A HANDBOOK OF HOMILETICS FOR THE PASTORS OF MYANMAR

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MAP OF MYANMAR (BURMA)



A HANDBOOK OF HOMILETICS FOR THE PASTORS OF MYANMAR

Abstract

This thesis develops a handbook of Homiletics designed to help the pastors of Myanmar preach more effectively in a rapidly changing culture. The task of this work is divided into four sections: (1) to research and develop a sound Biblical understanding of the subject and task of expository preaching; (2) to research the cultural, and religious background of Myanmar along with materials available in the field of homiletics; (3) to write the handbook at a level that will be understandable to the average pastor in Myanmar; and (4) to field test this handbook with a group of pastors from Myanmar.

The nature of the task of expository preaching from a biblical, theological perspective is examined in chapter two of this work. This chapter gives the mandate and scope of preaching expository sermons as well as the divine resources available to all pastors of Myanmar.

Chapter three explores the literature available to write a handbook by a non-Burmese author to pastors within a Burmese culture. This review will include: (1) literature about Burmese culture that becomes important within the framework of homiletics; (2) literature about Buddhism which 72.7% Burmese practice; (3) literature that contrasts the belief system of Buddhism and Christianity; (4) literature that helps to understand the unique nature of learning within the broader base of Asian culture; and (5) literature that develops good homiletic principles and practices.

Based on the observations of chapters two and three, chapter four develops the handbook of homiletics for the pastors of Myanmar. It is designed for the pastors who are already in the churches throughout the country of Myanmar. Therefore, it is written at a high school rather than a college level. The handbook includes: (1) the definition of expository preaching; (2) the rationale for expository preaching; and (3) the developmental process of expository preaching. The handbook is based on the principles of expository preaching developed by Dr. Haddon W. Robinson in his book, *Biblical Preaching*.

Chapter five reflects upon the field use of the handbook and provides practical teaching suggestions for the cross-cultural teacher, particularly the one who must work with a translator. Insights of what worked in teaching the handbook and what could have been improved are also detailed.

CHAPTER ONE

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to help the pastors of Myanmar preach more effectively within the framework of their own culture. This project will help them develop both hermeneutical and homiletical skills which are lacking among most of the pastors in that country.

In order to frame this project into the culture of Myanmar it is important to understand some facts about the country and why this project is needed. The country, formerly known as Burma, became the country of Myanmar in 1989 under the direction of the military government who rose to power following the coup of 1988.[1]

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Myanmar is presently marked by difficulties in its most basic cultural institutions. Education has been a priority of all governments in Myanmar, their commitment to it has varied over time. Under the constitution of 1974, "every citizen had a right to an education and that primary education (kindergarten through fourth grade) was compulsory."[2] Before the coup of 1988 enrollment in primary education was up to 87%. After the coup of 1988 enrollment has dropped and the latest figures

[1] Steinberg, David, *Burma, the State of Myanmar.* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2001), xi.
[2] Ibid. 207.

indicate that as of "1999 only 25% of students completed primary school, although about 70% entered kindergarten."[3] However, the future does look bright. There is every sign in Myanmar that she is aware of the transformation that is taking place in Asia by means of the advent of computers and internet. Asia and the Pacific is quickly becoming a global village and Myanmar is taking appropriate measures in becoming part of this transformation.

Religion plays a dominant role in the life of Myanmar. "The religious life of Myanmar is dominated by the omnipresent Theravada Buddhism, which was brought to the country as early as the 11th century AD. Today, about 88% of the population call themselves Theravadas, the remaining 12% of the Burmese are: Christians (7%), Muslims (3%) and Hindus (0.5%)."[4] For all practical purposes Christianity was brought to Myanmar by Adoniram Judson in July 1813. After 37 years of ministry a number of converts were established and the Burman Bible had been translated. In December 22, 1890 Dr. Ola Hanson came to Bhamo. Through his leadership other literature such as tracts and hymnals were written. All these activities stopped under the socialist government in 1963-64. Military rule made Buddhism the State religion and Christianity went underground.

Despite this domestic and religious persecution, the church of Jesus Christ thrived and has continued to grow. We are already seeing signs of the military government becoming less restrictive. I have been involved with the Kachin Baptist Convention and the Hanson Baptist Bible College, which are responsible for establishing over 53 churches in the last 20 years. People are being saved, and

[3] Ibid.
[4] www.germantravelnetwork.com; Internet; accessed 15 February 2004.

churches are being expanded continually. However, the pastors of these churches lack many skills. Because of the poor educational system, most pastors have only a fourth grade education. Some of the younger pastors have finished high school, and very few have a seminary degree. Because very few books have been translated into their language, the average pastor has only a Bible and maybe a Bible Dictionary to assist them in theological development. They have little, if any, hermeneutic skills and the homiletical skills they have learned through observation is minimal and not always helpful. As the people are exposed to outside influences, pastors will need to upgrade their skills of communication in order to effectively reach their people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

THEOLOGICAL BASIS

In order to help these pastors, through this thesis project, I will begin by exploring the biblical and theological support for preaching the word of God and for preaching it within the context of one's own language and culture. I will be looking for imperatives, principles and examples from Scripture for preaching at home as well as preaching in cultures other than one's own. I will be examining any restrictions that instructs us as to a particular style or method of preaching.

LITERTURE REVIEW

I will then examine literature that will provide background knowledge on the impact that the Burmese culture and its educational system has had on its people. Since Myanmar is predominately Buddhist, I will explore literature that will help me

understand the impact that Buddhism has on the culture of Myanmar and the affects it has on Christians within that country. I will attempt to see if Buddhism has any affect on the way the Burmese people are taught and how they learn. This may have important implications with regard to their reception of preaching. I will also be looking at literature that will assist me in writing about expository preaching and all its components that will be useful for the pastors of Myanmar. This information will also help others who use this thesis project.

PROJECT DESIGN

In order to accomplish this project I will be writing a questionnaire consisting of 13 questions that will help me understand the educational level of the present pastors of Myanmar and their sermon preparation habits. As I write each chapter I will e-mail them to my English and Burmese editors. In October 2004, I plan to attend the Kachin Baptist Convention in Myitkyina, Myanmar. I will be teaching twenty-one lessons from the handbook via interpreters, each lasting one hour. After each session a committee of Burmese pastors and professors will evaluate the lesson and give constructive suggestions for improvement. After completion, the handbook will be translated and published at the Hanson Baptist Bible College into five languages: Burmese, Kachin, Zaiwa, Lawaw and Rawang.

I will begin the project by defining and defending the case for expositional preaching. I will carefully work through the steps of sermon development on a high school level, so that the average pastor from Myanmar will be able to follow and improve his effectiveness to the people he ministers to. Because most of the pastors

have no other resource books or skills other than their Bible, I will develop the steps from selecting a passage and discovering the main idea to forming an outline that will be easy for their listeners to follow. I will give suggestions for good introductions and conclusions. I will spend some time discussing the importance of pulpit mannerisms and style. All of this will be done within the framework of their culture. I will also include in this thesis a summary chapter that will evaluate the teaching experience in Myanmar and offer suggestions that will help teach homiletics cross-culturally.

