's beginning. God does reveal himself for the hid treasure is found and the leaven begins to work. The cause of God has been entrusted to the disciples to make it known to the world.

[343]Jeremias, Parables, 147. Carson states that this amount of flour would be the maximum anyone would use at one time. Carson, Matthew, 319, and Funk, "Beyond," 159, give a summary to the confusing evidence concerning how much flour is involved.

[344]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 422.

[345]Gen. 18:6; Judg. 6:19; 1 Sam. 1:24. An ephah is the same as three sëàhs or three measures.

[346]Ex. 12:17-20; 23:18; 34:25; Lev. 2:11; 6:17; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Mt. 16:6, 11.

symbol of corruption. Jesus makes a shockingly unexpected association with their preconceived ideas about this word. If leaven always implies corruption, then Jesus states that he gathers to himself that which is unholy (unclean by temple standards) which permeates the entire kingdom.[347] However, Carson offers a clearer insight when he asserts that literary context dictates the interpretation of metaphors. He observes that yeast usually refers to evil but not always. He sites the examples in Lev. 7:13 and 23:15-18.[348] Carson argues that the Mustard Seed parable represents extensive growth and the Leaven parable represents intensive transformation by permeation.[349]

As long as leaven remains in its own bowl, it is alone and is as unfruitful as seed in its bin.[350] However, once the yeast is hidden in the dough, its influence can be felt. Yeast will change the character of the dough by sacrificing itself. The dough is thus changed into the likeness of the yeast.[351]

Homiletical idea: When the reign of God invades history, it may seem at first small and insignificant (hidden to most as though God were silent), but nothing can be left unaffected by it. Even when opposition mounts and rejection occurs, God's ultimate

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[347]Funk, "Beyond," 162, citing Ernst Lohmeyer, "Das Evangelium," 220-21. "For Lohmeyer the inseparable connection between unleaven and the holy was so intense that the parable of the leaven could be understood only as part of an attack on temple and cult, an attack that comports with Jesus' displacement of the righteous and pious in Israel with the poor and destitute, the tax collectors and harlots: . . . `the tax collectors and prostitutes go into the kingdom ahead of you (the Pharisees)' (Mt. 21:31)."

[348]Carson, Matthew, 319. He notes another example: The metaphor lion is used in scripture both for Jesus (Rev. 5:5) and Satan (2 Pet. 5:8).

[349]Ibid.

[350]Gerhardsson, "Seven," 22.

[351]Ibid., 23. He also notes, that salt dies (dissolves) when influencing that which is salted. By vanishing, salt makes the whole sacrifice.

purposes will not be nullified. The kingdom of God creates such a disturbance that it leavens the whole lump. God is fermenting the world. When all appears lost due to troublesome circumstances, know that God is a living God who actively works on behalf of his people. As God's representatives, his people should act as leaven permeating godliness in a godless society. The church is the salt of the earth and the light of the world.[352] Sermonic point: God is acting on behalf of his people even when it goes unseen by them.

These last three parables answer the theological questions concerning the rejection of the Messiah by Israel. These questions will be answered when history ends. God's triumph is placed in the future. It may not begin with success and may appear weak, but success is the ultimate destiny.[353] The next three parables focus on the present instead of the future. The emphasis lies with the action of believers and not the deeds and fate of unbelievers.[354]

The Hidden Treasure

> The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field (Mt. 13:44).

This short verse (31 words in the Greek), contains endless possibilities for interpretation.[355] Not every fact of this narrative can be held as analogy for instruction. Which facts have significance for interpretation? Does one use intuition? If the image is conventional, onr needs to know the cultural context, authorial intent and occasion of the

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[352]Mt. 5:13-16.
[353]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 432.
[354]Ibid., 435.
[355]John W. Sider, "Interpreting the Hid Treasure," Christian Scholar's Review 13 (1984): 367, mentions 28 possible narrative facts available for interpretation.

saying.[356] The question for these twin parables is: Which elements belong to the scenic framework of the narrative and which elements contain the application for the hearers?

This short similitude contains a sequential plot (plotted language).[357] A man discovers a treasure in a field.[358] There is surprise in the free finding that leads to joy. The parable presupposes that the kingdom is hidden, not yet revealed to everyone.[359] He

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[356]Ibid., 366. However, even then, alternative interpretations can be given that match all the evidence available. Jesus does not help us here with his own interpretation. One example that breaks with the history of interpretation, and yet does not violate any exegetical rule is given by Jeffrey A. Gibbs, "Parables of Atonement and Assurance: Matthew 13:44-46," Concordia Theological Quarterly 51 (January 1987): 14-43. In brief, he identifies the man in the field with Jesus. The act of buying corresponds with his redemption of the church on the cross. The act of finding corresponds with God's action of sending Jesus to seek and save the lost. He notes the pearl as a parable that intensifies and focuses the first. The treasure/pearl corresponds with the precious people of God.

Peter S. Hawkins, "Parable as Metaphor," Christian Scholar's Review 12 (1983): 226-36, finds the key narrative fact in the element that would be most surprising to the audience. Here is a man who finds a treasure found on someone else's field. The surprise to the audience would be in the morality of buying the field. Hawkins concludes that God can use anyone and any situation. God works to realize his purposes even through persons and circumstances as devious as the one found here. J. D. M. Derrett, Law in the New Testament (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 1-16, defends the propriety of the action of rehiding and buying the field. He states the focus of the attention lies elsewhere. Stein, Introduction, 99, agrees stating that you should not try to legalize or moralize the behavior of the man for that goes beyond the scope of the parable. Obviously the man could do such a thing without complications or the story loses its punch.

[357]Buttrick, "Preaching," 20.

[358]Stein, Introduction, 99. The best bank often proved to be your own back yard. If the owner died, was murdered, or taken into captivity, such treasures would remain hidden maybe for centuries, until by chance it was discovered.

[359]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 436. "The revelation of God in Jesus is not perfectly vivid to all; it can only be perceived by those with ears to hear and eyes to see."

determines to possess this treasure so he sells all that he has and buys the field. "With a single sentence we have movement with twists and turns."[360] Here is a man whose life is unexpectantly, yet happily, altered. His future plans and aspirations are made invalid due to the discovery of this treasure. Suddenly his world opens up to new unseen possibilities.[361]

John Dominic Crossan has done the most extensive study of this parable to date.[362] He focuses on the verbs "find," "sell," and "buy" which reveal the sequential plot shared by both parables.[363]

Kingsbury identifies the following four elements to be part of the scenic framework.[364] First, Jesus is not dealing with hiddenness, for the kingdom is not hidden but a present reality. Jesus is making the kingdom manifest in and through his mission. The Jews reject this manifestation of the kingdom due to their lack of understanding.[365]

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[360]Buttrick, "Preaching," 20.
[361]Crossan, In Parables, 34.
[362]Ibid.
[363]Buttrick, "Preaching," 34-36, agrees with Crossan. He describes this as "Advent," "Reversal," and "Action." "Someone's projected future is suddenly shattered by the advent of a new event, by something that is found. In the force of this advent, the person willingly reverses the past, `selling all that he has,' and receives a new world of action he did not have before." Ricoeur, "Listening," 19, restates this as: ". . . the Kingdom of God is compared to the chain of these three acts: letting the Event blossom, looking in another direction, and doing with all one's strength in accordance with the new vision." John Dominic Crossan takes his views to an extreme in Finding is the First Act, Semeia Supplements (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979): 94, when he states "If one gives up everything . . . then one must also give up this parable itself." See John W. Sider, "Rediscovering the Parables: The Logic of the Jeremias Tradition," Journal of Biblical Literature 102 (1983): 61-83, for fundamental difficulties in these and similar methods.
[364]Kingsbury, Parables, 114-16.
[365]Ibid.

Secondly, this parable says nothing about searching although the merchant in the parable of the pearl is searching for all kinds of pearls.[366] Also, the aspect of finding is incidental for in both parables the finding is accidental.[367] Finally, the parable is not dealing with the joy of the discovery for this only underlines the great value of the treasure. The element of joy is not found in the parable of the pearl.[368] Kingsbury understands the point of the parable to be the great value of the find that leads to sacrifice. In both cases, they go and sell all they possesses in order to buy.[369] The cause and effect relationship between the value of the kingdom and the resulting behavior of sacrifice will be evident to those who understand the true nature of discipleship.[370]

Stein too desires to find the common elements in both parables to determine the meaning. The elements of joy, hiddenness, and seeking are not elements shared by both parables. He agrees with Kingsbury that both parables emphasize the value of the kingdom is worth whatever the sacrifice necessary to enter it.[371]

Homiletical idea: Eta Linnemann emphasizes Matthew's parenetic function of exhortation to do likewise. These are individuals who sell all and risk everything because of an unique and valuable opportunity. It is therefore necessary to take such a risk when the opportunity presents itself. It presents itself now for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.[372] Sermonic point: No matter what the cost, let us all commit our lives to the rule of Jesus.

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[366]Ibid.
[367]Ibid.
[368]Ibid.
[369]Ibid.
[370]Ibid.
[371]Stein, Introduction, 102-4.
[372]Linnemann, Parables, 101.

The Pearl

> Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it (Mt. 13:45-46).

When interpreting the parable of the pearl, should the twin nature of the treasure parable be assumed or should the differences between the two be emphasized? Kingsbury calls them a perfect example of companion parables.[373] If the parable is taken as a doublet parable, then Jesus' purpose was to fix in the mind of the hearer what the two parables share in common.[374]

The differences between the two parables are summarized in the following chart:

Treasure	Pearl
1. Datival introduction with the object acted upon.	1. Datival introduction with the actor in the parable.
2. Hiddenness and joy.	2. No hiddenness and no joy.
3. No seeking.	3. Active seeking.
4. Historical present.	4. Aorist throughout.[375]

Already noted above, the datival introduction involves the entire narrative plot and not just the immediate referent. As for the difference between the two type of men, one

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[373]Kingsbury, Parables, 111.

[374]Sider, "Interpreting," 368. Jacobson, "Matthew," 279, also emphasizes what the two share in common stating the theme as "The kingdom of God is worth everything you have." Gibbs, "Parables," 20, states the key is found in the common phrase, "He goes and sells all that he has and buys."

[375]Gibbs, "Parables," 20. R. H. Charles, "Two Parables: A Study," The Expository Times 35 (March 1924): 265-69, argues that the historic present of the treasure parable has the force of continuous sustained action. He cites several grammars that allow the possibility even though it is not the normal case. Most commentators take the historical present as aoristic in meaning which only adds vividness of the dramatic character of the story. This eliminates from the list the differences in tense. Stein, Introduction, 101, determines this to be a difference of style rather than essence.

seeking and one who is not seeking, interpreters have been split as to the emphasis one should place here. The Gentiles have not been seeking God, yet the free gift of salvation is offered to them. The Jew has given his whole life to "pearls." His entire religious heritage centers around the kingdom. Will the Jew, on comprehending the true value of the kingdom as Jesus presents it, gladly exchange all to follow him? Jesus may therefore be calling both the individual who is seeking as well as the one who is apathetic toward God to give up whatever stands between them and the kingdom.[376] The method of finding, whether by chance or design, however, is not important. Both were surprised. This pearl merchant found the pearl by good fortune and not by his own efforts. Both men possessed the kind of responsive hearts that led them to take appropriate action.[377]

Homiletical idea: Those who possess the finest of pearls are individuals who sell all and risk everything because of an unique and valuable opportunity. It is therefore necessary to take such a risk when the opportunity presents itself. It presents itself now for the kingdom of heaven, more valuable than the finest of pearls, is at hand. Sermonic point: No matter what stands in your way, the kingdom is worth the price to possess.

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[376]Blomberg, Interpreting, 281.
[377]Stein, Introduction, 101. Charles, "Two Parables," 265.

The Net

> Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth (Mt. 13:47-50).

Fishing for most Americans involves wiggly worms, rods, reels, line, weights, and so forth. However the scene portrayed in this parable is that of a large net which is passing through the sea in order to catch fish. Robert Stein describes two ways this could be done. First, the net could be stretched between two boats which then headed for shore. The net would have floats on top and weights on the bottom so that when it was dragged to the shore it could trap all that came in its path. Another way involved only one boat that would stretch out the net to be dragged ashore by men or hooked to the shore so the boat could move in a large semicircle sweeping all in its path ashore. After the net was dragged to the shore, the ceremonially clean fish were kept and placed in a basket while the unclean fish forbidden by law to eat were thrown away.[378]

Kingsbury classifies this parable as a mixed-form or an allegorical parable.[379] The kingdom of heaven is like the entire process of netting, catching and sorting portrayed in the parable.[380] The lake is a common Jewish metaphor for the world.[381] Through

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[378]Stein, Introduction, 140.

[379]Kingsbury, Parables, 119. Blomberg, Interpreting, 201, classifies this parable as a three-point parable. (1) The action of the net stands for God who will come to judge his people on the last day. (2) The good are those God declares righteous and their fate is honorable. (3) The evil are those who are unredeemed and their fate is horrible. Stein, Introduction, 142, would agree with this eschatological interpretation. "There is a day when grace gives way to judgment. In that day a final and complete separation of the righteous and the unrighteous will take place. Now, however, there is still time."

[380]Jeremias, Parables, 225.

[381]G. B. Caird, The Revelation of Saint John the Divine, The Harper's

evangelism, the net[382] gathers converts (fish)[383] in the present age which is followed by a separating out those who do not belong in the future age.[384] Therefore the parable serves a paranetic function encouraging the followers of Jesus to do the will of God due to the separation and bitter end of the evil. Be patient, God will make this separation in the end.[385]

There are two extremes in interpretation that need to be avoided. On one end of the spectrum, some regard everyone in the church as true sons of the kingdom by virtue of their profession. On the other end, others try to identify and sort out all the good and bad "fish" prematurely.[386] The church needs to be more realistic in its approach and seek a balance.

This parable is commonly classified as a companion parable with the weeds.[387] Although the explanations given by Jesus are the same, he makes different points. The climax to the parable of the weeds emphasizes the need to let weeds and wheat grow side by side in the world and the separation will occur later. The climax to the present parable

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New Testament Commentaries (New York: Harper & Row, 1966): 65-68, gives the background sources for this understanding. See Job 38:8-11; Ps. 74:13-14; 89:9-10; 104:5-9; Prov. 8:27-29; Is. 27:1; 51:9-10; Dan. 7:2-3; Ecclus. 39:17. Delmar Jacobson, "Matthew 13:44-52," Interpretation 29 (July 1975): 281, supports this view for this text.

[382]Ibid. Jacobson gives four reasons why these allegorical metaphors were commonly understood in Matthew's community. Mt. 4:18 already shows that casting of nets is a picture of missions.

[383]J. D. M. Derrett, "'HEAN GAR HALIEIS (Mark i:16): Jesus' Fishermen and the Parable of the Net," Novum Testamentum 22 (1980): 125-31.

[384]Kingsbury, Parables, 121.

[385]Ibid., 124. Jacobson, "Matthew," 281, emphasizes the negative aspect of this exhortation to righteous living.

[386]Wenham, Parables, 67.

[387]France, Matthew, 230, due to the fact that the explanations given to both are verbatim. However, Kingsbury, Parables, 117, states that these two do not stand in juxtaposition.

emphasizes the separation that will occur in the future to purify the church. Kingsbury categorizes the relationship between the two parables not as identity, but one of progression.[388]

Homiletical idea: A proper understanding of God's judgment will motivate righteous behavior. The sermonic point: Since you understand about God's judgment, live to please God.

The Householder

> "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there (Mt. 13:51-53).

Kingsbury identifies this parable as a similitude mixed in form.[389] Many exegetes of Matthew 13 leave this parable completely out of the picture either due to oversight or to the fact it does not play well to their theological tune.[390] The structure of the entire section indicates a symmetrical division. The first division concludes at vv. 34-35 and the second at v. 53. This divides the parables into two groups of four. However, as noted earlier, the two-fold construction ignores other stylistic elements that indicate a three-fold division instead. In either case, this parable is included in Matthew's section on parables and plays an integral role.

This parable serves as a climax of the third discourse. It is informed by Mt.

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[388]Kingsbury, Parables, 118.
[389]Ibid., 127.
[390]Gerhardsson, "Seven," is just one example of an interpreter who does not deal with this parable. It is obvious that his interpretation of the Sower as being the guide for understanding the other parables has clouded his vision as to the inclusion of this parable.

13:11-12, 16-17:

> He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. . . . But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."

Jesus questions them as to whether they understand "all these things." The natural referent of "all these things" would be the "secrets of the kingdom" in verse 11.[391] These secrets have been revealed through the teaching of the previous seven parables. The disciples respond affirmatively thus qualifying them as skilled scribes.[392] However, to say they understood everything contradicts Mt. 15:16. The disciples were growing in their understanding of Jesus, but it is still not mature.[393]

Jesus has revealed to his disciples the will of God. Since the Twelve understood, their comprehension made it possible for Jesus to utter one more parable revealing the responsibility of the disciples as scribes instructed in the kingdom of heaven, to bring forth from such a treasure of understanding "things new and old." The kingdom of God is being compared to the relationship between a teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom and a householder. What is the point of comparison? The "owner of a house" is a frequent figure in Jesus' parables and can stand for God (Mt. 21:33), Jesus (Mt. 10:25), or disciples (Mt. 24:43).[394] "Very often he is a figure who

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[391]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 434-44. "All things" harks back to 13:34 and anticipates 13:56 demonstrating the comprehensive nature of their understanding. This phrase includes all of 13:1-51 giving the entire section closure. The term "treasure," gives closure to the third section, which began at 13:44.

[392]Ibid.

[393]Carson, Matthew, 331. Carson discusses the difficulty interpreters have had over the years understanding this parable. He cites several possibilities on pp. 331-32.

[394]Ibid., 332.

dispenses wealth in some way" (Mt. 20:1-16; 21:33-43).[395] This owner's storeroom contains both new and old items that he is free to use. The point of comparison centers on the ability to utilize the treasure one possesses.

Scribes were "teachers of the Scriptures." The disciples are to function now in similar fashion by bringing out of their heart treasures (those things that your heart is devoted to and rules your life) new and old in order to instruct others in the ways of the kingdom.[396] He is to do this because of his new allegience to the kingdom. Those things "new and old" would be the fullness of the realities of God's will applied to life as redefined by the message and mission of Jesus. The "new and old" seemingly is cryptic. Davies gives several possiblities as to the proper meaning.[397] It rests upon the disciples' ability to understand Jesus' teachings. He now instructs them to devote themselves to do the will of God as it has now been revealed.[398]

Based on their understanding, the disciples are instructed to bring out their treasures to teach others. This ministry is now committed by Matthew to the church. The disciples of every age are called to be interpreters of God's revelation, interpreting and applying these realities to all of life.[399] The sermons that follow continue the tradition of

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[395]Ibid.
[396]Ibid., 333. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 446, states the meaning of discipleship is the learning from Jesus and acting upon what one has learned.
[397]Davies and Allison, Matthew, 448. Probably the new is mentioned before the old because one must understand the old by the criteria of the new. The torah is understood according to one's new found understanding of Jesus' revelation.
[398]Kingsbury, Matthew as Story, 138, emphasizes the word "understanding" in this section (Mt. 13:11, 16-17, 51). The word is used six times. This does not foreclose the possibility that they can falter in making use of their understanding (Mt. 10:1; 14:13-21; 15:32-38; 16:5-12).
[399]Jacobson, "Matthew," 282.

Christian preaching commissioned by this text.

Homiletical idea: The Christian message, the story of Jesus, is too valuable to hide. Through Jesus, the Christian can clearly see God and God's will. Sermonic point: As disciples, share the greatest story ever told.

Sermons From Matthew 13

The following sermons are constructed to reflect the two models discussed in chapter 1. An effort will be made to detect which type elicits greater audience involvment. Alternating sermon models is the independent variable. The dependent variable will be the audience response to these sermons.

Four sermons have been randomly selected from the parables in Matthew 13 and modeled after Buttrick's methodology. These sermons will be compared with four other sermons on the remaining parables in Matthew 13 modeled after a deductive method that I previously employed.

These two sets of sermons will be presented to the Washington Church of Christ, Washington, Indiana, on eight consecutive weeks.[400] Each set of sermons will be internally mixed by random process respectively and presented in the sequence given by the text.[401] The following chart reflects the results of that random selection.

PARABLE	MODEL FORM

[400]The Washington Church of Christ averages 120 in attendance. Demographic information will be collected for future considerations.

[401]The parables in Matthew 13 will be paired prior to the random selection. This will give balance that otherwise could not be guaranteed. This pairing is reflected in the chart. The two sets of twin parables were paired together. The introductory parable was paired with the concluding parable. The final two parables are often paired together due to their similar themes.

SOWER	DEDUCTIVE
WEEDS	INDUCTIVE
MUSTARD SEED	DEDUCTIVE
LEAVEN	INDUCTIVE
TREASURE	DEDUCTIVE
PEARL	INDUCTIVE
NET	DEDUCTIVE
HOUSEHOLDER	INDUCTIVE

Everyone will be given a feedback tool to be filled out and returned by the end of each sermon. Each form will also contain simple instructions explaining the project and the use of the forms.

Surveying The Land[402]

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:1-8

AIM: TO ENCOURAGE THE AUDIENCE TO RECEIVE THE WORD WITH UNDERSTANDING.[403]

INTRODUCTION: I remember my mother walking around the pasture digging up samples of dirt, filling a little white box. She would take her white box of dirt home carefully to package and ship it to the University of Tennessee Agricultural Department. "O, just what I wanted for Christmas, dirt." The University of Tennessee, for a nominal fee, would analyze our soil so we would know which chemicals it needed to yield the

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[402]Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 79-91, summarizes the deductive sermon. He declares, "When anyone makes a declarative statement, only four things can be done to develop it. It can be restated, explained, proved, or applied." The exegetical idea should be submitted to three developmental questions: "What does this mean?" "Is it true?" "What difference does it make?" This last question leads to direct application to the audience.

[403]Ibid., 108-9. The "aim" statement should match the sermonic point given in the exegetical section. The sermon should be designed to change lives. Robinson states, "Whereas the idea states the truth, the purpose defines what that truth should accomplish."

best pasture. This soil testing usually resulted for us in the classification--ACIDIC. Every year Dad would then order several tons of lime to treat the soil. Jesus, in Matthew 13, describes a farmer working in his field. As we read the first eight verses, let us survey the land. (Read Text.)

In our world of supermarkets, food surpluses, mechanical farming and chemical fertilizers and herbicides, we are far removed from the fragile economy of first century Palestine. Jesus compares farming with the situation he and the disciples have been encountering. Jesus' message has fallen on deaf ears. The context of Matthew 11 and 12 demonstrates the rejection of the mission of Jesus by the Jews and especially the religious leaders. Jesus turns to the crowds and speaks to them in parables. Some of the crowd will respond favorably to his message and understand what the parables mean. Others will go away shaking their heads bewildered as to what mustard seeds, pearls, and stuff have to do with the kingdom of heaven. The parable of the sower explains why some respond favorably to Jesus while others do not.[404] If you were in that first audience listening to Jesus preach, would you not want to understand his message for your life? What is your responsibility as a listener to insure that you properly understand and apply the message of Jesus?[405]

If we were to take samples of the different hearts described by Jesus and send them to the University of Tennessee Agricultural Department, what classifications would come back in the report? What kind of spiritual hearts pump inside people? Jesus himself tells us the results of those reports in Mt. 13:18-23. Here he classifies four dif-

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[404]In deductive sermons, the thesis statement occurs early. The sermon will explain the truth presented here.

[405]These questions set in the mind of the audience the aim of the sermon.

ferent soils/hearts. As we study this text, ask yourself: "What would they discover if a sample of my heart were sent in?"[406]

I. CLASSIFICATION: SOME HEARTS ARE CONCRETE.[407] (Read vv. 4 & 18-19.)

A. EXPLANATION:

1. The farmer sows the seed. God through the ages, and now through the preaching of the Gospel, has revealed himself to man. God desires all men and women to come to a saving knowledge of his will not wanting anyone to perish.

2. But some people's hearts are as hard as the pavement on Highway 50 out here. I could not take my best shovel and dent the surface. The best sermons, a gift of a Bible, months of sacrificial service, all the kings horses and all the kings men could not win these souls to Christ.

3. Here are represented the atheist, agnostic, and the apathetic. These are men and women whom Satan has securely ensnared into his camp. The Word of God has no chance because Satan has already won their hearts.

B. APPLICATION:

1. Not many of these will find their way into a church service like this one. We will encounter most of the concrete hearts in our everyday activities in the

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[406]The structure of this sermon will provide four answers found in the text to this question.

[407]Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 131, states, "Since each point in the outline represents an idea, it should be a grammatically complete sentence. . . . Each point should be a statement, not a question." Robinson also explains on p. 137, that the oultine should be filled with supporting material that explains, proves, applies and/or amplifies the points. Due to the familar nature of deductive sermons, I will not attempt to explain these outlines.

world. It would be my guess that not one of you would receive a report back stating your heart to be so hard that the Word of God could not penetrate.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. But do not discount anyone as being like this and not worthy of hearing the gospel. Your responsibility lies in sowing the seed generously. Most of you know the story of John Clayton. Remember when he told you how he hated the things of God with such a passion that he set out to disprove God's Word. How many Christians wrote him off as soil too hard to teach? You may have a neighbor right now who treats the Word with contempt. Don't you become soil inspectors. Examine your own heart to make sure the Word can take root.[408] The second classification--

II. CLASSIFICATION: SOME HEARTS ARE SHALLOW. (Read vv. 5-6 & 20-21.)

A. EXPLANATION:[409]

1. This Spring I transplanted some Marigolds into a flower box on my front porch. Who could have predicted it would not rain in May for over two weeks? When I was on vacation, my parents got over eight inches. My flower box got none. Those fragile plants were crispy when we got home. The hot sun combined with the tender young roots brought about a hasty end to some beautiful flowers.

2. That's the way it is with many who become Christians. They enter the Christian life full of high hopes and dreams. Happy days are here again, for in Jesus Christ there will be no more trouble and no more sorrow. But the moment the roof caves

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[408]Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 131, states, "Carefully constructed transitions help the listener to think with the speaker so that together they move through the sermon."

[409]Often "Explanation," "Application," and "Illustration" will be woven together. This does not detract from the deductive flow of the logic.

in, they leave the Lord.

3. Many in the crowds were following Jesus the wonder worker. They were bringing their sick and dying from all parts of the country. In Mk. 3:26 and 6:3 we read how Jesus was becoming so popular, that at times he could not even eat. But when Jesus challenged them on the true nature of discipleship, they no longer could follow after him. (Read Jn. 6:61-66).

4. Jesus said in Jn. 16:33, "In this world you will have tribulation." The book of 1 Peter is all about the suffering a Christian will face because of the Word of God. But many Christians are "fair weather" Christians who only come out to enjoy the blessings of the Christian life, but as soon as anyone calls for them to act on their Christian responsibility, they are nowhere to be found.

B. APPLICATION:

1. (Read 1 Pet. 2:2). Spiritual growth does not come naturally. You must feed and nourish the soul so that you can grow up to be an adult in God's family.

2. One example of how you can grow in Christ is found in 1 Cor. 13:11. The context teaches us that love is a key to growing up into the image of God.

3. Let's imagine together a mountain scene where the wind sweeps down the mountainside brushing aside anything not firmly rooted in the soil. The tall pines of that region lift high their branches in splendor because they have persevered the strongest storms. Perseverence in spite of hardships is impossible for man. Only by plugging into the power source can we survive. Hold on to God. Never let him go.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. Let me tell you a story that illustrates many real life dramas. Mary

and Ted were married sixteen years when their daughter Sally died. Sally was three when she pulled the electrical cord of an Iron that was dangling from the top of their refrigerator. The Iron came crashing down crushing Sally's scull. For six months, Mary and Ted watched Sally in the hospital bed until she finally died. Mary blamed Ted for not watching Sally in the kitchen. Ted blamed Mary for storing the Iron on top of the refigerator. They divorced seven weeks after Sally's death. Instead of drawing closer during disaster and relying on each other, they alienated each other. When they needed each other the most, they isolated themselves from the love that had built their marriage.

> As long as the weather remains fair, many enjoy the benefits of marriage. But as soon as storm clouds appear on the horizon, they seek shelter someplace else. The marriage falls apart. So too with the church. People want all the benefits of an association with Jesus, but none of the responsibilities.

2. Look down at the lab report attached to your heart. Does it say anything about shallow soil? What would it take for you to quit on Jesus? Loss of job? Death of a mate? A dishonest preacher? A financial disaster? Or are you the kind of person who is ready to fly the coop just because an elder asks you to make a visit to a struggling family who can't meet their rent payment? Look down at the lab report attached to your heart. Does it say anything about shallow soil?

III. CLASSIFICATION: SOME HEARTS ARE INFESTED. (Read vv. 7 & 22.)

A. EXPLANATION:

1. Clematis. Some people love Clematis. They go to the nurseries and buy Clematis. O how I hate Clematis. I can't get rid of it. I first started my war on

Clematis when it choked and killed my Bridal Bouquet Spirea. I didn't realize what was happening at first. Some told me to let the Clematis grow since it has a beautiful white bloom. O how I was deceived. Two summers later, my Spirea was dead.

2. Some people's hearts are like soil that produces a good plant. The roots are sinking deep into the soil. But, unaware to all and especially to themselves, they die. Choked out by the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth.

B. APPLICATION:

1. So many good and worthwhile pursuits fill up our lives. We all are concerned about our jobs, families, health, finances, and even the church. We work hard long hours to make everything fit together. Slowly we add our hobbies and recreational pursuits to the game plan. We want it all. None of these things are wrong. We are pursuing the American dream side by side with everyone else down the street. For most people that involves two simple ingredients: Comfort and security.

2. But slowly, the everyday concerns of living begin to control us. Even our children need appointment books to keep track of their fast track lives. All we want is to get ahead a little so we can relax. But the more we strive, the further we fall behind. It's like treading water with your clothes on. Eventually they get heavier and heavier.

3. What causes all these thorns slowly to tighten their grip on us? First, the cause of worry is a lack of faith. Trust is an action word that requires our allowing God to work in our lives. Trust involves setting our sights away from the American success stories and onto Jesus. Second, thorns need constant weeding in order to be controlled. Every time I see a Clematis budding its little head, I don't break it off

with my hands. I've learned that it will always come back that way. Gardeners call that pruning. Now I go for my spade and dig up the roots. Weeding your heart of all those worldly desires is a painful process but necessary.

4. One of the most difficult exercises you can put yourself through today involves examining your heart for weeds. Be honest. Look yourself in the mirror and honestly assess your life in relation with the call of Jesus to discipleship. Where do you stand?

C. ILLUSTRATION:[410] Finally, Jesus gives one more classification.

IV. CLASSIFICATION: SOME HEARTS ARE FERTILE. (Read vv. 8 & 23.)

A. EXPLANATION:

1. How can you guarantee that your heart is good soil that produces an abundant crop? Good soil takes constant tending, tilling, weeding and feeding.

2. The one with a good heart is the one Jesus describes as not only hearing his words but understanding them. Understanding is more than mental comprehension. Understanding produces obedience to the will of God as a faithful disciple.

3. Some of the seed fell on good ground and yielded the crop--some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold. This is a bumper harvest, a harvest to gladden any farmer's heart and make him forget his losses.

B. APPLICATION:

1. In spite of all the frustrations, losses, troubles and persecutions, God will provide an abundant fruit in your life.

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[410]I will let the Clematis illustration work throughout this point.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. God's Word made a perfect beginning;

Man spoiled the creation by sinning;
We know that the story
Will end in God's glory,
But at present the other side's winning![411]

2. Doesn't the last line of that limerick describe how most of us feel about God's cause in the world? We see immorality all around us. We see the church's setbacks and failures. We see our own failures. There are empty pews and dwindling congregations infested with apathy. But no matter how gloomy the outlook, God's eternal kingdom stands. God can be trusted to finish his work. Jesus is saying to us all, "Have faith in God. His victory is sure."[412]

CONCLUSION: Have you heard this parable? Hearing requires decision and action. We can listen only with our ears. That is how most of us listen during casual conversation in a supermarket line. It goes in one ear and out the other like seed sown on a highway. Or we can listen with our minds only but not our hearts. The lecture on plants in biology class may instruct us about facts but do nothing to change the way we live. We may at first have ideal concerns about the environment, but as quickly as dew dries in the hot sun so does our enthusiasm. Maybe we hear an inspiring message demanding action for a good cause, but as soon as the phone rings the thought is choked out of our minds. But one day while watching television, an SOS message interrupts, calling out your name. You learn that your spouse has been in a dreadful accident. Now you hear with your ears, your mind and your heart. Now you take action at once for it is a matter of life or death.[413] This is the kind of hearing the Gospel calls for.