CONCLUSION

If the writing of this handbook can help develop the effectiveness of these pastors, I believe I can make a significant contribution to the field of homiletics as well as to the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

What would make a man, who has the responsibility to provide for his immediate and extended family, decide to become a preacher of the Word of God? What would cause him to live on a sub standard income when he could make enough money to at least provide the basis essentials for his family? What would make him risk his life, either by being sent to prison or even death, to present the good news of Jesus Christ? Why would he work so hard with only his bible and maybe one or two help books in order to preach at least three times a week?

These questions, and more, need to be answered by each Burmese pastor that ministers in the country of Myanmar. Their sacrifices are real and their task is difficult. However, many men in Myanmar are stepping up to the challenge and are faithfully proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The answer to these difficult questions begin with the call of God in his life and is perpetuated by his growing love for the Savior who died for him and called him to devote his life to preaching the Word of God. In this chapter I will examine the nature of preaching, the rationale for its importance, and the reason why preaching is so crucial for the furtherance of the gospel. I will look at the Scriptures as the basis of the task and present many comments from authorities who have perfected the art better than I have.

THE CALL TO PREACH GOD'S WORD

From the beginning of time, God has communicated His truth to man. At times He communicated by means of Theophanies and Christophanies (Gen. 3:8; 32:22-32; Josh. 5:13-15). Other times, He used special spokesmen called Prophets (Old Testament) and Apostles (New Testament), some of whose words actually became inspired of God. Today, He uses ministers who speak for God and whose teachings are to be considered authoritative based on II Tim. 2:14, 15. While every Christian has the right and responsibility to minister the Gospel (Rev. 22:17), there is a special call given to those who "herald" the Gospel. This is exemplified in Acts 8:4, 5 as recorded by Luke. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them (KJV)." In this version preaching is used with reference to the general people that were scattered *and* to Philip. In the original, the word "preach" was not used for both, and this is a vital distinction. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in his book *Preaching and Preachers,* explains it this way:

> "What the people who went everywhere did was, as someone has suggested it might be translated 'to gossip' the Word, to talk about it in conversation. Philip on the other hand did something different; he was 'heralding' the Gospel. This is, strictly speaking, what is meant by preaching in the sense that I have been using it. It is not accidental that such a distinction should be drawn into the actual text."[5]

This special calling is seen in the Old Testament where Prophets claimed a special commission from God to preach His Word. Isaiah records: "Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I. Send me! (Isaiah. 6:8 NASV)." Jeremiah writes with the same sense of distinction:

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[5] D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971). 102.

> "Now the word of the LORD came to me saying, Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations…Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant
> (Jeremiah. 1:4-10 NASV)."

Ezekiel uses the same language in his book (Ezek. 2:1-3; 3:1-4).

In the New Testament Paul speaks authoritatively when he states, "For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. For if I do this voluntarily, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have a stewardship entrusted to me (I Corinthians. 9:16, 17 NASV)."

Even today, God continues to call and set apart men to proclaim His Holy Word to His creatures. One of the more prolific preachers of modern history, Charles Spurgeon, once said: "No man may intrude into the sheepfold as an under-shepherd; he must have an eye to the chief Shepherd, and wait His beck and command."[6] Preaching is therefore extremely important to God, for it is one of the ways by which He communicates with people today. Matthew Simpson describes the preacher very eloquently in his book *Lectures on Preaching* when he states, "His throne is the pulpit; he stands in Christ's stead; his message is the word of God; around him are immortal souls; the Savior, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Spirit broods over the

[6] Charles Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 22.

congregation; angels gaze upon the scene, and heaven and hell await the issue. What associations and what vast responsibility!"[7]

TO PREACH GOD'S WORD IS TO PREACH BIBLICALLY

Today, there seems to be a trend toward experiential and pragmatic preaching**.** With the pressure to build large congregations and multifaceted ministries, many pastors have ceased making theology and expositional preaching the cornerstone of their ministry. This seems to indicate a partial fulfillment of Paul's prophecy when he states: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desire, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths (II Timothy 4:3,4 NASV)." In his book, *No Place for Truth,* David Wells states,

> "…It is possible that theology…has become peripheral and remote…The reason, quite simply, is that while these items of belief are professed, they are increasingly being removed from the center of evangelical life where they defined what that life was, and they are now being relegated to the periphery where their power to define what evangelical life should be is lost."[8]

Because of this trend in evangelical circles, it becomes even more important to stress expository preaching.

There is only one truth and that truth is the Word of God. John records for us Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17:17: "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth (NASB)." Paul states his legacy by saying: "Preach the word; be ready in

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[7] (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1879), 166. quoted in Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 16.
[8] David Wells, *No Place for Truth,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 108.

season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction (II Timothy 4:2 NASV)." The expositor is not called to preach his thoughts, ideas, preferences, or preach what others want to hear. He is to preach the word of God. Greidanus agrees:

> "When Paul charged young Timothy to 'preach the word,' he intended not simply that Timothy mount a pulpit and speak but that he base his spoken word on the written (and heard) word (see I Timothy 4:13; II Timothy 2:2, 15). If the Scriptures were a prerequisite for Timothy's preaching, they are so even more for contemporary preachers, for the latter have no other source of revelation. If contemporary preachers wish to preach the word, they will need to proclaim relevantly the word that was long ago inscribed in Scripture. To preach the word today means, therefore, to pass on to the church here and now the message of the Bible. The call to preach the word is the call to preach biblically."[9]

The Bible is worthy of reverence and careful attention on the part of those who read it and preach it. There are no more important words than God's. A man who would speak for God must preach biblically, declaring what God's written Word says.

TO PREACH GOD'S WORD BIBLICALLY IS TO PREACH UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

While it is important to have the Word of God in written form and to have it in one's own language, it is also important to be able to understand it. It is the function of the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, who enables the preacher and hearer to understand and apply the written Word of God.

The Holy Spirit and Inspiration

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is that of inspiration. Peter refers to this ministry when he writes: "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture

[9] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text,* (Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 10.

is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God (II Peter 1:20,21 NASV)." The Apostle Paul states it this way: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:16, 17 NASV)." The word translated "inspired" (*theopneustos*) means "God-breathed." Benjamin B. Warfield points out that "the very term in the Greek, *theopneustos,* means that a Divine product is breathed out by God."[10] The agent of the Godhead who inspired the writers was the Holy Spirit, and His ministry of inspiration had given us a text that is fully intended by God.

The Holy Spirit and the Preacher

Not only was the Holy Spirit instrumental in the writing of the Scriptures, He is also instrumental in helping us understand the Scriptures. Jesus comforts His disciples with these words: "But the Helper, the Holy spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you (John 14:16 NASV)." Again John writes: "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him (I John 2:27 NASV)." The theological term for this ministry is *Illumination.* "Illumination is the work of the Holy Spirit that opens one's spiritual eyes to comprehend the meaning of the Word of

[10] Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible,* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1948), 131.

God."[11] It is therefore important for every serious expositor to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit while being fully yielded to Him. Apart from His guidance the preacher will never fully understand the mysteries of the scriptures. The definitive passage on the necessity of illumination is I Corinthians 2:6-11.

> "Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; but just as it is written, Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. For to us God revealed them through the spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God, for who among men knows the thoughts of a man accept the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the spirit of God (NASV)."

The great reformer John Calvin made this comment about illumination: "The testimony of the Spirit is more excellent than all reason. For as God alone is a fit witness of Himself in his Word, so also the Word will not find acceptance in men's hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit."[12] Only as the preacher is dependent on the Spirit's working can he have confidence that the Spirit is using his pulpit ministry to accomplish the will of God. Therefore, it is vital that the preacher seeks to abide in Him and remain under His influence.

The Holy Spirit and the Audience

What has been stated about the Holy Spirit and the preacher can be said about the Holy Spirit and the audience. Apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the audience will never fully understand the Word of God as it is preached. Bernard

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[11] John MacArthur, Jr. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching,* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 103.
[12] John Calvin, *Calvin:Institutes of The Christian Religion,* ed. John T. McNeill, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:7, 79.

Ramm, in his book *Questions about the Spirit,* discusses Martin Luther's distinction between internal and external clarity. He states:

> "To Luther there was an outer and an inner clarity of Scripture. By the usual laws or rules of language, a Christian could understand the Scripture as a written document. This is the external clarity of Scripture. Due to man's sinfulness he needs an inward assist so that he might grasp the spiritual Word of God as the Word of God. The Word of God is a spiritual entity and can only be understood in faith with the help of the Holy Spirit. This is the internal clarity of Scripture."[13]

This is why it is so important for each believer who sits in the pew to assume the responsibility of maintaining his or her relationship with the Holy Spirit. Apart from His ministry of illumination the believer cannot understand or apply the Scriptures to his or her life.

TO PREACH GOD'S WORD BIBLICALLY IS TO PREACH EXPOSITORILY

There are many definitions of expository preaching. Haddon Robinson's definition is the most concise. He states: "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."[14]

Paul's first letter to the church at Thessalonica contributes substantially to the support of Robinson's definition of expository preaching. His references to his preaching in 1:2-2:14 are surrounded by important key terms, which provide a

[13] Bernard Ramm, *Questions About the Spirit,* (Waco, Texas: Word, 1977), 84.
[14] Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.

glimpse of Paul's understanding of the theological origin, function, and expected results of preaching. The key words "Gospel" and "Word" are closely related and this single sphere of the Gospel and the Word is the focus of Paul's preaching. It is also important to note that the gospel in 1:4-5 is more than a mere message.

> "It signifies an effective force; a power which creates and sustains the Christian community…the gospel is something that happens, an event. When the message of good news arrives, it calls forth faith and gathers the believers into its circle. The gospel is therefore something of a saving, dynamic *environment.* What gives the gospel message its dynamic is the fact that it is the Word of God (2:14). This means it is true and reliable. In preaching the Gospel, God's power is released."[15]

There is another important consequence to the Gospel being called the Word of God. Since it is "word," (*logos)* it requires a voice. As Beaudean explains further, "If the Word is alive and creative, it requires a means of communication that is alive and creative. And that means is the human voice. The word is oral. The human voice calls forth an audience, and in the audience's hearing it has a direct, personal effect."[16] There is, as Beker in his book *Paul the Apostle* explains, an immediacy and directness in oral speech, which is not the same in a written text.[17] For Paul, preaching the gospel is the direct vocal activity of the creative word of God in time and space. This is the apostle's definition of preaching.

The Apostle Paul states in I Corinthians. 1: 17: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void." Some expositors use this verse to support their belief that studying and developing good language skills is unimportant. The rebuttal

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[15] John Beaudean, Jr. *Paul's Theology of Preaching,* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1988), 56.
[16] Ibid., 56.
[17] J. Christian Beker, *Paul the Apostle,* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980), *122.*

is found in observing Paul himself. He was not only aware of the power of language, but made use of powerful metaphors and rhetorical devices in his letters and sermons.[18] In order to understand the balance between humble preaching and using strong styles of speech, we look to John Beaudean's *Paul's Theology of Preaching* for assistance. He states,

> "The weakness inherent in preaching stems not from its stylistic form, but from the position and posture of its spokesperson over against the hearers. Whatever linguistic or artistic style is employed, the heralding of the gospel is still based on the authority of God and nothing else. The preaching of the gospel, from Paul's perspective, is weakness precisely because the power of God is not evident in self-understood ways that accord with the standards of the world."[19]

Beaudean further states:

> "From Paul's point of view, authentic preaching does not draw its strength from itself, nor does it draw attention to itself, but it operates exclusively from the strength of God. If the gospel is true, as God is true, then preaching is true, and its power is unimpeachable. For preaching the gospel means announcing the reality that undergirds the universe. It needs no other signs of authentication."[20]

In light of this instruction given by Beaudean, preachers need to ask themselves the following questions: "Do I really believe the gospel?" "Is the gospel of Christ really the focus of the saving act of God in human history for me?" "Does it create for me a saving universe of meaning?" For as we have learned from Paul, there is no preaching without the gospel. The gospel is the norm by which all preaching must be tested. If I really believe that, then I am ready to be the authentic

[18] II Corinthians 2:14f and I Thessalonians 2:3-8 are only a few examples.
[19] Beaudean. 203.
[20] Ibid. 205.

voice of the new creation of God as I announce the gospel to all who will hear. For in proclaiming the gospel, I announce what is! And that makes all the difference.[21]

Randall Nichols, in his book *Building the Word*, proves helpful at this point. He reminds us that language by its very nature creates a group, a community, which modern communications researchers and theorists refer to as publics.[22] These "publics" are groups who gather around a common cause or purpose. They focus on specific topics and choose appropriate words and emphases. For the modern preacher the question becomes this: What kind of community are we creating? Beaudean emphasizes this when he states,

> "By the preaching of the gospel the 'public' of God is that gathering of believers which is created and sustained within the orbit of the gospel's power. Thus, Christians, by means of preaching, live out of the interpretation of life that comes when one lives within the sphere of influence that is God's gospel, the gospel of life and salvation focused in the death and resurrection of Christ. Preaching the gospel is, therefore, the means of a new sense of community, of social unity and coherence." [23]

If the preacher is to create a new sense of community that is reflective of the God of the Bible, two pillars must support him. First, he needs to clearly understand the nature of the task of preaching and be stimulated by a lively faith in the One about whom he is preaching. Second, he needs to know how to skillfully present the truth of the Word of God with clear and compelling terms so that his audience will hear and understand. There is no match for the compelling exposition of God's truth being preached by a lively faith in the living, sovereign God.

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Randall Nichols. *Building the Word.* (San Francisco: Harper, 1980), 107.

[23] Beaudean. 206.