Ask these questions: "What kind of soil am I? Am I hard soil, shallow soil, infested soil, or good soil?" What will you do with Jesus? What will your answer be?

Waiting On God

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:24-30

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[411]Hunter, Parables, 37.
[412]Ibid.
[413]Ibid., 38.

AIM: TO CAUSE PEOPLE TO BE MORE PATIENT WITH GOD'S TIMETABLE OF JUSTICE.

PLOT:[414] Why does God allow wickedness in the world? Why doesn't he destroy the wicked immediately? For the preservation of society there must be a weeding out process. The church, to be the pure community of God, must also protect itself from the pollution of society. For all their faults, the Pharisees had the right idea about how to live as God's chosen people, pure and holy. But Jesus says "NO!" to all this nonsense. God's community fellowships every tribe, race, and tongue of man.

INTRODUCTION:[415] (Read the song sung by Anne Murray, "A Little Good News.")

> I rolled out this morning the kids had the morning news show on; Bryant Gumble was talkin' `bout the fighting in Lebanon; Some Senator was squawking `bout the bad economy. It's gonna get worse you see, we need a change in policy.

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[414]In each of the inductive sermons modeled after Buttrick's methodology, the sequential plot of the sermon was given followed by the expanded version. Once you understand the form of the text, you can ask the question, "What is the language trying to do?" You answer this question by learning the plot of the text and the movement of the logic of the text. The sermon then imitates these structures and purposes. Buttrick, "Interpretation," 56-58.

Buttrick uses the analogy on p. 294 of a camera. The mind selects a field of understanding to focus on. When all is set, the shutter opens, the image is captured in memory, the shutter closes, and the film is advanced to the next frame. Each frame is a move or a homiletical idea. The frames together develop the plot. If the sermon is well formed, the audience will have something like a filmstrip in which the frames work together to produce coherent understanding.

Once the basic plot has been laid out, sequences of illustrations, images and examples are interwoven to expand the sermon. "The patterned grid of images, examples, and illustrations is designed to function with the structural `argument' of the sermon. . . . Illustrations do not merely illunine discrete ideas, they interrelate in consciousness to form a whole structure of meaning." Buttrick, Homiletic, 163.

[415]The introduction sets the scene and identifies the biblical images with the homiletical idea.

There's a local paper rolled up in a rubber band; One more sad story's one more than I can stand; Just once how I'd like to see the headline say, "Not much to print today, can't find nothin' bad to say -- because

Nobody robbed a liquer store on the lower part of town, Nobody O.D.'ed, nobody burned a single building down, Nobody fired a shot in anger nobody had to die in vain." We sure could use a little good news today.

I'll come home this evenin' I'll bet that the news will be the same; Somebody takes a hostage, somebody steals a plane; How I wanna hear the anchor man talk about a county fair--and how we cleaned up the air--how everybody learned to care, Oh, tell me--

Nobody was assassinated in the whole third world today. And in the streets of Ireland all the children had to do was play. And everbody loves everybody in the good ole USA. We sure could use a little good news today.

Nobody robbed a liquer store on the lower part of town, Nobody O.D.'ed, Nobody burned a single building down, Nobody fired a shot in anger, Nobody had to die in vain, Sure could use a little good news today.[416]

That sounds like what God intended in this world. When a farmer plants, he intends on growing a crop with nice clean rows. However, weeds appear. Weeds are "bad news." And bad news dominates the News and oftentimes our lives. Why does God allow wickedness in the world? Why does God allow that drug pusher to sell crack to our youth? Why does God allow the father to abuse his daughter sexually? Why doesn't he destroy the wicked immediately? Isn't it time for "a little good news!"

1. If you allow the weeds to grow in your garden, your crop will be choked out.[417]

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[416]Charlie Black, Rory Bourke and Tommy Rocco, A Little Good News, (Santa Monica, CA: Chappell & Co., and Bibo Music Publishers, 1983).

[417]Long, Witness, 103, summarizes Buttrick's methodology as what should occur within each move.

"1. Opening statement. The preacher must state, in one clear sentence, the main idea of this move, what this move is about. . . . This invites the hearers to "take a picture of this." In addition, the opening must show how this move is connected to the one before, indicate the point of view of the move, and establish the move's emotional mood.

It will be like the thorns in the parable of the Sower--"Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants." Would it not fulfill God's purpose for this world if he would do some weeding?[418] For the preservation of society there must be a weeding out process. Even in nature this principle holds true. The classic title for this law is: The Survival of the Fittest. Whether it be a heard of buffalo, a pack of wolves, or a hive of bees, the weak and sick of that community will eventually be culled out. The survival of the rest depends upon the fact that the one that cannot survive on its own will die. If energy and resources are spent on the care of unfit members of the clan, then the healthy too will suffer. What do you do when you find that one bad apple in the bushel?

You practice this principle of culling every day of your life. The oil filter in your car screens out harmful particles and purifies your oil.[419] The contaminates are trapped within the filter so that your engine will not be harmed. Our school systems test for academic achievement to insure certain standards are met. Those who cannot meet those

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2. Development. In the middle section of the move, the main idea is elaborated, sometimes through clarification or illustration and sometimes through the raising of objections.

3. Closure. In a terse final sentence, the main idea of the move is restated, thereby signaling to the hearer that his move is complete. Thus, the shutter on the hearer's camera closes, and the film advances in readiness for the next move."

[418]The problem of evil remains a stumbling block for many. Most would use the following logic of weeding much like Jesus' anticipates in his audience. In this move, identification with the general attitudes of the audience is established.

[419]This is one example of using a new image or metaphor to proclaim the same truth. There are too many images shared in consciousness to identify each one through these sermons. An image should reflect common usage in contemporary conversation so that it quickly forms in consciousness of the hearer. Buttrick, Homiletic, 133, states that some aspect of the illustrations must have a clear analogy between the idea in the sermon. There needs to be a parallel between the structure of content and the shape of an illustration. The illustration should be appropriate to the content.

standards are left behind. Are you not glad that your doctor was able to pass certain minimal standards before he was allowed to practice? All of us desire medical review boards to discipline those practitioners who are not qualified. Our judicial system culls out those undesirable elements in our society who otherwise would cause harm. Amen to the Judge who sentences the rapist, murderer, and child molester to the maximum sentence allowable under the law. Our roads will be much safer when the judicial system enforces the law and revokes the licenses of those who dare drink and drive. From the boy cut from the varsity basketball team to God's culling down the men of Gideon to 300, weeding is a part of everyday life.[420] Would it not fulfill God's purpose for this world if he would do some weeding?[421]

2. The church must also protect itself from the pollution of society if it is to be the pure community of God.[422] More than a hundred years ago, Soren Kierkegaard

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[420]In each move, I am creating one central image consisting of common associations in the experience of the congregation. This image should support the thesis sentence of the on-going plot. Each image needs three or four minutes to visualize in the minds of the audience, but no more than four is needed lest the image will be lost. Buttrick states, "moves" are blocks of thought on a "single notion" or a "single conceptual idea." Only one single idea is to be imaged at a time. Within a "move," there is a weaving of three different strands of thought: (1) theological reflections; (2) "opposition" or intellectual blocks in the minds of the congregation; and (3) experiences which we all share in common. See Buttrick, Homiletic, 33.

The use of Gideon is an example of removing intellectual blocks in the minds of the audience. Here is an example where God approves of "weeding." Otherwise, people would stop and dwell on a perceived obstacle and not continue the journey. I will not attemp to identify contrapuntal statements in the future.

[421]Here is a repeating of the thought of the first few sentences designed to bring closure to this image.

[422]The first move is intensified in this move by making a direct application to the church. Nothing yet is introduced to overturn the attitudes of the audience. Premature weeding seemingly is still acceptable.

warned that the age of the crowd was upon us. In such an age, said Kierkegaard, people would not think of deciding for themselves. They would follow the advice given to children going off to a party: "Look and see what the others are doing and then behave like them."

A documentary showed the mysterious world of the octopus. His chameleon capabilities allow him not only to change the color of his skin, but also the texture. If the surface of the ocean floor is sandy smooth, the octopus will mirror that condition. However, if the octopus climbs on to a rocky cliff, he can conform his skin to mirror that condition. Since the octopus has no skeletal structure, it can squeeze its body into the smallest of crevices. Its body will be molded to fit whatever size necessary. The church must never conform itself to the world, changing righteousness just to mirror the newest cultural fad.

If someone has cancer, an operation is usually performed to cut out the malignancy. The reason is simple: if left alone, it will metastasize; that is, it will spread. No one wants a cancer to spread, so it is cut out or otherwise removed from the body so that the patient can be healthy again. And, of course, when the doctors tell the patient, "We got it all," everyone is encouraged and rejoices.

The same thing should be true in the church. The reason to excommunicate the one refusing to live by the standards of holiness is to protect the rest of the body from being infected with that disease. Did not Paul tell the Corinthian church to turn the man who was living with his father's wife over to Satan. Sin, like cancer, needs to be cut out so it will not spread. The church must protect itself from the pollution of society.

3. The Pharisees, for all their faults, had the right idea about how to live as God's

chosen people.[423] To live holy lives, we must not indulge in what the world does. To be sanctified means to live as one set apart for special service. The Pharisee would identify with this text. Paul says,

> What do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people. Therefore come out form them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, and let us strive for perfection out of reverence for God (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1).

The Parisee would identify with "come out from them and be separate." Even the term "Pharisee" means: "separated ones." They desired to restore Mosaic Law to Israel to help usher in the Messianic Age. They especially insisted upon the observance of Jewish ritual laws. Since Pharisees found that other Jews were not careful enough about keeping the laws of tithing and ritual purity, they felt it was necessary to place limits on their contacts with other Jews as well as with Gentiles. For example, they could not eat in the home of a non-Pharisee, since they could not be sure that the food had been properly tithed and kept ritually pure. Although their hearts were far from God due to their hypocrisy, they zealously strove to obey God. Even Paul credited unbelieving Jews with having a "zeal for God" (Rom. 10:2), even though it was misguided.

4. This parable of Jesus was given in the context of a society seeking to be God's pure people. First century Judaism knew all about weeding. However, in this parable,

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[423]This move may create doubt on the part of the listener. Not many will want to be identified with the Pharisees. Yet, they cannot help but realize their position agrees with that of the Pharisees. The use of Pauline material here serves as a contrapuntal device to erase the doubts.

Jesus gives the other side of the coin. Jesus contradicts their view of weeding. Jesus is calling his people to live with the culls and not weed them out. (Read the parable.) Jesus says "No!" to weeding. That goes against every principle known to civilized society. Yet, Jesus says "NO!" to all this nonsense about weeding.[424] God is not a respecter of persons. Really? Surely, God places more value on Paul than he would some fifteen-year-old runaway. You see, some men, like the Pharisees, are more religious than God himself.

The Pharisees practiced spiritual "Apartheid." They were incensed and indignant at the free and easy way in which Jesus was admitting all kinds of undesirables into his messianic community. Harlots, tax-collectors, common folk like fishermen, women caught in adultery, Samaritans and Gentiles. If this keeps up, he soon will be accepting babies born out of wedlock and people on Welfare. You let one of their kind in and you will have them knocking your door down. You will be labeled a drunkard and a glutton if you eat with the likes of them. But Jesus says "NO!" No farmer in his senses tries to separate the weeds from the wheat while the crop is still growing. Leave the weeding out of the unrighteous from the righteous to God at Judgment Day. Paul understands this principle when he says in 1 Cor. 4:5, "Pass no premature judgment; wait till the Lord comes. For he will bring to light what darkness hides, and disclose men's inward motives."

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[424]I now make a shift back to the original intent of the parable. Since the audience has been disoriented, reorientation now will enable them to hear again this parable. Buttrick, "Parable," on p. 17, states, "What parables may do is to let us enter them on our terms, to find at the outset our own rather stock understandings of self, world, and God; then, suddenly, to disrupt our world so that in the end we find ourselves translated into a mysterious new world, . . . forced to change. . . ."

Some may ask, "But what about church discipline?" "Do we not have the right to kick the immoral fellow out?" They would then respond saying, "That's the problem with the church today, not enough elders with the backbone to discipline the church." Let us ask the parable these questions: "What was the purpose of sowing the seed?" To have a good crop. "And the purpose for not weeding?" To preserve the good crop. "And the purpose of church discipline?" Why, it was to win the erring back to the Way. It also protects the whole lump. Correction stops infection. Church discipline was never designed to weed anyone out of the garden of God. Only God has that right and that power. When the man in 1 Corinthians 5 was delivered over to Satan, that too, was for the restoration of a soul if he would repent.

Have you ever met a person, no matter how vicious and depraved, of whom you could say without a doubt, "This person is a weed and nothing else, rotten to the core?" "The truth is that, if the weeding out of the sinners from the saints were left to men, we would, as Jesus said, inevitably rip up much good wheat along with the weeds."[425]

> As the old rhyme says: There is so much good in the worst of us, And so much bad in the best of us, That it hardly becomes any of us, To talk about the rest of us.[426]

Most of us are umpires at heart; we like to call balls and strikes on somebody else. However, there are too many in God's garden already pulling up and destroying the lives of any who get in their way. Leave the weeding out of the unrighteous from the righteous to God at Judgment Day.

5. God's community fellowships every tribe, race and tongue of man.[427]

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[425]Hunter, Parables, 48.
[426]Ibid.
[427]This Move gives a theological basis for Jesus' parable. Instead of focusing on the weeds, there is a need to focus on the positive side of human relationships. The audience perspective should shift in

Community. I like that word. The family of God is a community of believers who have been brought together in fellowship. We gather from all walks of life to share our sorrows, our joys, our disappointments and our successes. We lean upon each other; we protect each other; we cherish each other; we respect each other. Here is security and refuge. Community. A community only made possible by the glue that God uses to bond us together. No matter what our differences, love for each other maintains a unity the world cannot comprehend. Stephen C. Neill said it this way,

> Our friends are the people whom we choose, usually friends are the same sort of people as ourselves. My neighbor is the man whom I do not choose; he is the man whom God gives to me; he is the man who happens to live in the house next to mine; he is the man who happens to sit opposite to me in the train; he is the clerk who works at the desk next to mine. I have no right to say that he is no concern of mine, because, if I am a Christian, I know that he is the man whom God has given to me.
> When God gives you a brother or sister, you have no right to say, "I have no need of you." The rocket scientist sits side by side with the sanitation worker singing, "A Common Love." "A common love for each other; A common gift to the Savior; A common bond holding us to the Lord; A common strength when we're weary; A common hope for tomorrow; A common joy in the truth of God's Word."

Conclusion: Yes, there is wickedness in the world. Yes, there is wickedness in the church. But God is patiently waiting for men to repent. Be assured, one day God will render justice to the evil and the righteous. God will reward every wicked deed. He will make right every wrong. Our suffering will not be in vain. As community, we patiently wait for God to separate the sheep from the goats. We patiently wait for the harvest when

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attitude so that a more tolerant and patient understanding can develop. The audience needs to see the world as God sees the world. There is both a good crop and weeds growing in the field.

God will bring in the wheat and burn the weeds. That's what I call, "a little good news."[428] Then we will be gathered home to enjoy the perfect fellowship in the community called heaven.[429]

Beholding The Future

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:31-32

AIM: TO CAUSE PEOPLE TO BE ASSURED THAT DESPITE APPEARANCES GOD'S KINGDOM IS HERE AND WILL BE MANIFEST IN GLORY.

INTRODUCTION: Revolution! Liberation! Kingdom! These words drip with blood. Picture: A scanty band of Galileans hiding behind the stalls of a dusty manger plotting revolution. The Roman patrols march freely from village to village taking every liberty . . . and each time a soldier steals a fig from the tree, the hatred mounts in yet another Jewish heart. Each time a tax collector excises another surcharge upon an already tax-burdened family, the revolution gains another volunteer.

The disciples of Jesus were well versed in the tune of Revolution. When the messiah comes, revolution, liberation, kingdom! Our nation knew such fever. Thomas Payne, John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and George Washington fought a revolution for your freedom and mine because of tyranny. In those days, a Red

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[428]By calling upon images from the introduction and previous moves, so that a symbolic field of meaning forms in consciousness. The sermonic aim will be fixed so that the audience will respond accordingly.

[429]This final move contains the conclusion which the previous moves have been contributing to. Beginning with move one, the audience has been taken on a journey that has finally arrived at the destination of move five. If each move takes about four minutes, then a well designed sermon of twenty minutes will consist of about five moves. I will not attempt to elucidate on Buttrick's methodology beyond this first sermon.

Coat fired the hearth of hatred as readily as a Roman Banner did in Jesus' day. When the Messiah comes, he will usher in his kingdom. It must have been discouraging to the Twelve during the early parts of Jesus' ministry. The crowds chased after a miracle worker; the religious leaders chased after a heretic; the disciples chased after a teller of parables. When would Jesus get down to kingdom business? Instead, he told little stories about mustard seeds. What is God up to anyway?[430] In this parable we learn how God takes action on three fronts:[431] First --

I. GOD'S BEGINNING A MIRACLE: (Read Text.)

A. EXPLANATION:

1. The words of Zech. 4:10 ring clearly through the interpretation of this parable. "Who despises the day of small things?" So often what appears to be small and insignificant, will in the final outcome be the most significant and pivotal event. Who would have suspected that a small mustard seed could produce such a mighty bush in God's garden. Because of their size, you would naturally associate large seeds with large plants which produce large fruit. Therefore, watermelons would logically be the fruit of an oak tree, not an acorn. But the experienced farmer understands that God produces a marvel with every seed. It is not how the venture begins, but the harvest in the end that counts.

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[430]This introduction is inductive. This limited use is acceptable in a deductive sermon. Induction works well in introductions of deductive sermons.

[431]The thesis is introduced by the preceding question. Each point answers this question. Each point also is organized deductively. Even when a point contains a paragraph inductive in nature, the overall scheme contributes to deductive structure.

2. The disciples needed assurance. They needed to hear that their sacrifices of home and businesses were not in vain. Will this puny bunch of itinerant preachers ever be able to usher in God's kingdom? Instead of true Israelites, Jesus attracted publicans and sinners. Opposition mounted against the carpenter and his "good news." They threw him out of the synagogues. They accused him of being in league with the devil. Even his own family wondered if he had gone out of his mind. How could this be the eternal God invading history? Though a mustard seed may begin small, so too do many of God's mightiest acts.

B. APPLICATION:

1. We too often waver when we look around. This congregation is but one outpost in God's kingdom. Many great battles are being fought on the front lines against a whole array of evil onslaughts. Meanwhile, we linger here, not knowing whether God has any great battle plans for us to implement or not. And if God were to call on us to respond, how can we do so on the limited budget and manpower available to us?

2. Yet the parable of the mustard seed teaches clearly: God is a God of small things. In small things, God has employed his mightiest acts.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. On one of the nature trails at Turkey Run State Park, there lies a deep pool of water carved out of solid rock. High above the pool, a mere trickle of water falls drop by drop into the basin. Slowly, over the centuries, that water has chiseled out from that rock a marvel of nature.

God has a way that often starts small before he portrays his glory. The Mississippi embarks down a hill so small that a man can step from one bank to the other without getting wet. Yet this mighty river still serves as the number one water transportation route in this nation. God often takes five loaves and two fishes just to produce twelve baskets for his glory.

2. I like what A. M. Hunter says in this regard:

> Five centuries before, Isaiah of Babylon had foretold the coming of a messenger with `news of deliverance' who would cry aloud to Zion and the cities of Judah, `Your God has become king!' (Isa. 40:9f; 52:7f.) The `good news' that the reign of God had arrived was what Israel had been waiting for centuries to hear. Now, says Jesus, the prophecy is coming true. The new order of God is dawning. Turn to God and make his good news your own.
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> It is always hard, at the actual time, to discern what is really going on in what is taking place. Take an instance from British history. What took place at Runnymede in 1215 was that King John, much against his will, signed the Magna Carta. When the king put pen to paper, a few of the barons present may have dimly surmised something of what the benefit of hindsight sees quite clearly, that what was then being inaugurated was British parliamentary democracy as we know it.
>
> So it is with what took place in Galilee nineteen hundred years ago. With the help of hindsight, we Christians can now see that God, through his Son, Jesus the Messiah, was setting in motion a train of events which was to issue in the rise of the new Israel, which is the church of Christ. But in AD 28 nobody foresaw this. . . .[432]

What is God up to anyway? God's not only in the business of beginning miracles, but also--

II. GOD'S ADVANCING A KINGDOM:

A. EXPLANATION:

1. We fall prey to the "Bigger is better" philosophy popularized by the business world. A fundamental doctrine of God's kingdom teaches the

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[432]Hunter, Parables, 43.

spiritual nature of this realm. The Jews awaited a physical kingdom to be established in Jerusalem. We fail to realize that often our measures of success are not able to judge the spiritual world. Whenever we look at size, numbers, and dollars, we limit God's power to advance his kingdom on his terms.

2. When a mustard seed is planted, who by watching it can see it grow. Although it seemingly appears to grow overnight, not one of us can differentiate from day to day its progress.

B. APPLICATION:

1. God advances his kingdom on many fronts. First, he advances his kingdom by the sowing of the seed. The responsibility of the seed penetrating the hearts of people belongs to God. It is his truth. The Word is the sword he uses to create faith. We sing: "I know not how the Spirit moves, convincing men of sin, revealing Jesus thro' the word, creating faith in Him." But you can be convinced that God is advancing his kingdom in many ways that we cannot even perceive.

2. God's kingdom advances through spiritual growth. As a congregation grows in love, service and maturity, the kingdom advances. As each one of you grows into the image of God, the kingdom advances. Each time a child is taught in our Bible Classes; Each time food is distributed to a hungry family; Each time you choose the right over the wrong--the kingdom advances.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. Just this past year Sears was replaced by Wal-Mart as the number one retail department store in America. Retailers in every avenue of business have marveled at the success of Sam Walton. But who can say that this success story is any more amazing than the victories won by the Mom and Pop hardware store where all the bills have been paid, kids raised healthy and happy, where the community turns for honest trusted service and where Mom and Pop retire, not rich, but doing O.K. God advances his kingdom even in the small church where the gates of Hades will not prevail.

Also,

III. GOD'S PROVIDING A SHELTER[433]

A. EXPLANATION:

1. The mustard plant grows to such a height that the birds of the air come to roost. The Old Testament imagery of God's future kingdom creates a picture of harmony, security and refuge.

B. APPLICATION:

1. Americans lust for security. We call many of the stocks and bonds, securities. They comfort us as we look into the future. Whether it be a rainy day or retirement, our securities are our financial holdings. Politicians protect the sacred cow of Social Security, a system never designed to be a retirement program. The original intent of Social

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[433]Each of the three points could stand as separate blocks independent of the others. Each alone would adequately answer the question in the introduction without the aid of the other two points.

Security was to supplement retirement and disability programs already provided. Yet, for too many, it has become their only means of support. God offers a security, a peace, a haven of rest beyond any the world has known.

2. The storms of life come to wash us away. Many of the storms beat against our life from every direction. From the north comes furious winds while the south brings scorching heat. Heartaches, stress, deteriorating health, and mounting credit beat against our homes like rain, snow, and sleet. These attacks assail us at the core of our being. Only in Jesus can you find refuge.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. Movie: "Logan's Run." They sought a place called "Sanctuary."

2. Judges: The seven cities of refuge.

CONCLUSION: God is a God of action. He actively works in his church achieving for us a victory. God uses the small things to display his mighty power. God continually moves to bless the ongoing work of faithful believers. God offers sanctuary to all who would come. (Read Mt. 11:28-30.) God sent his son to usher in his kingdom. Although it began with a small band of disciples, God continued to advance his kingdom to the ends of the earth. God's kingdom is here. He sits upon the great white throne even as I speak. For all those who desire a safe haven of rest, God's kingdom provides refuge.[434]

Transforming The World

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:33

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[434]The conclusion summarizes the entire thesis.

AIM: TO PRODUCE CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S PEOPLE AS AMBASSADORS TO THE WORLD.

PLOT: At no time in history has man had greater power for good than today. Yet, the best laid plans of man have failed. All that is evil infiltrates man's best intentions. Evil works like leaven in the world. And still, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to leaven. The impact of one Christian life can transform the world.

INTRODUCTION:[435]

1. At no time in history has man had greater power for good than today. Man has always dreamed of Heaven on earth, the achieving of an ideal society called utopia. Robert Owen founded New Harmony, IN, just north of us, with such dreams. Yet, the utopian experiment failed. The two factors that most favor the twenty-first century are: First, the great amount of knowledge collected over the centuries; and second, the technological advances that our hands have made. From one isolated location, you can transmit a message for the entire world to hear. Nations have now gathered in unison to put down a threat to world peace in the Middle East with minimal loss of life. The forecasters of the future paint pictures of tomorrow that only Sci-fi writers dare speak about. The computer age will move the next ten years faster and higher than all previous decades in history. Man has the power to feed and house the world. Man is quickly approaching a day when disease will be obsolete.

Louis Sullivan, M.D., secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has even unveiled 300 goals that would lead to a healthy America by the year 2000. By following Dr. Sullivan's advice, "up to 70 percent of all premature deaths could

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[435]The first move in this case is general enough to serve as an introduction.

be prevented."[436] Soon man will genetically engineer human life as he sees fit. It seems the ideal utopia man has sought since the beginning of time is becoming a reality.

2. Yet, the best laid plans of man have failed and will continue to fail. Man rarely accounts for the influence of sin. As soon as one disease obtains endangered species status, another one takes it place. The black plague, TB, cholera, polio, and small pox have all but vanished from our hospitals. Yet the Aids epidemic threatens to bankrupt the medical industry. Even when we find the cure for Aids, another killer disease will arrive on the scene. As man pats himself on the back for breaking the resistance of Iraq, other third world powers plot even now to rise up and be heard. The weapons of peace accumulate in stockpiles of destruction controlled by the lusts of evil men. Just when many people are dreaming of one world currency and market, financial institutions are failing. Just when preachers dream of taking the gospel to every creature through the network of telecommunication, the world's population grows to such 6 billion proportions that Christianity is quickly dwindling percentage wise. Past experience should teach us that legislating morality does not work. So often "Moral Majorities" have coerced conformity to rules and regulations.

The church hangs on to Victorian cultural traditions striving to mold the future into the image of the past. How do we fight abortion? Legislate. How do we attack homosexuality? Legislate. How do we protect the environment? Legislate. How do we get the rapist off the streets? Legislate. How do we get kids to quit taking drugs? Educate. How do we stop teenage pregnancies? Educate. How do we create world peace? Negotiate. How do you eliminate a world bully? Missile Negotiate. Our answer for the

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[436]"A Healthy You In a Healthy America," Health Scene (Summer 1991): 1.

ills of this world is always the same. Educate, Legislate, or Negotiate. All the institutions of man have proven but one point in world history. Man is a failure. Legislation, rules, traditions, technological advances, education, and laws have failed and will continue to fail in producing utopia. Here is a lesson for the church to learn.

3. All that is evil infiltrates man's best intentions. Some claim that Satan has some world scheme infiltrating every level of society to usher in disaster. Different scenarios are given by different doom sayers. Some say the media, through some deceptive, covert operation, is designed to bring moral collapse to our nation. Slowly every immoral taboo will be taught our young by the almighty educator called television. Slowly every liberal cause of organizations like ACLU will be implanted in our minds by network newscasters. Politicians belong to some world government organization that is attempting to rob us of our democratic heritage; McCarthy phobia at its best. Is there some world scheme of Satan to bring down mankind? Yes. Satan works his schemes in each heart, when it gives in to the temptations of its own lusts and sins. He has a very good plan.

Man has been tripping over his own desires for power, immorality and wealth since the beginning of time. Eve was the first to fall victim to Satan's devices. Soon Adam, Cain, and Lamech all sin. The Garden of Eden was utopia. But sin entered the picture. Generation after generation proved but one point: Man is a failure. God remorsed that he had made man and started over with just eight. He destroyed man with a flood. But soon after Noah comes out of the ark, we find him drunk in his tent. Generation after generation proved but one point: Man is a failure. By Genesis 11, we find man again full of evil as he tries to reach out to be like God. So God started over.

This time he did not destroy the world but started working through one man, Abraham, and one family and one nation. Even though there were bright spots like David, Elijah, Isaiah, and others, God's chosen nation proved one point: Man is a failure. No utopia was established. No world order was achieved. Man through the centuries have followed their Caesars, Czars, Kaisers, and Presidents, but no world utopia has ever come. And it will never come for Satan gets a foothold in all of us.

4. Evil works like leaven in the world. Yeast hidden in dough works beyond human sight. No matter how closely you watch, the dough rises without your awareness. Who can detect the blooming of a rose? Leaven infiltrates and transforms the dough by permeating throughout the entire loaf. In Mt. 16:6 and 11, Jesus compares the teachings of the Pharisees to leaven. Since the days of the Passover in Egypt, leaven was a symbol of evil. Although there are some cases where leaven is not associated with evil in the Old Testament, most people in Jesus' day would understand this image as representing something bad. The Pharisees work their legalistic web around the Law of Moses nullifying God's Word in the name of religion. They look so pious and religious, yet lead men to become "twice the son of hell" as they are. If Satan appeared with his red suit and pitch fork rubbing his hands together, every one of us would lead the charge to cast him out. "Get behind me Satan." "Resist him and he will flee from you." Yet Satan comes wearing sheep's clothing. Satan hides in the darkest corners of our minds only to sneak out when we are least aware to tempt us where we are the weakest. Sometimes we catch him at his game and he flees from us. At other times, we fall victim to his schemes. Slowly Satan works his plans through more and more unsuspecting souls until a family breaks apart; or a church divides over trivial matters; or a community tolerates gross

immorality; or a nation supports laws contrary to God's nature. Like leaven, evil permeates society until all is corrupted.

5. And still, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to leaven. "You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world." But in this parable he declares, you are also leaven. When the leaven of God mixes with the leaven of evil, Satan will flee as darkness hides from light. When the reign of God invades history, nothing can be unaffected by it. God reaches down his hand into the affairs of men to change the course of history. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven permeating dough. God is acting through his people. He creates a disturbance from which nothing is secure. (Read Acts 17:6; 24:5.) From the Christian perspective these disturbances are described by passages like, 1 Thess. 1:4-10. When Alexis de Tocqueville came to the United States to study the prison system during the nineteenth century, he made this observation:

> I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her fertile fields and boundless forests; it was not there. I sought for it in her free schools and her institutions of learning; it was not there. I sought for it in her matchless Constitution and democratic Congress; it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and found the pulpits aflame for righteousness, did I understand the greatness and genius of America. America is great because America is good. When America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.[437]

The kingdom of God is like leaven which leavens the whole lump. The only hope for man, is God. Man is a failure. The only hope for man to succeed is to enter into the kingdom of God.

6. The impact of one Christian life can transform the world. Never underestimate your influence for good. You have a Savior living inside of you that has already overcome the world. The church can ferment the world. How will this world be won to

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[437]As quoted by Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7,700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times (Rockville, MD: Assurance Publishers, 1979), 1541.

Christ? One soul at a time. How can Christians transform the world? By teaching one neighbor the transforming message of Jesus Christ.

Let's compare this influence to trains. Trains are awesome. Trains are earth-bound freight and people movers that shake the earth as they rumble through town. How many of us were fascinated by the big locomotives as kids? But even the most powerful engine can not start one-hundred 200,000 pound cars all at once. A one-hundred car train starts one car at a time. Between each is a coupler with about five inches of slack. The slack lets each car start rolling before the one behind. The church, you, need to follow that same principle. The church will transform the world by starting with one other person.