TO PREACH GOD'S WORD BIBLICALLY IS TO PREACH GLOBALLY

The Bible is very clear in its mandate to preach the gospel. It is also clear that the church is to preach the gospel globally. "Global evangelism" was first introduced to us in Genesis 12:2, 3 when God gave Abraham what is known as the "Abrahamic Covenant." "…And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. *And in you all the families of the earth will be* blessed." Paul makes it clear in Galatians 3:6-9 that this was God's intention in this statement. This idea of reaching the world with the gospel is further stated by Isaiah. He writes, "…It is too small a thing that you should be My Servant. To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make you a light of the *nations so that my Salvation may reach to the end of the earth* (Isaiah 49:6 NASV)." In the New Testament Jesus expresses the same thought by what has become known as the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Mt. 28:19,20 NASV)." The core of the Great Commission is a command to make disciples of every people group in the world. In the original language, this does not include a command to go. The word for *go* is a participle, *going*. This means that the going is secondary to the main thrust, though in many cases it is essential to the reaching of specific people groups. On the authority of Jesus, His followers are to make whatever concentrated effort is necessary to carry

the gospel to every people group in the world.[24] As missiologist Johannes Verkuyl expressed it, in comparison with the commissions of the risen Christ recorded in the other Gospels and in the book of Acts, the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel express the "mandate for engaging in worldwide mission…the most forthrightly." He further asserts, "Not only is the conclusion to Matthew's Gospel extremely powerful compared to the others, but the final verses form a climax and present a summary of what was written before. They are the key to understanding the whole book."[25] While previous to the Great Commission the "gospel" was basically limited to the Jews, now the church was given the task to take the "gospel" to the whole world.

This change of outlook came very gradually. It began with the mind and work of Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle. To him, preaching the Gospel to the world is an essential part of the plan of God. After being converted to Christianity, he saw this open door to the Gentiles as one of the signs that we are living in the last days. He thought he may live to see this great consummation, but he also knew that this could not take place until the fullness of the Gentiles had come. With this motivation, he began to move throughout the Roman Empire, bearing witness to the Gospel. In God's providence, he had much success, and he even proclaimed Christ in the presence of the emperor himself.

It is noteworthy that the church of the first Christian generation was a genuinely missionary church. From prominent workers like Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1-4) to local assistants like Epaphras (I Corinthians 9:13, 14), they were trained

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[24] Winston Crawley, *Global Mission: A Story to Tell.* (Nashville: Boardman Press, 1985), p. 79.
[25] Johannes Verkuyl, *Contemporary Missiology,* trans. and ed. Dale Cooper (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), p. 106.

and sent out to establish local churches. We also see unnamed workers that the Church could depend upon with the advancement of the gospel. Following the execution of Stephen in Acts 8 these unnamed followers were scattered as a result of the persecution, and went about preaching the word (Acts 11:19-21).

In God's providence, there were many Jews present in every part of the Roman Empire. These Jews were a vigorous, active, and at times turbulent people. Coupled with the passion of the Greeks for knowledge and wisdom, it became apparent that the local synagogue offered a profound and moving wisdom apparently more ancient than even that of Homer.[26] Monotheism was in the air. Some Gentiles submitted to the rite of circumcision, and so became part of the people of the Jews (Acts 13:16). It was in this group that the preaching of the Gospel found its most ready and its most immediate response. "Paul was correct in his strategy. The Roman Empire was a world of cities, each of which dominated the thought as well as the economic life of the surrounding country. The Christian Church began as a city Church; it was only slowly and gradually that it moved out into the country, and in general the country folk were the last to yield to its influence."[27]

Through Church history we see the Church obeying the mandate to preach the Gospel to all nations. Based on the testimony of Irenaeus (130-200AD) we have evidence that the gospel had reached Gaul and Spain.[28] We do not know exactly when the gospel reached Britain. Tertullian, the ex-lawyer and church father of North Africa tells us that Christ had followers on the far side of the Roman wall in Britain,

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[26] Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 27.

[27] Ibid. 29,30.
[28] Ibid. 34.

where the legions had never yet penetrated. It is certain that in 314AD Britain was represented at the Council of Arles in southern France by the bishops of York, London, and a third see.

The discovery of America and the beginning of European colonization paved the way for the gospel to reach beyond the borders of Europe and continue its journey around the world. The charter granted to Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583 referred to the compassion of God "for poor infidels, it seeming probable that God hath reserved these Gentiles to be introduced into Christian civility by the English nation." Similarly, when Charles I granted a charter to the colony of Massachusetts, he included the statement that the principal end of the plantation was that the colonists might 'win and invite the natives of the country to the knowledge of the only true God and Savior of mankind and the Christian faith.'[29]

While more could be discussed concerning the global perspective of the gospel, this thesis is focused on the people group of Myanmar (Burma). It was under the leadership of Adoniram Judson (1788-1850AD) that the gospel reached this remote country. Born and reared in Massachusetts, Judson was saved and commissioned to reach the East with the gospel. Having been a Congregationalist all his life, he changed denominations while on his way to Burma. In a book about his father, Edward Judson states,

> "On his way to Burma, however, he became a Baptist. His attention was at this time especially drawn to the distinctive views of the Baptists by the fact that he was now about to found a new Christian society among the heathen. When the adult heathen accepted Christ by faith and love, he should of course be baptized, and thus formally initiated into the Christian Church. But ought the children also to be baptized upon the strength of the parent's faith? This was a practical question…. The result of his searching investigation was the

[29] Ibid. 225.

> conclusion, reluctantly formed, that he was wrong and that the Baptists were right. Of course they held many fundamental doctrines in common with Christians of all other evangelical denominations; but there were two distinctive tenets, that faith should always precede baptism, and that baptism is immersion. He was convinced that in these views they had the Bible on their side."[30]

On September 6, 1812, the Rev. Mr. Ward baptized Mr. and Mrs. Judson in Calcutta. On July 30, 1813, the Judson's arrived in Rangoon, Burma to start their ministry with the Burmese people. This endeavor would become the distinguishing characteristic of Adoniram Judson's ministry. Today, many evangelical groups carry out his work. This handbook is primarily intended to assist the pastors of Myanmar in their preaching effectiveness. It is oriented toward those who are part of the Baptist tradition, particularly those who belong to the Kachin Baptist Convention.

TO PREACH GOD'S WORD BIBLICALLY IS TO PREACH RELEVANTLY

God's word is far more practical than theoretical. Paul tells Timothy, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:16, 17 NASV)." Since those who wrote on God's behalf wrote relevant messages, it stands to reason that those who would speak for Him today would do likewise. Relevance is an issue that should concern the expositor not just because people today want practical applications of the Word of God, but also because it is an issue that concerns God Himself. God wants His word to be applicable in whatever generation it is spoken. Therefore, it is important for the expositor to examine the text in light of the audience to which the text was written

[30] Edward Judson. *The Life of Adoniram Judson,* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Company, 1883), 36.

and to transmit that message to the audience to which he is preaching. In order to do this, he must look for similar situational ties that will link the ancient audience with the present. To be successful he must be a student of the biblical audience and a student of the contemporary audience. Both are important in order to communicate effectively the truth of God's Word. John Stott, in his book *Between Two Worlds*, expresses it this way:

> "It is because preaching is not exposition only but communication, not just the exegesis of a text but the conveying of a God-given message to living people who need to hear it, that I am going to develop a different metaphor to illustrate the essential nature of preaching. It is non-biblical in the sense that it is not explicitly used in Scripture, but I hope to show that what it lays upon us is a fundamentally biblical task. The metaphor is that of bridge-building."

Stott goes on to say, "Biblical and theological studies do not by themselves make for good preaching. They are indispensable. But unless they are supplemented by contemporary studies, they can keep us disastrously isolated on one side of the cultural chasm."[31]

Relevance is judged by the listener. One's social setting, personal background, perceived needs, or areas of struggle all help to define what is relevant to the listener. They readily become the content areas to which the preacher seeks to apply God's word. The preacher's task is to make the word of God intelligible to his listeners.[32] Preachers must know how people approach and interact with reality in a particular culture, their thought forms, values, and beliefs, and their level of language ability. All of this affects how a message is crafted in order to make it intelligible.