Laws will never stop teenage pregnancies. But if you will risk a relationship and share your Savior, then one less life will be aborted. A few Friday nights holding the hand of a drunk can transform not only his life, but also the life of a whole family. One church that rises up to the challenge of its community can influence that community for good beyond anything imaginable. The only solution to an increasing suicide statistic, an ever growing drug culture, a rising divorce rate, the expanding homeless sub-culture, etc., is people to people sharing together God's love. As God's people, let us act as leaven permeating a godliness in a godless society. The influence of your life sharing God's love can transform the world of those you meet everyday.[438] They will know we are Christians

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[438]This inductive sermon can be compared to a funnel. The first four moves have created images that will contribute to the last two moves. Moves five and six narrow down the images until one lasting impression is made on the audience. This impression corresponds with he purpose of the original parable and should impact the present audience with equal force. Although the form of the parable is not maintained in any of these sermons, the function of the text is imitated by the inductive sermon.

by our love. Be God's leaven! Permeate this town! Influence your family, neighbors and friends for the cause of Christ. Be God's salt! Be a light shinning in darkness! Be God's leaven!

Striking It Rich

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:44

AIM: TO DEEPEN APPRECIATION FOR THE VALUE OF CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT.

INTRODUCTION: America is obsessed with the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Remember the T.V. show where you sent in your story about why you needed money. A millionaire, if he thought your request worthy, would grant your request. Today we have sweepstakes and lotteries of every kind. No longer do you have to be worthy, only lucky. Remember Jed Clampet. While rustling up some food, he fired a shot that changed his destiny.

> Up from the ground came a bubblin crude. Oil that is. Black gold. Texas Tea. Well his kinfolk said, "Jed, move away from here. California is the place you ought to be." So he loaded up his truck and moved to Beverly.

It was a godsend, an amazing discovery, fate. Different people have different ways to explain it. What you might call fate, I might call providence. Another example of an amazing discovery is when:

> In the Spring of 1947 when two Bedouin lads were shepherding their sheep and goats at Qumran, by the northwestern cliffs of the Dead Sea, an animal went amissing. One of the lads, searching for it, threw a stone into a small cave in the rock face. When he heard what sounded like breaking crockery, he took sudden fright. Later, however, the two lads crept together into the cave, and there on its floor, stuffed in elongated jars, behold, roll upon roll of crumbling leather. They had made one of the biggest archaeological discoveries of modern times. They had found the first of the now famous Dead Sea scrolls.[439]

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[439]Hunter, Parables, 77.

An amazing discovery. But the greatest discovery a man can make occurs when he finds the kingdom of Jesus Christ. (Read the parable). Finding Jesus and following Jesus are both necessary for entering his kingdom. Even though some find Jesus, they make the decision to go their own way. This parable identifies three steps necessary to obtain the most valuable treasure ever know to man. First, you must hear the gospel.

I. GOD PRESENTS YOU WITH AN UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY:

A. EXPLANATION: Tell the beginning of the parable: "Find."

1. The man working in the field fell upon good fortune. An amazing discovery. He wasn't seeking it. He unearthed quite by accident this rich treasure. You might call it Serendipity--a discovery you are not expecting. He did not need his kinfolk to tell him what to do. He put that treasure back into its hiding place. The best bank often proved to be your own back yard. If the owner died, was murdered, or taken into captivity, such treasures would remain hidden maybe for centuries, until by chance it was discovered.[440]

2. This man recognized the great value of his find. He did not need to take it to the local appraiser, he realized immediately upon discovery that the treasure was priceless.

B. ILLUSTRATION:[441]

1. Imagine, a young boy who brought in his father's baseball cards asking the dealer for a fair price. "Hundred dollars for the whole lot." A

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[440]Stein, Introduction, 99.

[441]The placement of "explanation," "application," and "illustration," is not rigid.

hundred dollars to an eight year old seemed like a fortune. A few days later, the dealer sold Mickey Mantle's rookie card for thousands. The boy didn't know the value of what he possessed.

C. APPLICATION:

1. The value of the kingdom of heaven is priceless. He discovered the treasure with great joy. It would have been so easy to settle far short of the goal. This world offers so many other attractive alternatives. Many men during the California gold rush set off for their fortune. How sad it would be for a man to settle for Fools Gold--like a mirage that will leave you empty. Parched, your lips cracked, tongue swollen--you look up to see the palm trees blowing in the wind. An oasis of pure fresh spring water. A mirage. Full of promise that ends up vain. Just shinny rocks without value.

2. The Kingdom of God is of such value that whatever else your life has been bound to, it is a fair exchange to give it up to possess the Kingdom. How valuable is the Kingdom to you? Whether you find it on the pages of Scripture, or by visiting a local congregation of God's people, or in the life of a friend, realize that the kingdom of God is the greatest fortune this world has ever seen.

3. When you hear the voice of Jesus say, "Come, open your eyes to all that I give you by my grace." Respond, "One thing I do know, I was blind but now I see."

Finding the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ is an unique opportunity. A true Godsend.

However,

II. OPPORTUNITIES REQUIRE DECISIONS:

A. EXPLANATION: (Continue the parable--the man sold all that he possessed.) This man had a decision to make. Would he bury the treasure for someone else to find? Would he take the treasure to the present owner of the field? Or would he decide to acquire the treasure for himself?

1. You have worked hard all your life to fulfill your goals and dreams. Your life is headed down a well planned path. But suddenly the inbreak of the kingdom occurs in your life. You find Jesus Christ. You hear the message that Jesus came to save sinners. You hear about how he died for your sins and was raised to the right hand of the Father where he reigns to this day. You hear that the one who was crucified has now been made both Lord and Christ. You hear that the opportunity for salvation is still available. God desires to save you. God desires to adopt you into his family. God wants you to accept the rule of Jesus Christ into your heart. What will you do with Jesus?

2. Once you meet Jesus, you have come to a fork in the road. You must turn one way or the other. Which road you take will determine the destiny of your entire life. Just like there are two sides to a sheet of flypaper, it makes a difference to the fly which side he chooses.

B. APPLICATION:

1. Decisions, decisions, decisions. Some people cannot make the simplest of decisions. They either put an important decision off to the last

moment, or they wait until it is too late and out of their hands. If you do not make decisions, someone else will make them for you.

2. The kingdom of heaven: God's rule over men's hearts. Living within the borders of the kingdom brings abundant life. There is protection, blessing, forgiveness, purpose, love, peace, and much more all found within the borders of his kingdom. But on the outside lie the bandits and thieves who wish to kill and destroy. Guilt, anxiety, false hopes, and condemnation all lurk outside the borders of God's kingdom seeking to devour you.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. Do you remember the oil filter commercial: "Pay me now or pay me later." It is your decision. What happens if you put the decision off? The decision will be made for you. When your engine locks up on you on the highway twenty miles from nowhere, you're going to have to pay the price.

2. The conversion of Saul in Acts 9 will serve as a useful illustration. He waited in Damascus three days praying and fasting. Ananias called him to decision (Acts 22:16).

III. DECISIONS DEMAND ACTION:[442]

A. EXPLANATION: (Finish the parable--the man sold all to purchase the field in order to acquire the treasure.)

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[442]Each point does not stand alone. The points build upon each other proving the thesis. All three steps will be necessary for one to enter the kingdom.

1. The action required by the man involved selling all that he possessed in order to enjoy the blessings of the treasure. The cost is high. Jesus demands your very life given to him in service. Lk. 9:23. Like that silly rabbit which will do anything for a bowl of Trix, we will do anything our king requires. Those who walk away from the treasure may think we are foolish by giving up our lives for Jesus, but we know the value they forfeited.

2. No longer would this man's life be the same. Everyday would now be different because when he found the treasure, he decided to sell all he own in order to possess it.

B. APPLICATION:

1. Discuss the path of the Christian lifestyle presented in Colossians 3. Once we have been raised, we walk as Jesus did. The Christian life becomes a journey following the king. The kingdom is so valuable, that the decision to possess it will involve selling your whole life. From that day forward, by your obedience, you pay the price.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. (Return to the illustration of Paul. Compare Phil. 3:7-14 with 2 Tim. 4:6-8.)

CONCLUSION: Once you discover Jesus, make a decision to act. When the opportunity to possess the greatest treasure in all the world presents itself to you, take action. The kingdom is here now!

Taking The Plunge

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:45-46

AIM: TO CAUSE GREATER COMMITMENT.

PLOT: I love quests. Everybody is looking for something of value. And the joy of finding makes the heart flutter. So no matter what the cost, you will do all to possess it. Are you willing to follow Jesus?

1. I love quests. If you want to give me a book that will captivate me, give me one about a daring adventure of a prince who will risk life and limb, go over land and sea and conquer mighty foes finally to reach the rainbow's end. When Frodo finally destroys the evil ring of power nearly slipping into Mt. Doom, my heart leaps out of my chest racing with him every step of the way. There are dragons to be slayed, giants to topple, Evil Warlocks to outwit. It has been almost three years since I have read such an epic. Not because I cannot find them, but because they consume me. I will not put it down once I begin. Two days later, I come out of hiding exhausted from the road I have just traveled. Life is a quest. Life can have as many ups and downs, and be filled with as many exciting twists and turns as you are willing to take. It is all a matter of attitude.

2. Everybody is looking for something of value. Ask anyone where they see themselves in twenty-five years, and they will have a ready answer. All of us have dreams and goals for our life and the life of our children. Sit back on a hill and gaze at the clouds as they roll on to their distant destination. Let your mind dream about tomorrow. Maybe you dream about a life of luxury. Perhaps your goals center on what you can accomplish in the business world. Possibly you focus on your children's success while you spoil your grandchildren beyond repair. Conceivably your aspirations lie in making a difference in this world that will have lasting impact on making society a better

place. Saul of Tarsus sought after the will of God. He zealously pursued the Law. He devoted himself night and day to become one of the leading authorities in Jerusalem. He went to the best schools. He studied under the finest teachers. He led at home and abroad successful campaigns in name of Jehovah against Christianity. The desire to please God drove Saul even to commit murder. He had a dream for a pure Israel that would usher in God's powerful kingdom. When a dream takes hold of your heart, you will go to any extreme to fulfill that desire. Everybody is seeking something. Set your hearts on treasures above.

3. And the joy of finding makes the heart flutter. You have worked so hard for so many days it becomes easy to lose sight of your destination. Monday after Monday toils on year after year. Dreams accumulate dust after awhile. And when you least expect it, BOOM! There it is. You found it. When one discovers Jesus Christ for the first time, the joy surpasses any experience known to man. After long years of struggling with sin and guilt, the freedom found in the kingdom of God liberates your soul. This is forgiveness that makes you feel clean and fresh. Burdens are truly lifted at Calvary. Rom. 7:24-25. No greater joy in all the world can be felt. (Tell the story of Acts 3:1-8.) The joy of being touched by Jesus far surpasses any worldly pleasure.

4. So no matter what the cost, you will do all to possess it. As kids we use to say, "finders keepers." You find a candy bar, it does not matter if it was in your brother's coat pocket, you find it--you keep it. "Finders keepers!" And you had better eat it before your brother finds you. But you grow up and learn that not all is so easy. (Tell the story of the text.) When you find what you have been searching for, you must then make a decision. Your life can no longer be the same. For when you really look at Jesus you see the most

unexpected sight. Many hope to find a man dressed in fine linen sitting on a throne. The road to the throne is paved in gold. As you pass through the gates of pearl to the white throne room of God, you hope to see a King wearing his diamond studded crown. Instead, look closely now, you see ragged clothes, a thorny crown, and a rugged man carrying a heavy cross headed for a borrowed tomb. Jesus says, "Come follow me." For the truth of the camp song cannot be denied, "You can't wear the crown if you don't bear the cross." And the old hymn rings true, "The way of the cross leads home." Finding the kingdom is worth more than many fine pearls. But entering the kingdom will cost you all that you own.

5. Are you willing to follow Jesus? It is a true adventure. It is the greatest quest you will ever undertake. Seek, Find, Act! Conclude with the song, "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus."[443]

Harvesting The Sea

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:47-50

AIM: TO CAUSE PEOPLE TO DETERMINE TO BE RIGHTEOUS.

INTRODUCTION: The only reason that I would go fishing is for the fun of it. I am not a fisherman. It is not my vocation. That certainly was not the case with Peter and John. They were fishermen. It was not their favorite sport. It was not a pastime. It was not something they did. It was who they were. On August 10, Bill Quilliam put in his newspaper article, "Sharing Outdoors," a picture of a 42 inch catfish. That's what I call a "keeper." Yesterday, he showed the photo of the Lake Sturgeon that was as long as that

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[443]Although each move contains elements of the final conclusion, none alone can explain the parable. Not until all five moves have played their role will the thesis be evident.

pick-up truck was wide. You throw back the 3 inch blue gill. The type of fishing Jesus talks about in the parable of the Net is completely different. Peter probably would not know a Zebco 33 from a 202. But when he hauled in a catch of fish, he puts us all to shame. He was a fisherman. His livelihood depended on it. He knew all about the images found in this parable. (Read the text.) When Jesus compared net fishing to the kingdom of God, Peter understood. In the parable of the Net, Jesus asserts these three aspects concerning the kingdom.

I. JUDGMENT BEGINS WITH THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD:

A. EXPLANATION:

1. Parables usually contain a key that is necessary to facilitate their understanding today. When Jesus first uttered these words, the audience possessed the background necessary for comprehending all that Jesus spoke. However, too often they did not understand due to the condition of their hearts.

2. In 13:38, Jesus opens the door of understanding when he states, "the field is the world." The rest of the parable must correspond with this inspired interpretation. In the parable of the Net, the key is found in the word "lake." This was both Old Testament and first century imagery for the world. It relates to all that belongs outside of God's will.

3. The church casts the nets of evangelism into the world fishing for all kinds of fish. The church should never discriminate as to who hears and who does not hear the gospel. (Read the song, "The Gospel Is For All".)

4. At judgment God's angels will begin with the church, separating out those who do not belong.

B. APPLICATION:

1. We know too well that not everybody who sits in these pews Sunday after Sunday are saved. Remember how beautiful the moon looks as you gaze up at night? Remember also, there is the other side which is dark. Some who claim to be Christians look good on the outside but like white washed tombs, on the inside lie dead men's bones. Although they have been baptized, attend services regularly, take the communion of our Lord, they do not possess a saving relationship with God. We do not possess the insight necessary to make the distinctions concerning who is or is not in a proper relationship with God. Only God will make that decision through his angelic servants on that last day. The answers as to why they are no longer in God's family are numerous. The list would include: those who are divisive; those who are legalist; those who are hypocritical; those who are immoral; and those who are apathetic.

2. It is a great blessing to be assured of your salvation. The security we have in Jesus cannot be shaken by Satan. However, that security rests upon the blood shed at Calvary. Some will leave the cleansing found at the fountain and seek salvation on other terms: merit, works, false securities. Since the judgment will begin with the household of God, what kind of people ought we to be?

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. <u>The Poseidon Adventure</u>. Of all the classic disaster films of the 1970s, this is my favorite. Even though a great tidal wave capsized this

high society luxury liner, many survived. Hanging from tables anchored to the floor or already resting on the ceiling, these people had to make a decision concerning their rescue. Should they remain where they were and await assistance, or should they journey to the bottom of the boat (go towards the surface) seeking their own recovery? Although all were safe, only a few survived. Salvation rested not upon waiting but action.

So many feel secure believing their salvation depends upon the church membership rolls and are not following the Lord. Judgment will begin at home. Some of the fish in the net will be judged unfit. The second aspect of the kingdom of God revealed in this parable is that:

II. JUDGMENT CONSISTS OF A GREAT SEPARATION:

A. EXPLANATION:

1. Other parables describe this as a separating of the wheat from the chaff, the wheat from the weeds, or the sheep from the goats. "Now all who are on my left are goats. Look, all those on my right are smiling as smug bugs in a rug. All I have to do is turn around and you on my right are now on my left." God's judgment is not that arbitrary. He knows every heart, thought and motive in this room. His judgment will be just. It will be a judgment based upon mercy and grace extended at Calvary. The same love which caused God to send his son, in which we have believed, hoped and endured, will be unchanged on Judgment Day. This separation will begin with the church.