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[31] John Stott, *Between Two Worlds,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 137, 190.
[32] For example, he is not to speak in a foreign tongue (I Corinthians. 14:6-12).

Individual perceptions of needs, while important, are not the sole definition of relevance. God certainly has a say as to what is relevant or not. What God has chosen to reveal through His Word is without question relevant to all individuals. God knows the needs of people better than they know their own needs. People can be deceived about what their real needs are but God is not. Therefore, what is relevant to God, which He has revealed, is what must be relevant to His preacher who communicates that revelation. As has been stated before, The Bible must be the source book of all preaching.

Preaching the Word of God is essential for today. It could be argued that procreation by two individuals is an important human activity. Yet, the Word of God speaks of a greater procreation. The Apostle Peter explains, "For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the LORD endures forever (I Peter 1:23-25 NASV)." It is through the preaching of God's Word that people are saved. Preaching is not merely a human activity but a divine one. God uses preaching in order to carry out His act of spiritual procreation. When a man is called and equipped by God to preach the Word of God and does so Biblically, expositorily, and relevantly, he, in a real and true sense, no longer speaks for himself but for God. Paul states in his book to the Romans: "For whoever will call on the name of the LORD will be saved. How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as

it is written, 'how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news of good things!' (Romans 10:13-15 NASV)."

CONCLUSION

To speak the Word of God expositorily under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and to do it in a way that impacts lives within the framework of modern culture is a tremendous privilege and responsibility. Because of the nature of this task, the preaching of the Word of God should be a high priority in the life of any preacher. The early Apostles understood the importance of this task when they came to the following conclusion. "…It is not desirable for us to neglect the Word of God in order to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:2-4 NASV)." For the preacher of today there are many good tasks that draw the minister away from the study and preaching of the Word of God. Counseling, evangelistic visitation, ministering to the sick and widows, church administration, and leadership all provide legitimate and often expected responsibilities. However, nothing should take away from the diligent proclamation of God's truth. Paul exhorts young Timothy: "Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery (I Timothy 4:13, 14 NASV)." These directives from the Scripture should encourage each serious student of the Word of God to polish his preaching skills. To

stand in God's place as His spokesman is a spiritual privilege which should never be taken lightly. To preach well is to bring glory to God and fulfillment to one's call.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Solomon tells us that in the multitude of counselors there is safety (Proverbs 11:14). I am sure Solomon had in mind verbal counsel. However, I will take the liberty to apply it to written counsel. The intent of this thesis is to produce a handbook on expositional preaching for the pastors of Myanmar that will give them guidance in homiletics within the framework of their culture. Because I am not from Myanmar and have only visited it once, there are many areas with which I must become familiar in order to achieve my objective.

I will explore five areas of literature that seem to be essential for accomplishing the purpose of this thesis. First, we need to be familiar with the Burmese culture, noting key features of that culture, which most directly influence my project. Second, we will look at the predominate religion, Buddhism, to gain an understanding of its teachings. Third, we will note the effect of Buddhism on Christianity. Fourth, we will consider the effect Buddhism has on the teaching and learning styles of the people. Fifth, we will briefly review the literature concerning expositional preaching in order to describe our own context from which we will work.

This review of the relevant literature is designed to give us an understanding of the people of Myanmar, their culture, the influence of Buddhism, and the importance of expositional preaching. It will ultimately enable this thesis to be relevant to them in the context of their culture.

BURMESE CULTURE

Learning the culture of Myanmar helps to understand the people and how they think as well as how they learn. Caroline Courtauld, in her book, *Burma (Myanmar)*, gives a good general overview of the history of the country as a whole as well as a history of each individual state. She states that because of military rule, a country so rich in natural resources is still poor. She describes the child malnutrition in towns and gives reasons why the universities are closed for years at a time. Some of these reasons include: student unrest, unwillingness of the present military rulers to recognize free elections and economic shortages.

Courtauld claims that one of the fundamental themes of Burmese culture is the impact of the West.[33] She states,

> Beginning in the 15th century, Western merchants primarily attracted by the gem trade arrived at Burmese ports. But somehow Burma—tucked away on the right of the Bay of Bengal not on the way to anywhere—never became a major trading arena. By the 19th century, however, both Britain and France realized that Burma was indeed on the way to somewhere. She held the key, in the form of the Irrawaddy River, to the back door into China. Fear that this key might fall into the hands of the French resulted in the Third Anglo-Burmese War and, in 1886, complete absorption of Burma into the British Empire.[34]

Even though Myanmar has gained her independence from Britain she is still eyed as a potential resource for the West. With possession of natural resources and the people's desire for freedom, Myanmar is headed for much change in the future. As Myanmar becomes attractive because of its natural resources, it will become more influenced by the presence of Westerners and their higher standard of living. This influence will result in a higher level of education and desire to learn. If the pastors

[33] See map on page vii.
[34] Caroline Courtauld, *Burma (Myanmar),* (New York: Odyssey Publications Ltd., 1988), 24.

of Myanmar are to continue to be effective in presenting the gospel they too will have to increase their level of education and ability to communicate.

Another resource that helps us understand the culture of Myanmar is David Steinberg's book, *Burma, the State of Myanmar.* He elaborates about the culture more than Courtauld does in her book by discussing the politics of social issues such as poverty, the destruction of the educational system, health, and the lower-class status of women. At one time Burma enjoyed a standard of living much better than her neighbors. Because of the abundance of natural resources, the people lived well. Steinberg states that at one time Burma had the "highest literacy rates between Suez and Japan…."[35] The people were healthy and women had much more freedom than their counterparts in neighboring countries.

However, things began to change because of the fear that progress would change their culture. Steinberg states,

> The decline in the quality of life in Burma from 1962… was a travesty of which many Burmese have been deeply chagrined and ashamed. Many Burmese officials have recognized this disgrace. That is why the military concealed from the public for four months (until March 1988) that Burma had been recognized by the United Nations as 'least developed.' Even with the financial crisis of 1997 that affected so much of Southeast Asia and Korea, but from the worst effects of which Myanmar was insulated by its relative isolation from the world economy, the decline in the Thai standard of living is but a minor irritation compared to the continuous stagnation, even decline, in the quality of Burmese life, both for the majority of Burmans and the minority peoples.[36]

Steinberg places the blame squarely on the shoulders of the military.

> He explains, "…The large military expenditures on defense and the related military establishment restrict the ability of the state to deal effectively with any of these issues. Furthermore, insofar as the elite of the military are

[35] David Steinberg, *Burma, The State of Myanmar,* (Washington, D. C: Georgetown University Press, 2001), 199.
[36] Ibid., 200.

> isolated from the problems of health and education because the *tatmadaw* runs its own vastly superior systems for its staff and families, they are less inclined to feel that improvement in public systems is a priority concern of the state."[37]

Because of these travesties, Myanmar has been lacking in all developmental aspects of life such as education, health, and the status of women. Because of these travesties the people of Myanmar are hungry for change. With the inevitable influence of the West the standard of living will eventually increase and with it the need for the preachers to elevate their skills in homiletics.