2. However, the Last Judgment will contain unexpected surprises.

(Refresh memories concerning Mt. 25:31-46.) For some will not expect God's condemnation and ask, "When did we see you this way?" Others will be surprised when they hear God casting them out from his presence (refer to Mt. 7:21).

B. APPLICATION:

1. Therefore, what kind of people ought we to be? God will not tolerate wickedness of any kind into heaven. God's nature is repulsed by sin. When one does not stand in Christ, only condemnation remains.

2. Just because someone has become a Christian does not guarantee they will receive God's rich welcome in the end. Just because someone begins a journey, doesn't mean they always finish the journey. God demands faithfulness throughout the Christian walk.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. The example of Judas: A man worthy enough to be selected by Jesus as one of the Twelve. Judas began the discipleship path full of high hope and potential. Up until the very end, there were only a few indications that he was not following as Jesus asked. But the other 12 were also falling short of expectations. Judas, however, stepped beyond the grace of God and betrayed Jesus.

Finally, the third assertion Jesus makes concerning the Judgment is that:

III. JUDGMENT PRODUCES FEAR ONLY FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS:

A. EXPLANATION:

1. Often, the principles that are taught in parables are also made

explicit in the doctrinal sections of Scripture. The point being made in the parable of the Net corresponds with 1 Pet. 4:17, "For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?" A rhetorical question with an obvious answer--"Horrible!" Jesus declares the same fate for the unrighteous found in the church as he did for the unrighteous found in the world. (Compare 13:40-43 where the field is the world to 13:49-50 where the net full of fish is the church.)

2. But for those who are found faithful, the righteous, there will be eternal life. "Heaven is a wonderful place; Filled with glory and grace; I want to see my Savior's face; Heaven is a wonderful place."

B. APPLICATION:

1. The definition of "righteousness" throughout the gospel of Matthew: "Those who obey the will of the Father." Not only do they understand God's will, but they do God's will.

2. (Read 1 John 4:17-18.)

a. Love operationally defined in this text: Obeying commandments.

b. Primary example of love in this text: Loving your brother.

C. ILLUSTRATION:

1. Junior had his first big date Friday night. Dad let Junior borrow the family "boat" for the first time by himself after dark. Junior had simple plans: movie and a pizza and be home at 11 P.M. Everything went

real smoothly. The movie lacked zip, but the pizza tasted great. Junior got his date home by 10:15. That allowed him forty-five minutes to do some cruising. He parked over at the 3-D Plaza to watch other cool dudes drive by. Freddie drove up in his refinished Corvaire. What a hot car! 10:55. Time to hit the road, do not want to be late for curfew the first night out. Reverse, No,--Drive! Slam! Junior smacked Freddie's new fender right where the engine was suppose to be. It was a long drive home, but Junior stepped through the living room with courage. "Dad, I wrecked the car." As they walked out to examine the damage, Dad put his arm around Junior and squeezed his shoulder with reassurance, "Now you know why you are paying part of the insurance premium."

2. Junior and Dad had a relationship built on trust, love and responsibility. Junior knew his father would not like the remodeling done that night, but he also knew his father loved him. No lectures, no yelling, no "I told you so."

3. That's the way it is for the member of God's household who knows the Father. They have nothing to fear. On the final day, they confidently wait for the words, "Well done my good and faithful servant." God will put his arms around us too.

CONCLUSION: When we approach the great white throne on Judgment Day, remember: Judgment will begin with the church. God will separate from the church those who are unrighteous condemning them to eternal torment. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give account of the things we have done in the body whether

good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Are you ready for that day to come? If not, then make your life right by deciding now to follow Jesus.

Sharing The Wealth

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:51-53

AIM: TO ENCOURAGE TODAY'S DISCIPLES TO CONTINUE THE MISSION OF JESUS.

PLOT: This world is full of greedy, self-serving people. If the "haves" would share with the "have-nots," then suffering would be eliminated from this world. If I had unlimited resources, I would make this world a better place to live. God has given us the most precious treasure in Jesus Christ. But it seems like Christians, too, are greedy, self-serving people. Christians have a treasure-house full of fine jewels to share with all who have need.

INTRODUCTION: If we would have a contest right now as to who could sing the words to the theme song of "Gilligan's Isle," several of you would win. Some of you might even know all the Gilligan trivia there is to know. Do you remember the episode when Gilligan stumbles upon a treasure chest locked tighter than a bank when you ask for a loan? They do all they know to try and open that chest so that they can fulfil all their dreams about being rich. What would you do with rubies bigger than onions? Gold chains that hang to your knees? Or diamonds sparkling brighter than the sun? Finally, they string up the chest to the top of a high tree. Once that chest strike the earth, all her mysterious treasures would burst open. But wait! Thurston Howe the III doesn't want to share with the others. You would think he had plenty already. However, that's not the case with riches. You never have enough to satisfy your lusts. Mr. Howe (or Thurston to

all of you regular watchers), negotiates for the shares of all the other castaways. $100,000 a piece. The rope is cut. Down comes the long awaited treasure. Black pearls. The biggest black pearls you have ever seen. In reality, Mr. Howe has bought a chest full of cannon balls.

1. This world is full of greedy, self-serving people. The maxim is true: "The rich get richer, and the poor get stuck with the bill." It's like that fellow over in Illinois who has won the lottery three times. But it is not only the rich who are greedy. Greed runs through our society from top to bottom. The man receiving food stamps can be just as selfish as the corporate raider gobbling up another empire. It's just that we notice more readily the greed in the rich. And when that corporate raider lays off thousands of hard working blue collar workers because his profits went down one-half of one percent, it just doesn't set well. Greed abounds!

2. If the "haves" would share with the "have-nots," then suffering would be eliminated from this world. Everyday we read about the homeless in our society. Here in Washington, there are families living well below the poverty level. If only a few of those corporate millionaires would let loose of the purse strings, then the tax dollar of the middle class could be freed. Once in a while you will hear about how someone sacrificed great wealth for someone else, but not often. America portrays this attitude of sharing when we give thousands of tons of food each year to under-developed nations. Our technology has been shared with growing nations that otherwise would do without. But all seems like a drop in the bucket compared to the millions who go to bed hungry at night. This nation was built by volunteers. Volunteers are those who do not seek payment or reward for their services. Red Cross, The Heart Association, the local PTA

and churches all survive due to the dedicated service of volunteers freely donating their time and service. So many wait for the government to do it for them. It is time to stop waiting on someone else. We must all respond, "Such as I have, I freely give." Then, and only then, is there hope for a suffering world.

3. If I had unlimited resources, I would make this world a better place to live. Sit back and let your imagination go. Remember to keep your dreams noble. Don't think about mansions, boats or world cruises. What could I do in the name of the Lord for this community. We could build a food and clothing pantry here that would provide all the needs of anyone who requested help. We could buy some land outside of town to build enough quality housing to eliminate these roach infested holes around town. We could purchase a factory that would employ anyone who wanted to work. We would pay top dollar with an abundance of benefits. We could open a job rehabilitation center so that people could advance themselves. And of course, we could hire a Youth Minister, Family Life Minister, and a team of experienced Evangelists. We could open a Marriage and Family Clinic to save the American home. We could build a Christian School and Day Care center that would provide a quality Christian environment. We could operate a Christian Home for orphans, wayward girls and the aged. Our Bible School would be well equipped with a paid staff. The airways would be filled with Christian broadcasts. Let your dreams soar. If I had unlimited funds, what would I do for the Lord in this community? The greatest resource is people. With enough people power, we could move mountains. All it takes is one shovel at a time.

4. God has given us the most precious treasure in Jesus Christ. God loved us so much that he gave us his son. I might die for you. If I found you in jeopardy and

needing rescuing, I might possibly risk my life to save yours. But I don't think I love you enough to risk my son's life for you. But God loved us so much he gave his son to die for us. Before Jesus went to the cross, he spent three years in ministry showing us how we ought to live. He didn't teach how to be a rich successful business man, but how to be a lowly servant to those in pain. He taught us about righteousness--how to live holy and pleasing lives obedient to the will of God. He taught us how to have unity, peace and joy. He taught how to have successful home lives. He taught how to please God. He taught us all how to love. He taught us how to die. His life and death are the greatest gifts the world has ever seen. And through him we can have eternal life with the Father in a home prepared just for us. Jesus Christ is the greatest gift the world has ever known. (Summarize the parable of the treasure and the pearl.)

5. But it seems like Christians are greedy, self-serving people too. Jack Benny made a career as the stingy miser who asked for the worst waitress in town just so he wouldn't have to leave a tip. Can a church develop such a reputation? Can a Christian conduct himself or herself in such a way that people are repulsed by what he believes and teaches. Can you imagine a teacher of reading withholding that precious knowledge from an illiterate neighbor just because that neighbor didn't sign up for the class on time? Or couldn't pay the tuition? A teacher by definition has a responsibility to teach. Yet many churches spend thousands of dollars on buildings but do not have a penny to spend on missions. Many churches spend hours involved in ministries that build up the body but do not reach out to non-members in any worthwhile way. "That church down the street can really put on a feed. They really know how to put away the fried chicken. They go every Friday night down to the ball park and play softball together. They pull out some

of the biggest picnic baskets you have ever seen." All that is fine. But wouldn't it be better to hear someone say, "That church down the street is the one you need to go to if you need assistance. Just last month, four nurses who attend that congregation gave four nights, unpaid, staying with Mrs. Jenkins. She don't even belong to that church." It is especially sad to see a church greedy with the gospel. That's when Monday Night Baseball is so much more important than Monday night Bible Study with the neighbors. Christians are as greedy with their time and resources as the pagans are down the street.

6. Christians have a treasure-house full of fine jewels to share with all who have need. The greatest treasure in the world involves teachings about mustard seeds, weeds and pearls. A treasure that would transform this world, this nation, this community, your neighbors and friends. Jesus concludes his teaching about the kingdom of heaven with this one final parable.

> "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old" (Mt. 13:51-52).

This treasure is so valuable that once people realize their opportunity to possess it, they will sacrifice all. You too have been instructed in the ways of the kingdom. You are now the scribes of the new covenant. You know the gospel story. You know why you love the Lord. You have accepted his gift of grace in your life. You have had your sins forgiven. You know the peace that comes by being in the Lord. Like the camp song, "Love is something if you give it away. . . . If you hold it tight you won't have any. If you give it away you'll have plenty. You'll end up having more." The greatest gift you can give is the loving message that Jesus came to this earth to forgive sins. He came to seek and save that which was lost. He came to be lifted up so he might draw all men unto himself.

This is not a message to hoard away but to give freely to all who have need.

Observations

These sermons were preached during the months of September and October, 1991. Each sermon was recorded. I listened to each sermon after each presentation. Overall, I was satisfied with the delivery of each sermon. They were not preached in consecutive weeks as planned due to unforseen interruptions. Each sermon was read word for word from the above manuscripts. When changes were made in the sermons during delivery, the manuscripts were edited to reflect them.

The congregation responded to each sermon by completing the Preacher Response Questionnaire. There was a high rate of adult participation each Sunday. Even visitors participated. The data collected from this project are discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

The inherent difficulty in assessing the effectiveness of an inductive sermon compared to a deductive sermon lies in the wide variation of individual attitudes and standards of judgments. "What seems like a `good,' or `effective,' or `powerful' speech to one listener may impress another as stupid, weak, or boring."[444] To restate the fundamental axiom given by A. H. Monroe: "Effectiveness must be measured in terms of the response secured from the audience spoken to."[445]

It is the purpose of this chapter to report the findings of the study described in chapter 1. The data for this study were collected from the audience of eight sermons from the parables of Matthew 13 presented at the Washington Church of Christ. A total of 380 questionnaires were collected (198 questionnaires returned for the deductive sermons and 182 questionnaires returned for the inductive sermons).

The Pearson chi-square test was used to find out whether a particular variable is statistically independent of the sermonic models. The results of this statistical analysis are presented in tables 1-3 and reported below.[446]

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[444]Monroe, "Effectiveness," 5.
[445]Ibid., 7.
[446]The results were analyzed by Dr. M. Hegde, professor of statistics at the University of Southern Indiana.

TABLE 1

GENERAL STATISTICAL DATA

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	INDUCTIVE MODEL		DEDUCTIVE MODEL		COMPOSITE
VARIABLE	MEAN	MODE	MEAN	MODE	MEAN
ORGANIZATION OF STRUCTURE	2.629 ± .043	3	2.802 ± .035	3	2.720 ± .028
INVOLVEMENT IN MAKING CONCLUSION	1.846 ± .036	2	1.728 ± .039	2	1.784 ± .027
SERMON HAS CLEAR MAIN IDEA	1.772 ± .055	2	1.605 ± .046	2	1.685 ± .035
EASY TO FOLLOW ORGANIZATION	1.967 ± .066	2	1.766 ± .055	2	1.862 ± .043
APPEALING TO MENTAL IMAGERY	1.804 ± .061	2	1.744 ± .057	2	1.773 ± .042
EFFECTIVELY HOLDING ATTENTION	1.783 ± .059	2	1.797 ± .051	2	1.790 ± .039
INTERESTING AND EASY TO LISTEN	1.844 ± .072	1	1.727 ± .048	2	1.783 ± .043
PROPER EXPLANATION OF BIBLE	1.713 ± .052	2	1.561 ± .043	1	1.633 ± .034
I KNEW WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF ME	2.000 ± .061	2	1.813 ± .055	2	1.902 ± .041
TEACHER DID NOT PROVE THE POINT	1.782 ± .069	1	1.626 ± .059	1	1.700 ± .045
OPENING REMARKS	1.785 ± .060	2	1.756 ± .050	2	1.770 ± .039
CLEARNESS OF LINE OF THOUGHT	2.221 ± .060	2	1.944 ± .048	2	2.077 ± .039
LOGIC OF THE SERMON	2.199 ± .056	2	1.985 ± .051	2	2.087 ± .038
CONCLUDING REMARKS	1.939 ± .052	2	1.957 ± .053	2	1.948 ± .037
RANK THE SERMON IN VALUE TO YOU	1.709 ± .064	1	1.584 ± .051	1	1.644 ± .041
SHARP TO DULL	2.011 ± .064	2	1.984 ± .060	2	1.997 ± .044
EFFECTIVE TO INEFFECTIVE	1.943 ± .068	2	1.820 ± .056	2	

1.878 ± .044
VALUABLE TO WORTHLESS 1.857 ± .066 1 1.703 ± .058 1 1.777 ± .044
FAST TO SLOW 2.339 ± .061 3 2.370 ± .067 3 2.355 ± .045
CLEAR TO HAZY 1.931 ± .067 2 1.782 ± .059 2 1.853 ± .044
FRESH TO STALE 2.040 ± .073 2 2.053 ± .067 2 2.047 ± .049
GOOD TO BAD 1.825 ± .063 1 1.733 ± .056 1 1.777 ± .042
CONCRETE TO ABSTRACT 2.017 ± .073 1 1.969 ± .077 1 1.992 ± .053
ALIVE TO DEAD 1.844 ± .067 1 1.870 ± .062 2 1.858 ± .045
ATTENTIVE TO INATTENTIVE 1.858 ± .068 1 1.812 ± .064 1 1.834 ± .047
ACTIVE TO PASSIVE 2.155 ± .077 2 2.164 ± .077 2 2.159 ± .055
MALE/FEMALE 1.628 ± .037 2 1.637 ± .035 2 1.633 ± .025
AGE 5.033 ± .104 4 4.912 ± .099 4 4.971 ± .072
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL 3.596 ± .081 4 3.619 ± .083 4 3.608 ± .058

TABLE 2

DATA FROM CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

VARIABLE	LEVELS	CHI-SQUARE	p VALUE	DF	SIGNIFICANCE
ORGANIZATION OF STRUCTURE	3	14.99321	2	.00055*	
INVOLVEMENT IN MAKING CONCLUSION	3	6.20901	2	.04485*	
SERMON HAS CLEAR MAIN IDEA	5	8.91318	4	.06331*	
EASY TO FOLLOW ORGANIZATION	5	10.05222	4	.03956*	
APPEALING TO MENTAL IMAGERY	5	.64580	4	.95784	
EFFECTIVELY HOLDING ATTENTION	5	2.22672	4	.69414	
INTERESTING AND EASY TO LISTEN	5	13.80819	4	.00793*	
PROPER EXPLANATION OF BIBLE	5	7.22454	3	.06507*	
I KNEW WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF ME	5	6.77449	4	.14830	
TEACHER DID NOT PROVE THE POINT	5	3.59348	4	.46381	
OPENING REMARKS	5	3.30212	3	.34735	
CLEARNESS OF LINE OF THOUGHT	5	16.63660	4	.00227*	
LOGIC OF THE SERMON	5	8.05052	3	.04498*	
CONCLUDING REMARKS	5	1.91206	4	.75193	
RANK THE SERMON IN VALUE TO YOU	5	6.06075	4	.19466	
SHARP TO DULL	5	8.08765	4	.08842*	
EFFECTIVE TO INEFFECTIVE	5	9.12566	4	.05803*	
VALUABLE TO WORTHLESS	5	4.00984	4	.40468	
FAST TO SLOW	5	3.73413	4	.44318	
CLEAR TO HAZY	5	3.11421	4	.53890	
STALE TO FRESH	5	1.19312	4	.87923	
GOOD TO BAD	5	5.45671	3	.14125	
ABSTRACT TO CONCRETE	5	6.96689	4	.13765	
DEAD TO ALIVE	5	3.22727	4	.52054	
ATTENTIVE TO INATTENTIVE	5	1.70635	4	.78956	
PASSIVE TO ACTIVE	5	1.93803	4	.74715	

* SIGNIFICANT

The reporting and analysis of the data gathered from the "Preaching Response Questionnaire" is done by proceeding question by question through the questionnaire. The listener responses are not considered in a sermonic comparison; that is, comparing how listeners responded to the particular question for all eight sermons. The deductive model is compared to the inductive model as a whole. Each question in the questionnaire is stated below just as it was printed in the questionnaire. The percentages given during the discussion come from a chi-square analysis of the data.

1. Did the sermon have an organized structure that you could notice?

a. No evident organization of structure (loose, informal collection of thoughts and points)

b. Occasional evidences of organized structure (on occasion, a progression of points could be followed)

c. Clearly evident organization of structure (structure obvious in evident progression of points)

The purpose of this question was to ascertain if there was a marked perception as to which of the methods is considered by the listener more organized and structured. Do the listeners sense a difference in the two models logical structure?

A majority responded that they observed clear evident organization of structure (76.5% of the total respondents marked choice "c"). Both inductive sermons and deductive sermons have a definite structure, but it was assumed that the inductive sermon structure would not be observable. This result seems surprising since the literature reviewed tended to describe the deductive method in terms of precise organizational structure and inductive method as concentrating on a movement of thought rather than an

organization of points. It was expected that the deductive sermons would have a higher percentage of listeners describing them as clearly organized in comparison to the inductive sermons.

Although there seems to be a hesitancy on the part of an audience to indicate that they were not able to discern that structure, this question still proved contrary to the assumption of independence. When choices other than "c" were marked, there was a significant tendency for this to be during the inductive sermons.[447]

In a large sample, this question does detect a significant difference between the two models. Listeners are able as a group to differentiate between the organizational structure of an inductive sermon and a deductive sermon. Since listeners are able to discriminate between the two models, then the question of which model elicits greater listener participation is legitimate.

2. How would you describe your involvement (participation) in arriving at the conclusion of this sermon?

a. The conclusion was already made for me.

b. I joined in forming the conclusion.

c. No conclusion was offered, so I made my own.

The intention of this question was to ascertain which of the two models solicited greater listener participation and involvement in the preaching process. The literature supports the idea that inductive sermons will create higher listener involvement by

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[447]For the following observations, whenever the Pearson chi-square p value is observed to be .1 or less, it will be considered significant. However, .05 or less is preferable. When the p value falls in this range, it will indicate that this item is contrary to the assumption of independence with respect to the sermon models.

encouraging them to participate with the thought process as the sermon proceeds to its conclusion.

A deliberate attempt was made during the deductive sermons to highlight the deductive conclusion within the first few minutes. During the inductive sermons, the conclusion was not offered until the last few minutes. There was a tendency for most individuals (69.7%) to perceive themselves as joining in forming the conclusions. This indicates that either the audience presupposes their own participation in the process of forming conclusions or that both models are capable of involving the listener in arriving at the conclusion. The location of the conclusion did not seem to be the determining factor in listener perception of participation.

Why would those who could not have heard a formal conclusion during the inductive sermons, indicate (36.8% of those who marked choice "a" of the composite) that the conclusion was already made for them? If the listeners waited until after the conclusion of the sermon to fill out the questionnaire, it is possible that while thinking back over the sermon those who sensed the central idea by the end of the sermon assumed that the idea was actually stated from the beginning.

Although 69.7% of the total responded that they joined in forming the conclusion, there was a marked increase during the deductive sermons of those realizing the conclusion was already made for them. Only 4.4% of the total saw no evidence of a conclusion offered by the sermons. This number was equally distributed between the two sermon models. However, the difference between the two models can be clearly seen since only 9.6% of the composite and 20.0% of the inductive responses indicated choice a. Also, while only 36.8% of those who marked choice "a" of the composite did so

during the inductive sermons, 63.2% did so during the deductive sermons.

This question differentiated between the two models indicating that the inductive model does generate greater involvement on the part of hearers in forming conclusions. From other results yet to be discussed, the question arises whether this process was a positive or negative experience on the part of the audience. Did participation by the audience in forming a conclusion during inductive sermons become a struggle counter productive to the communication process? It may be a positive encounter when the process of challenge leads to new insights and changed perspectives. The process may become negative if the audience refuses to go on the inductive journey because the path chosen violates too many of their expectations.

3. This sermon has a clear central idea (main point) which I could sense.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

This question corresponds with the previous question. As expected, there was a significant increase (10.1%) for the respondents to the deductive sermons to discern the main point. This expectation is due to the nature of deductive sermons to repeat the central idea throughout the lesson. Although 92.0% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement during the composite series, 46.2% of the deductive sermons strongly agreed (verses the other available responses) as opposed to only 36.1% of the inductive sermons. By looking at those who marked strongly agreed only, the difference is even greater (58.1% during the deductive sermons and 41.9% during the inductive sermons).

4. I could easily follow the organization of this sermon.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY

DISAGREE

This question corresponds with question one. It also will indicate whether or not the challenge of forming conclusions and participating in the logic of the inductive process is counter productive. Similar results for the same reasons are found for this question as for the previous three. Individuals could significantly follow the organization of the deductive sermon better than the inductive sermons. Again, this is due to the nature of deductive sermons that repeat and reinforce the structure as it explains the conclusion already stated. A total of 84.1% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement for both models during the whole series indicating that the inductive process did not hinder the listener in following the organization of the sermon.

This question proved significant in distinguishing between the two models. When one disagreed with the statement (5.8%), 77.3% of the time was during the inductive sermons. For a small part of the sample, the inductive process was counter productive. They will need deductive elements during all or some sermons. Otherwise this will be a portion of the population that will be ignored in the proclamation of the gospel.

Summarizing the results from the last four questions indicates that for the Washington Church of Christ, a greater perception of clarity exists (in terms of the sermon's central idea and organization) during deductive sermons than during inductive sermons. The inductive sermons were not counter productive. For most individuals this model accomplishes its purpose. It does arouse the hearer to increase active participation in forming conclusions. However, the deductive sermon accomplishes the desired goal of the whole communication process with a significantly and consistently higher

frequency.[448]

5. Tim caught my attention by appealing to varied types of mental imagery and thought provoking illustrations.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

This question was designed with the entire process of inductive preaching in mind. Since inductive sermons take you on a journey, creating a plot, building toward a climax and finally reaching the intended destination, it was assumed that the audience would be carried away with the ride as their minds in consciousness imagined the trip. However, due to the nature of deductive sermons, which implement various mental images, metaphors, similes, illustrations, etc. . . ., this question did not prove significant. Both models demonstrated their ability to appeal to mental imagery.

This question may have garnered a more significant response if the comparison was between deductive sermons and story sermons modeled after one like Eugene Lowery. However, many of the images that are to form in consciousness during a move modeled after Buttrick's methodology may or may not be part of a story. My own creativity and ability to employ this imagery may be the most significant reason why a question such as this does not indicate the desired difference between the two models. No matter which inductive model you choose to employ (even eclectically choosing from all to create your own style), there remains the element of creative and artistic talent that some preachers do not possess. Although artistic talent can be studied and developed in the non-gifted, it is preferable for the preacher to emphasize his or her own strengths.

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[448]Questions 12 and 13 especially will confirm these conclusions.

6. Tim effectively held my attention.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

This question was designed to indicate the audience's perception of involvement. It was assumed, if Buttrick's methodology does solicit greater audience participation, that this question would be a strong influence in answering the question. However, the Pearson chi-square p value clearly indicates that this question is not significant in determining a difference between the two models. Both models tended to indicate that the sermons effectively held the audience's attention.

Some possible explanations are: (1) Since the same speaker presented both models, his pulpit presence encouraged listener participation. (2) The use of a measurement tool like the "Preacher Response Questionnaire" could easily increase the attention of the audience for both models (Hawthorne Effect). (3) Those who come to hear sermons come with the presupposition that they will listen to and do listen to sermons even when their minds wander. Audiences are often self-deceived as to the quality and quantity of their own listening. They often make subjective judgments between two sermons or two preachers as to which was better, but when asked about any one individual sermon will respond in the manner indicated here. Which model effectively decreased the amount of time the audience spent thinking about other matters and participated more with the whole communication process of preaching, seemingly cannot be determined by the audiences own self analysis sought by this question. (4) Finally, different moods from week to week effect congregations' perception of sermons. If the congregation is significantly more tired one week as opposed to another, then this

will effect their involvement with the sermon, and the preacher has little control or warning concerning this phenomenon. The preacher, too, has different moods from week to week unrelated to the sermon he is presenting. All of these factors contribute to the complicated matter of measuring listener involvement during the preaching event.

7. This sermon was interesting and easy to listen to.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

This question was designed to answer directly the question concerning which model would increase listener participation. Since inductive sermons tell a story, especially when imitating the form and function of parables, the assumption was made that the audience would enjoy and respond significantly in favor to these four sermons.

This question clearly indicated the audience found the deductive sermons more interesting and easier to listen to. Although 87.1% of the whole found all the sermons interesting and easy to listen to, 7.8% of those listening to the inductive sermons found them difficult to listen to and the tendency for the entire sample was in this direction. Comments after some of the inductive sermons indicated that some people struggled with knowing the sermons intent and direction. It seemingly violated their expectations as to what constitutes a sermon. This was especially true when the purpose of the sermon (e.g., "Waiting On God") was intended to disorient the audience before reorienting them to the biblical message. The audience tended to struggle to figure out the point instead of allowing the parabolic affect to occur naturally. This is a reflection on our analytical culture compared to the story telling culture of the Middle East in which Jesus lived.

Since the deductive sermon met the expectations of the congregation as to how a

sermon should be, the congregation was more at ease. Both sermon models were deemed interesting and easy to listen to; however, significantly more preferred the deductive method. This does not eliminate the inductive process at all. It encourages a variety of sermon styles to meet the various personality types that make up one congregation. The inductive sermon may find its validity in the challenge and discomfort it brings since this is how the original parables functioned.

8. I felt Tim properly explained and applied the biblical message.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

Do people sense that the Bible can only be explained one way? If the Bible is explained in a way that is contrary to their expectations, do people sense the message was not properly explained and applied? The data clearly indicate that nearly all of the listeners in this series described the sermons as explaining and applying God's Word.

The significance of this question indicating a difference in the two models is borderline. If there is a difference, the deductive sermons seemingly explain and apply the biblical message better. A total of 49.2% of those responding to the inductive sermons agreed that the sermons properly explained and applied the biblical message while only 40.9% strongly agreed. During the deductive sermons, however, those same percentages are 48.0% and 48.5% respectively.

Although the audience perception that both models functioned to explain and apply the message of the text, a tendency for the deductive model to be perceived as doing a better job is expected. It is strongly believed that the inductive sermon which imitates the genre form and function actually does apply and explain the text better

(especially parabolic preaching as described in chapter 3), but, this is not congruent with audience expectations or perceptions. American audiences have been trained to hear logical deductive arguments. Jesus chose culturally useful models of communication to present his message. The preacher also must be sensitive to this conditioning in his audience. These expectations should be employed by the preacher to proclaim God's Word effectively.

9. I felt I knew exactly what was expected of me through this sermon.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

Since deductive sermons begin with the sermonic point to be emphasized throughout the sermon, it is assumed by design that they will express clearly from the outset what is expected of the audience. The deductive sermon also would emphasize that point throughout the lesson and strongly reinforce it during the conclusion. Likewise, these inductive sermons will strongly emphasize a sermonic point in the final few minutes of each lesson (as opposed to some who state that the inductive sermon should not offer a definite conclusion).[449]

This question did not indicate any significant difference between the two models. This is due to the nature of the conclusions which clearly defined what was expected of the audience. Both sermon models appealed to the audience to respond in a definite way.[450] If I would have opted, during the inductive sermons, to offer no final warnings,

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[449]Buttrick, "Parable," 21. This variation of the model Buttrick proposes is only slight since he too offers a stated conclusion in his sermon on the sower, Homiletic, 158-63. However, my sermons did vary at this point compared to others who strictly interpret this theory of offering no conclusions at all.

[450]Although the Pearson chi-square p value indicates that this question was not significant, the percentages in the chi-square table tend to lean toward the deductive

exhortations, or appeals leaving the audience open to draw its own conclusions, this question may have proved significant. However, I did not interpret Buttrick's model in this way nor would I desire to implement such a method in my preaching.

10. In my judgement Tim did not prove his point in this sermon.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

This question confirms the lack of difference between the two models as indicated in question 9. Here there is no doubt that both sermons functioned effectively to explain and apply the sermonic point for the purpose of soliciting a response from the audience. The inductive sermon was perceived by the audience as proving the point. One possible explanation for this is: many will respond to these questions after hearing the entire sermon. Once the audience has arrived at a conclusion during the inductive process, they reflect over the entire sermon and conclude that the sermon proved its point. There is no significant difference in the two models in this respect.

11. What is your impression of Tim's opening remarks?

Excellent Promising Common Place Uninteresting Disadvantageous

This question was designed to manifest a difference between a formal declarative statement offered during the introduction of deductive sermons, and the lack of such a statement during the introduction of the inductive sermons. However, there was no observed difference between the two models. This is due to the use of inductive

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model as a better model in clarifying expectations. All together, 20.4% of those responding to inductive sermons were undecided as to what was expected of them during this sermon as compared to 28.7% who strongly agreed with the statement.

introductions even for deductive sermons. The use of an inductive introduction may quickly arrive at the thesis statement, however, when responding to this question the audience has already made a determination.

This question would have served better for deductive sermons that are stilted in their presentation of the facts. A bare-bones presentation of the deductive sermon would serve the purposes of this research better by exposing the obvious differences in the two models clearly. However, that is not how proponents of the deductive style desire to present sermons. There is a great emphasis in the literature on smooth and flowing thought during introductions, transitions and conclusions as well as within the tightly reasoned body of the sermon. The differences in the two models utilized in this research are not as apparent as it would have been if extreme options were chosen.

12. To what degree did you find Tim's line of thought clear?

Vivid Clear-cut Intelligible Confusing Unintelligible

This question (also question 13) asks again for the audience to respond to the difference between the two models use of structure. Corresponding with the first four questions, numbers 12 and 13 demonstrate a significant difference between the two models. There is an audience expectation for sermons to behave in certain ways. Since many of the older models (deductive in nature) have been preached for long periods of time, they function to precondition the audience to have certain expectations. The inductive sermons often left them guessing and subsequently less at ease. For an audience that was not preconditioned by deductive sermons, the results may have proven different.