The Making of Modern Burma by Thant Myint-U is another book that sheds much light on the Burmese culture. Thant Myint-U wrote this book when he was a research fellow of Trinity College in Cambridge. Thant Myint-U gives two explanations as to why Myanmar has been under the oppressive rule of the military for so long. One reason is the nature of the military itself. He explains,

> "Unlike Thailand, no older institutions, such as the monarchy, carried over to ballast newer forces in society. And unlike other British Asian possessions at independence, such as India, Ceylon or Malaya, Burma's colonial era structures—the army, police, civil service and judiciary—were singularly fragile, having had barely fifty years of life in the old heartland. Thus Burma at independence faced a weak institutional legacy, a vacuum which the new war-time army was soon able to fill."[38]

The second reason for the dominating military rule is the Burmese ethnic nationalism. Myint-U further states,

> "In Burma the strength and political dominance of a Burmese/Myanmar identity based on older Ava-based memories has never allowed the development of a newer identity which would incorporate the divers peoples inhabiting the modern state. Instead, it has led since 1948 to recurrent warfare, the growth of a large military machine and an army rule which seems unlikely to end."[39]

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[37] Ibid., 201.
[38] Thant Myint-U, *The Making of Modern Burma,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 254.
[39] Ibid.

According to Thant Myint-U this military rule will never end, and thus there seems to be no hope for Myanmar to ever overcome its current problems. Now is a great time to present the Good News of Jesus Christ. The freedom we have in Him no man or government can take away. In order to present this good news effectively the preachers will have to develop better skills of communicating the Good News of the Word of God.

The book entitled, *Freedom from Fear*, by Aung San Suu Kyi, is a great resource that enables us to understand what the future may hold for Myanmar. She takes a much more positive and hopeful outlook than that of Myint-U. Aung San Suu Kyi received her PhD from Oxford, England. Her father was Aung San who was assassinated just before Burma gained the independence to which he had dedicated his life. Aung San had been under house arrest but was freed July 10, 1995, and has since resumed her struggle for political freedom in her country. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December of 1991. Her book gives a very detailed picture of the struggles that the Burmese (Myanmar) people are going through to obtain their political freedom. Struggles such as freedom to express ones own belief and opinions. Opinions as they relates to religion and government. Although the government claims that the people have this freedom, the reality is they do not. Today, there is much unrest among the students however, nothing has changed. Each time there is a political rally or march, the military is quick to keep the movement from spreading.

Aung San has been able to gather many followers, especially students. Wherever she goes and speaks, they come and listen. Many feel that if democracy

comes to Myanmar it will be because of the work that Aung San is doing. Her message is the same as that of her father's. Whenever she speaks she quotes him.

> "We must make democracy the popular creed. We must try to build up a free Burma in accordance with such a creed. If we should fail to do this, our people are bound to suffer. If democracy should fail the world cannot stand back and just look on and therefore Burma would one day, like Japan and Germany, be despised. Democracy is the only ideology, which is consistent with freedom. It is also an ideology that promotes and strengthens peace. It is therefore the only ideology we should aim for."[40]

Freedom, according to Aung San Suu Kyi, is the desire of the common people of Myanmar. Many are willing to give their lives for it as long as their people are free. Her purpose in life is to encourage her people and facilitate that freedom. As she so profoundly states, "The quest for democracy in Burma is the struggle of a people to live whole, meaningful lives as free and equal members of the world community. It is part of the unceasing human endeavor to prove that the spirit of man can transcend the flaws of his own nature."[41] Aung San Suu Kyi is optimistic of the future of Myanmar and so are many of the youths within the country.

Though Myanmar has been living under a "dark ages" situation for some time now, there are signs, which point to an insurgence that will eventually bring democracy to the land. When freedom comes, the need for better homiletical skills will be of necessity if the pastor's of local churches want to continue being effective in their work for God. History has proven, even in Myanmar, that military rule cannot last forever. Sooner or later democracy will develop. The country is already receiving pressure from the United Nations and the United States to allow more

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[40] Aung San Suu Kyi, *Freedom From Fear,* 2nd ed. ed. Michael Aris (New York: Penguin Putman Inc., 1995), 194.
[41] Ibid., 179.

international trade. Western culture is presently influencing the country by various means such as MTV. With these various influences the attention span may shorten and interests in many other activities will challenge interest in spiritual things. There will be a point in time that preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will have to develop better homiletical skills if they hope to capture and motivate people.

BUDDHISM

According to the *World Christian Encyclopedia,* Myanmar is 72.7% Buddhist.[42] To help understand Buddhist doctrine and its impact on Burmese culture and the Christian church the following books will help. *A Concise History of Buddhism* by Andrew Skilton is a good place to start. Skilton was born in 1957 in Croydon, Surrey. He began to develop an interest in Buddhism for a number of years before he was ordained as a member of the Western Buddhist Order in 1979. He has since studied Buddhist theology and religious studies at the University of Bristol and just before *writing A Concise History of Buddhism* he completed his doctoral thesis on the *Samadhiraja Sutra* at Oxford. In *A Concise History of Buddhism,* Skilton explores the origins of this twenty-five-centuries-old religion and traces the major developments in Buddhism through the nineteenth century, focusing on the roots of present-day forms of the religion. Some of these major developments include doctrine; various techniques of meditation, such as concentration upon a single object; analysis of the present; and materialism.

[42] *World Christian Encyclopedia,* 2nd ed. vol. 1, 518.

Skilton also describes the impact that Buddhism has had on countries other than India such as Myanmar. Concerning the Buddhist tradition in Myanmar Skilton writes,

> "The region occupied by the modern state of Burma was to play a crucial role in the spread of Buddhism in the region, and indeed seems to have been the first mainland country outside India to come under its influence, a mission being sent by Asoka (3rd century BCE) to the Mon peoples of Lower Burma and Thailand." He further states, "Application to the study of the Buddhist scriptures has been a feature of Burmese Buddhism. This has resulted in a particularly reliable transmission of the whole Pali Canon there, although the Burmese have shown greatest interest in the Abhidhamma. Notable expression of the same trend was shown in the Fifth and Sixth Buddhist Councils, convened in Mandalay in 1871 and Rangoon in 1954-56 respectively, at both of which the canon was thoroughly revised."[43]

Skilton reveals that Buddhism has greatly affected the country. However, the light of the Gospel shines best when the darkness is the darkest. We are already seeing signs of the transformation that the gospel brings particularly in the Kachin State. Here, the church is thriving and Christianity is spreading to the point that the government has had to recognize its legitimate place in their society.

For those unacquainted with Buddhism, *Introduction to Buddhism* by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso gives a good explanation of the Buddhist way of life.
Gyatso was born in Tibet and is a fully accomplished meditation master and internationally renowned teacher of Buddhism. He has founded many Buddhist centers throughout the world. In his book, he describes the very basic tenets of Buddhism. In layman terms he explains who Buddha was and defines such terms as "Karma," "Path to Liberation" and the "Path to Enlightenment." One of the major doctrines of Buddhism is reincarnation. In his book he describes a "proof

[43] Andrew Skilton, *A Concise History of Buddhism,* (Birmingham UK: Windhorse Publications, 1994), 155, 156.

experience" that enhances this belief. The story revolves around the death of his mother and the birth of a baby girl to one of his friends. He writes:

> "One night I dreamed about my mother again and again. The next morning, I considered the matter carefully and reached a decision. If the baby had been born that night, then it was definitely my mother's reincarnation, but if it had not, I would need to make further examinations. Having made this decision, I telephoned the husband, who gave me the good news that his wife had given birth to a baby girl the previous night. I was delighted and performed a puja, or offering ceremony, as a thanksgiving to my Dharmapala. A few days later, the father telephoned and told me that if he recited the mantra of Buddha Avalokiteshvara, OM MANI PAME HUM, when the baby cried, she would immediately stop crying and appear to be listening to the mantra. He asked me why this was and I replied that it was because of her tendencies from her previous life. I knew that my mother had recited this mantra with strong faith throughout her life."[44]

Gyatso exemplifies a common error by proving doctrine on the basis of personal experience alone. This will present a great challenge to the Christian expositor. For the Christian experience is interpreted by Scripture not Scripture by experience. The Word of God is our final authority (II Timothy 3:16,17) not man. Even though the Word of God is powerful and the Spirit of God can illuminate all minds, it is also the responsibility of the preacher, (II Corinthians 5:17ff) to present the message of God's Word as clearly and powerfully as he can.

Buddhism Plain and Simple by Steve Hagen, a Zen priest, who is currently teaching at the Dharma Field Meditation of Learning Center in Minneapolis, presents a precise exposition of Buddhism. The major thrust of Hagen's book and a major doctrine of Buddhism is that there is no god but oneself. In this Epilogue entitled 'Be a Light Unto Yourself" Hagen quotes a saying from Buddha as he approached death: "Be a

[44] Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Introduction to Buddhism,* 2nd ed. (Glen Sprey, New York: Tharpa Publications, 2001), 22.

light unto yourself; betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves." Hagen goes on to say:

> "You'll not find what satisfies the heartmind in a book, or in a teaching. You'll not find it even in what the Buddha taught. You won't get Truth from the Buddha, or from a venerated Zen master or lama, or from a priest or monk or nun or teacher or guru. You won't receive Truth—what quiets the deepest ache of the heart –from any other…You're the one you can count on. You're not other-dependent. Everything you need is here now. Just rely on this—immediate, direct experience. You're the final authority."[45]

This position exposes a major contrast to Christianity and presents a door of opportunity for the Christian pastor to preach the fact that God is Truth. Jesus says: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me." (John. 14:6 NASV) The gospel is very clear that salvation, truth and life itself in not found in man but in God. Man is not the ultimate source of truth. The Word of God is. Jesus states in John 17:17; "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth." (NASV) Even though those who hold to the doctrine of Buddhism have great faith, it is the object of faith that makes the difference. The only object of faith that can save a person is Jesus Christ and not our good deeds. Titus records: "But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:4,5 NASV)

BUDDHISM VERSUS CHRISTIANITY

As a Christian communicates the truth of Scriptures to a culture that is primarily Buddhist it becomes important to note the points of conflict in terms of

[45] Steve Hagen, *Buddhism Plain and Simple,* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 51, 52.

theology. Jim Ruff, former missionary to Japan and present administrator at Association of Baptist For World Evangelism (ABWE), defines for us the basic doctrines of Buddhism as they relate to Christianity in his course manual for the candidates of ABWE entitled "*Evangelizing and Ministering Within A Buddhist Culture."*[46] In simple terms he lays out the beliefs of Buddhism and the counterpart beliefs of Christianity. He effectively argues that a person cannot be a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time. For example, one cannot believe simultaneously in the deity of Jesus Christ and hold to the doctrine that there is no god. He concludes by stating, "Obviously, one will quickly come to the realization that, in spite of all the convergences and parallels, being a Christian and being a Buddhist are not simply identical: the way of discipleship in Christ and the path of the Buddha cannot simply be traveled at the same time."[47] There is much teaching today with the philosophy of inclusivism that a person can be both. However, as the truth of the Word of God is taught, this approach proves to be impossible.

In order to effectively present the Word of God to the Burmese people, it is important to understand how to effectively present the Good News. A series of essays entitled *Clues to Thai Culture and to Cross Cultural Adjustment, Communication and Innovation,*[48] gives us specific guidelines that are effective in working with the Burmese culture. Even though this collection of essays is geared for the Thai culture, Thai and Burmese cultures are very similar so the suggestions are appropriate. Some of these guidelines include ways of perceiving the world, ways of thinking, ways of

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[46] Jim Ruff, *Evangelizing and Ministering Within a Buddhist Culture,* (presented for the candidate class of ABWE, 2001).
[47] Ibid., 14.
[48] Central Thai Language Committee (OMF), *Clues to Thai Culture and to Cross Cultural Adjustment, Communication and Innovation,* (Bangkok, May 1981).

expressing ideas, ways of acting, ways of channeling the message, ways of interacting, and ways of deciding what is truth.[49]

Within this collection is an essay written by Wan Petchsongkram entitled *How to Communicate the Christian Message to a Buddhist—Excerpts from Three Lectures*.[50] In this essay Petchsongkram gives some very practical suggestions in presenting the gospel to the average Buddhist. For example, a Buddhist believes that there are two levels of righteousness. One, the worldly level associated with the ordinary Buddhist. Two, the level above the world associated with an advanced person. If the Christian is to present the gospel properly to a Buddhist, he must present it on a high level by using parables and examples so that they cannot say that the gospel is cheap.[51]

THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS OF BURMESE CULTURE

Any time culture barriers are crossed and if communication is to be effective, there must be an understanding of the teaching/learning process of that culture. Burmese culture is no exception. To begin with one must understand the thinking process of the culture that is to be influenced. Robert Oliver clearly expresses this fact in a lecture series entitled: *Culture and Communication: The Problem of Penetrating National and Cultural Boundaries.* He states,

> "Not only do we not speak alike, but, more importantly, we do not think alike. Every separate community has its own value system. Every culture has its own modes of thought and its own selected interest areas, which constitute the subject matter it chooses to think about. The ways in which the mind of a

[49] Ibid., 40.
[50] Ibid., 48-58.
[51] Ibid., 48.

> Hindu differs in its workings from the mind of an American are more complex and more basic than the difference between the Hindi and the English languages."[52]

Oliver continues his series and explains that different genres help in the communication process. This becomes important as we try to explain the gospel to the Burmese people. Because they are more artistic in their expressions, the poetic books of Scripture become more useful than the didactic ones.

Missiologist Edward Pentecost, in his book *Issues in Missiology: An Introduction*, takes Oliver's statement a step further. He gives a comparative analysis that is quite similar to other missiologists, describing the difference between cultural perspectives of Western mentality and non-western mentality.[53] The point that Pentecost makes is that people are different. Culture, language, geography, history, social customs, social structures, and religion all affect thought patterns. For the expositor, it is important to recognize that there is a close relationship between one's mentality, which is a learned pattern of thinking, and one's religion, which is a learned belief and practice.