Of those responding during the inductive sermons, 26.0% felt the line of thought

to be merely "intelligible" while only 12.2% said the same thing during the deductive sermons. Compared to the higher percentages of other questions, only 76.9% of the whole responded with the first two choices, "vivid" and "clear-cut." Only 19.8% of the whole responded with the highest category "vivid." Except for question 19, this was the lowest percentages in the entire survey.

13. The logic of this sermon was:

Indisputable Convincing Acceptable Doubtful Fallacious

As noted during the discussion for question 12, the deductive sermon demonstrated a significant difference between the two models. A total of 29.8% of those responding during the inductive sermons, compared to 20.2% of those responding during the deductive sermons, found the logic merely "acceptable." Although 66.9% of those responding during the inductive sermons responded that the logic was either "indisputable" or "convincing," 78.2% responded the same during the deductive sermons.

When using familiar logic and style to form conclusions already accepted by the audience, deductive sermons tend to confirm those beliefs. However, when those same beliefs are presented using an unfamiliar style like induction, beliefs are often more easily challenged and reevaluated. People are then predisposed to respond (in this case only slightly) negatively.

14. In my judgment, Tim's concluding remarks in this sermon were:

Impressive Effective Relevant Weak Detracting

As noted earlier, these inductive sermons concluded with a definite resolution and called for a specific response. Both the sermon models contained this type of short and concise appeal. The audience, when responding to this question, also would allow the

entire sermonic process (either model) to influence their response. Therefore, this question did not prove significant in determining any difference. If these inductive sermons were rewritten to allow each individual to draw his or her own conclusions, this question may have proved significant. However, this is not how Buttrick himself uses the model contra his own statements noted above.

15. How would you rank this sermon in value to you?

Important Worth-while Medium Unimportant Worthless

It was assumed that the sermon that elicited greater participation by the audience would also be deemed as significantly more important. Since the overall impact of a sermon will be the determining factor (not the logical structure) in answering this question, most people are inclined to respond in a positive way. Most hesitate to state they regard any sermon (good or bad) as being worthless. Less than 1% throughout the whole project chose this response. Maybe speeches with less eternal significance or sermons with contrary doctrines would render a more varied response. In this study, this question was not significant.

Questions 16 through 26 will be discussed together.

16. SHARP 1 2 3 4 5 DULL

17. EFFECTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 INEFFECTIVE

18. VALUABLE 1 2 3 4 5 WORTHLESS

19. FAST 1 2 3 4 5 SLOW

20. CLEAR 1 2 3 4 5 HAZY

21. STALE 1 2 3 4 5 FRESH

22. GOOD 1 2 3 4 5 BAD

23.	ABSTRACT	1 2 3 4 5	CONCRETE
24.	DEAD	1 2 3 4 5	ALIVE
25.	ATTENTIVE	1 2 3 4 5	INATTENTIVE
26.	ACTIVE	1 2 3 4 5	PASSIVE

Although, questions 16 and 17 did give evidence that they were significant, the rest of this scale did not. The words for questions 16 and 17 are more familiar to the audience for interacting with sermons and seemingly less abstract. It was hoped that this scale would be significant in answering the proposed question concerning audience involvement. Since this scale proved invalid, the question as to whether Buttrick's methodology enhances audience involvement will have less evidence from which to draw meaningful conclusions. Only question 16 then will contribute directly to this analysis.

Based upon questions 16 and 17, which proved to be significant, the deductive model proved to be sharper and more effective. For question 16, although 72.0% of those responding during the inductive model responded with a "1" or "2" choice, those responding in the same categories during the deductive sermons did so in a significantly greater way. Choice "3" gave the most critical evidence confirming this conclusion. Only 19.3% of those responding during the deductive sermons responded with choice "3" while 25.7% responded the same during the inductive sermons.

For question 17, the results are even stronger, indicating the effectiveness of the deductive sermons over the inductive sermons. It was not that the audience found the inductive sermons as ineffective, but that in a significant way the deductive sermons were more effective.

Most individuals in this audience seem uncomfortable using this scale. This may

be due to several possible factors: First, this scale may have been unfamiliar in nature to this audience. The educational level of this audience was possibly lower than the anticipated audience of this scale. It was necessary to explain this section in detail every week due to someone's question from the week before. Finally, it was an observed tendency for many to mark them all alike without reference to the particular words.

Questions 25 and 26 were especially designed with the question of involvement in mind. These proved to be the least significant questions in the entire tool. One possible reason for this phenomenon is that people tend to believe that they listen and are involved whether they are or not. Also, those who do listen already, give the same effort in listening without reference to the model involved. It is too much to assume that a listener can quantitatively assess whether one listens more one week versus another and tends to understand one's self from week to week evenly, with only slight adjustments, when obvious moods, distractions or illnesses may inhibit their concentration. This neutralizes the expected results of this project.

Analysis was also conducted on the entire study and reported in table 3. Cronback's Reliability Coefficient [alpha] was calculated to be 0.9458 indicating the internal consistency of the response tool. The positive correlation between the 26 items was observed to be high. The multivariate t-test (Hotelling T^2) was used to test the hypothesis of no difference between the mean vectors of the 26 variables (questions 1-26) for the two sermonic models. The observed $F_{(26,274)}$-test stastic value 1.80598 with the p value of less than 0.011. This means, the hypothesis of no difference may be rejected. This tool did distinguish between the two models in a significant way. Although it was observed that both models held the audience's attention, for the Washington Church of

Christ the deductive model functioned slightly better in this respect.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

According to homiletical theory, of which David Buttrick is a leading figure, inductive preaching should increase listener participation. This research project set out to inquire into the correlation between listener participation and the inductive movement of a sermon. More specifically, an answer to the following question was sought: Will listener participation increase when sermons are modeled after Buttrick's inductive methodology rather than a more deductive method? The conclusions that follow are drawn from the gathered data furnished by a quasi-experiment conducted at the Washington Church of Christ. This data provides some preliminary answers to this question.

The most evident conclusion that emerges from this comparison of the deductive and inductive models of preaching in the data of this project is: The choice of method alone is not the determinative factor in eliciting audience involvement. Deductive sermons have a clear advantage over inductive sermons in repeating and reaffirming the central idea throughout the sermon. The listener was better able to discern the logic, structure, and main point during these sermons. This led to a clearer message as to what the biblical point was and the desired expectation the sermon had for audience response. These deductive sermons also proved to be more interesting and easy to listen to for they

did not contradict the audience's expectations of how sermons ought to be preached. Overall, it can be stated that these sermons were more effective.

Inductive sermons were also effective. This model also provided clearness of thought and application of the biblical point. However, the inductive model did not function significantly as well overall as the deductive model. If the inductive sermon challenged the audience by calling into question traditional understandings, then this result is both good and expected. Question 2 indicated that the inductive sermon did involve the audience in forming the conclusion with the sermon in a significant way. This confirms homiletical theory found in the literature. This benefit alone indicates the positive value of the inductive sermon.

Dwight Nelson states:

> It is apparent, therefore, that in order for the central idea to be clearly grasped and retained by the listener, the task of the preacher, regardless of the method he chooses, is to keep that idea clearly before the listener. With the deductive method, his task is to keep reiterating and repeating his opening central idea to the listener throughout the sermon. With the inductive method, his challenge is to carefully and clearly lead the listener towards a joint arrival at the concluding central idea.[451]

Possible reasons as to why the inductive sermons did not distinguish themselves in eliciting greater audience involvement according to Buttrick's theory are two-fold: First, the ability of the preacher to bridge the gap from theory to practice (by reading the literature only) may be limited. Without formal training in the use of Buttrick's theory by either Buttrick himself or one deemed qualified to do so, there are certain limitations to the example sermons used in this project. However, it can be argued that implementation of Buttrick's method should be readily accessible to preachers by studying the literature alone. The sermons preached reflect this consideration well; they were formulated

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[451]Nelson, "Comparison," 200.

according to Buttrick's model.

Secondly, both the inductive and deductive sermons used in this project tended to blend both styles. Although it was clearly evident which sermon represented which style (evidenced by the committees approval of the sermons and the questionnaire results), the sermons could have been written to reflect a purer theory in mind. Deductive sermons could have been written that mechanically moved from point to point without any thought to smooth rhetorical style. Inductive sermons could have been written with an open ended style leaving the audience to form its own conclusions. However, this would have been inconsistent with the recommendations made in the homiletical literature.

There are many practical conclusions that can be drawn from this project. The preacher needs to grow in an understanding of culturally appropriate ways to communicate the biblical message in a given setting. By understanding the congregations preconditioning and expectations, the preacher will more effectively create an atmosphere where hearing can occur. One can not violate these expectations often without suffering a loss of communication. Fred Craddock describes this as using the "power of the familiar."[452] The preacher must also grow in the use of mental imagery, metaphors, use of story, etc., no matter which method is chosen. By using a variety of styles and techniques, the audience can be reconditioned to respond in whatever form the gospel is proclaimed.

Further Investigation

There are several areas that invite further investigation. First, there are a variety of ways to conduct this same experiment so that the above results could either be verified

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[452]Craddock, Preaching, 47-48.

or dismissed. One could vary the audience, speaker or genre and test again the comparative affects inductive preaching and deductive preaching have on listener participation. To reuse this same instrument, it would be advisable to restructure questions 16-26. Although a non-significant finding for these questions should not be discounted (indicating no observable difference between the two models), possibly using a Liekert type scale would prove more sensitive.

Secondly, a second-level statistical analysis could be conducted on this experiment from the data already collected. The investigation of this model using a covariate or multi-variate analysis with respect to age, sex and education levels may lead to some interesting conclusions. The responses of the listeners in the various gender, age and education levels did not vary dramatically in the Preaching Response Questionnaire throughout the eight sermons. Preliminary investigation in this area leads to some interesting possibilities. For example, question 5 dealing with mental imagery indicated that there was no significant difference between the two models when not taking sex, age or education level into consideration. However, by examining the sex variable, during the deductive sermons there was no observable difference in the mean scores (taking the standard deviation and standard error into account), but during the inductive sermon there was a marked increase in the mean score for the male, indicating that men are less likely to agree with the statement.

A second interesting possibility indicated that the younger the population, the less desirable the results. However, the group 14-23 years may not have been large enough to make these findings valuable. Many other observations also could be obtained by statistically analyzing the demographic information in reference to each variable.

Finally, a Roy-Bargman Stepdown F-test could be conducted in order to determine the significance of the questions asked in this particular order. Preliminary observations indicate that while both the Pearson Chi-square value and the univariate F-tests give evidence of significance for questions 1-3 when asked independently of each other, question 3 is not significant when questions 1 and 2 are asked before it. Questions 5, 8, 16, and 21 also indicate a high level of significance when asked in this sequence. This observation is due to the high correlation structure of the variables (questions 1-26). However, this level of statistical analysis is beyond the scope of this research project.

Final Observations

From the research given above, it is determined that for the Washington Church of Christ there is a high level of correlation between listener participation and the inductive movement of a sermon. More specifically, listener participation (on the level of involvement in arriving at a conclusion) increased significantly when sermons were modeled after Buttrick's inductive methodology rather than after a more deductive method. The inductive model proved to be successful in the communication process. However, there is also a high correlation between listener participation and the deductive movement of a sermon. In respect to every other variable tested that indicated significance (other than involvement at arriving at a conclusion), the deductive sermon significantly better accomplished the communication task.

For the Washington Church of Christ, both the inductive and the deductive methods ought to be used to meet the wide range of personalities in the audience. Listener response indicates that in order to communicate effectively with this diverse congregation, both methods are essential. Ralph Lewis has called for such a combination

of methods:

> Any sermon, whatever the subject, whatever the intent--evangelistic, doctrinal, or basic expository--can and must incorporate a combined approach if it's going to achieve maximum effectiveness and involvement.[453]

Even Haddon Robinson describes a combined approach:

> Induction and deductive may be combined in a sermon. The expositor develops his introduction and first point inductively, leading up to the statement of his idea. Then the remainder of the sermon proceeds deductively to explain, prove, or apply the idea.[454]

Whether it be combining both methods into a single sermon or alternating methods within a series, it is recommended that for preaching at the Washington Church of Christ both the deductive and inductive methods of communication be intentionally and systematically incorporated in the preaching event with a slight preference to the deductive model.

This writer already felt a strong attraction for the inductive method prior to this research effort. This project solidified his preference for this style. He is more relaxed, freer from his notes, and more confident during inductive sermons. Since the parables are inductive by nature, then it seems fitting for the preacher to imitate their form and function in preaching them. However, since the congregation responded well to the deductive sermons, this writer should not allow his own bias to ignore this method.

This writer plans to allow the text itself to inform which model he employs in the future. This will insure both variety of sermons and a fidelity to the text. At some point in the near future, this researcher should retest Buttrick's methodology using deductive

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[453]Lewis and Lewis, Inductive, 117. They earlier advocated the blending of both methods within the same sermon calling it the "full-orbed induction" method.

[454]Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 127.

rather than inductive texts.

APPENDIX A

PREACHING RESPONSE QUESTIONNAIRE

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and respond by circling the response which describes your personal reaction to this statement. Please be completely open and honest in your responses to make the information useful for Tim's preparation of sermons.

1. Did the sermon have an organized structure that you could notice? (Please circle your choice.)

a. No evident organization of structure (loose, informal collection of thoughts and points)

b. Occasional evidences of organized structure (on occasion, a progression of points could be followed)

c. Clearly evident organization of structure (structure obvious in evident progression of points)

2. How would you describe your involvement (participation) in arriving at the conclusion of this sermon?

a. The conclusion was already made for me.

b. I joined in forming the conclusion.

c. No conclusion was offered, so I made my own.

3. This sermon has a clear central idea (main point) which I could sense. (Please circle your choice.)

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

4. I could easily follow the organization of this sermon.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

5. Tim caught my attention by appealing to varied types of mental imagery and thought provoking illustrations.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

6. Tim effectively held my attention.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

7. This sermon was interesting and easy to listen to.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

8. I felt Tim properly explained and applied the biblical message.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

9. I felt I knew exactly what was expected of me through this sermon.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

10. In my judgement Tim did not prove his point in this sermon.

STRONGLY AGREE AGREE UNDECIDED DISAGREE STRONGLY DISAGREE

11. What is your impression of Tim's opening remarks?

Excellent Promising Common Place Uninteresting Disadvantageous

12. To what degree did you find Tim's line of thought clear?

Vivid Clear-cut Intelligible Confusing Unintelligible

13. The logic of this sermon was:

Indisputable Convincing Acceptable Doubtful Fallacious

14. In my judgment, Tim's concluding remarks in this sermon were:

Impressive Effective Relevant Weak Detracting

15. How would you rank this sermon in value to you?

Important Worth-while Medium Unimportant Worthless

Circle the number that most nearly indicates the relative effectiveness of yourself as a listener to this sermon.

ATTENTIVE	1 2 3 4 5	INATTENTIVE
ACTIVE	1 2 3 4 5	PASSIVE

Instructions: Circle the number which most nearly indicates your view of this sermon.

SHARP	1 2 3 4 5	DULL
EFFECTIVE	1 2 3 4 5	INEFFECTIVE
VALUABLE	1 2 3 4 5	WORTHLESS
FAST	1 2 3 4 5	SLOW
CLEAR	1 2 3 4 5	HAZY
STALE	1 2 3 4 5	FRESH
GOOD	1 2 3 4 5	BAD
ABSTRACT	1 2 3 4 5	CONCRETE
DEAD	1 2 3 4 5	ALIVE

Date:

Sermon Title:

Please take a moment to circle the correct response.

1. I am: M F

2. I am: Under 14
   14-18
   19-23
   24-40
   41-54
   55-65
   66+

3. Education Completed:
   Graduate/Professional
   Four Year College
   Some High School
   Finished Elementary

Some College/Technical Some Elementary
Finished High School

Thank you for returning this questionnaire today to the box in the foyer.

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To Laura

A good wife who can find?
She is far more precious than jewels.
The heart of her husband trusts in her,
and he will have no lack of gain.
She does him good, and not harm,
all the days of her life.
Proverbs 31:10-12

To Leslie and Graham

For this child I prayed; and the Lord has
granted me my petition which I made to him.
Therefore I have lent him to the Lord;
as long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.
I Samuel 1:27-28