In order to communicate the unchanging truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a different culture one must understand the basic processes of cross-cultural communication skills. A helpful book on the subject is David J. Hesselgrave's *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally.* In this book Hesselgrave elaborates in

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[52] Robert T. Oliver, *Culture and Communication: The Problem of Penetrating National and Cultural Boundaries,* American Lecture Series, ed. Dominick A. Barbara, no. 506 (Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1962), xi.
[53] Edward C. Pentecost, *Issues in Missiology: An Introduction,* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1982), 98-99.

detail the seven dimensions of cross-cultural communication.[54] Hesselgrave correctly observes, "The Christian mission is serious business—the King's business! In it, missionaries have ambassadorial rank. Their special task is to cross cultural and other boundaries in order to communicate Christ."[55] An understanding of these seven dimensions gives the expositor a good perspective in communicating the truth of the Word of God to the heart of his cross-cultural hearers.

To become more familiar with the Burmese culture influenced greatly by the Buddhist religion, a look at Richard Lewis' book *The Cultural Imperative* is helpful. He looks at Buddhism's teaching as it relates to the way people think and react.[56] Lewis gives the expositor a valuable tool in helping him understand how Burmese people think and what they will accept. He looks at the Buddhist four noble truths which are: All life is sorrow; sorrow is the result of unchecked desire; cessation of desire ends sorrow, and one must follow the Middle Way (and avoid extremes). Lewis follows with a list of paths that the Buddhist will follow which are: right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, seeking the truth, and contemplation.[57] Although Lewis would see all religions on the same level, he offers a valuable service for the Christian preacher as he ministers cross-culturally.

Some issues that must be realized and dealt with in teaching homiletics to the pastors of Myanmar are: One--Myanmar is a military state and the government is

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[54] The seven dimensions of cross-cultural communication are: World views--ways of perceiving the world; cognitive processes—ways of thinking; linguistic forms—ways of expressing ideas; behavioral patters—ways of acting; social structures—ways of interacting; media influence—ways of channeling the message; motivational sources—ways of deciding. David J. Hesselgrave, *Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally,* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 121-461.
[55] Ibid., 16
[56] Richard Lewis, *The Cultural Imperative,* (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc., 2003), 52-53.
[57] Ibid.

very suspicious of Americans teaching in their country. Therefore, the teacher must be careful not to offend the government officials that will, no doubt, be in his audience listening, by giving illustrations such as freedom, liberty, challenging authority and evangelizing the community. *Two*--There are no evangelical pastors in Myanmar that have received training in the field of homiletics. Therefore, all teaching will be done cross-culturally. Coupled with the fact that the average pastor in Myanmar has the equivalent to an eight-grade education, it will become important that the teacher keep his materials simple. He will need to limit his vocabulary to no more than three syllable words because of the use of at least two interpreters. *Three*--Buddhist culture reveres the "teacher" more than parents or the elderly. What he says is absolute truth and is never questioned. Because this reverence has crossed over into the Christian community of Myanmar, it becomes difficult to gain feedback on teaching, even though they do not fully understand what the teacher is saying or even though they may disagree, they will seldom ask a question or make a comment that might be controversial. The only feedback that the teacher will hear is: "Thank you; I learned much today." It is very difficult to convince them that it is all right to ask questions and even debate the teacher. *Four*-- Another factor that creates a difficulty in teaching homiletics to the pastors of Myanmar is the fact that many of them feel they need no training in sermon development. Their Buddhist background teaches them that praying in enough. Buddhists spend a great deal of their time praying and reading. When surveyed, the average pastor spends only two hours developing a sermon. Much of that time is spent praying and reading. They enter their pulpits and, after reading the Scriptures, they tell stories. In the past, this process has been

sufficient to capture the attention and convey the truth to their audience. However, as Western culture influences the people of Myanmar, the pastors of that country will have to develop their skills of sermon development in order to capture attention and convey deeper truths to their people.[58]

The writing and application of this thesis is designed to help alleviate some of these issues. Having a handbook in their own language and written on a level that the average pastor will be able to understand will help much to assist them in developing good exegetical sermons. After my teaching the handbook in October 2004 to sixty Burmese pastors, it became clear to them that they needed help in developing good sermons if they were to remain relevant.

EXPOSITORY PREACHING

The field of expository preaching presents a wide range of materials.[59] For this thesis, Haddon Robinson's book *Biblical Preaching* will be the main source. He develops a good case for expository preaching and articulates a helpful process for discovering the "big idea" of a text and the general progression of sermon preparation. His definition of expository preaching is the cornerstone of his book. He defines it as: "The communication of a biblical concept derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its

[58] These observations were made by interviewing Dr. Zauba Lahpai (professor of New Testament at Hansen Baptist Bible College and pastor in Myitkyina, Myanmar) along with teaching twenty-one hours of homiletics to sixty pastors during a pastor's conference in Myitkyina, Myanmar on October 18-23, 2004.

[59] The books that will be used in the field of homiletics are those written from a Western perspective. Thus, it will be necessary to be aware of the cultural differences between Burmese society and the West as we construct our preaching guide. However, that is not to say we will eschew anything that is Western. On the contrary, part of crafting this guide will be to import the best contributions from the Western perspective that we have without violating the legitimate cultural uniqueness of Myanmar.

context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers."[60] From this definition Robinson skillfully lays out a systematic approach of taking the expositor from the text to the sermon.

John MacArthur's book *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* presents a balanced approach of how prayer and the Holy Spirit help with expository preaching. Within this book, James E. Rosscup, a faculty member of Master's Seminary, writes a particularly pertinent essay, "The Priority of Prayer and Expository Preaching." Rosscup very skillfully describes the importance of godliness and dependence on the power of God as they relate to the expositor and his prayer life. He describes them as "basic ingredients in the experience of a praying preacher."[61] He continues his treatise by tracking the theme of prayer through both the Old and New Testaments. After establishing the biblical foundation of prayer he presses the necessity of prayer for power in preaching today. He quotes many preachers of the past and their testimonies as to the power of prayer in preaching concluding with the famous quote from H. A. Ironside: "If we would prevail with men in public, we must prevail with God in secret."[62] The subject of the Holy Spirit is explored by John MacArthur in the section entitled "The Spirit of God and Expository Preaching." He states: "Powerful preaching occurs only when a Spirit-illumined man of God expounds clearly and compellingly God's Spirit-inspired revelation in Scripture to a Spirit-illumined

[60] Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 2ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 21.
[61] James E. Rosscup, "The Priority of Prayer and Expository Preaching," in *Rediscovering Expository Preachng,* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 64.
[62] Ibid. 76.

congregation."[63] Much of his chapter is devoted to the development of illumination. He concludes the chapter by describing at least four benefits that the preacher and congregation receive from the ministry of illumination.[64] The preacher must never neglect the illuminating work of God's Spirit if he intends to produce supernatural results. Apart from illumination, our efforts are only mechanical and not spiritual.

The Handbook of Contemporary Preaching, edited by Michael Duduit, gives constructive helps in preaching the various genres of the Bible. The book was compiled from a number of expositors ranging from the roots of contemporary preaching to preaching various genres of Scripture. It is the section of the genres of Scripture that this thesis will draw from.[65] As is true in all cultures, staying true to the text in content and style is important. As the Scriptures use different genres to reveal truth, the preacher must understand and use the different genres to convey truth. This handbook helps the expositor to understand the different strengths of each genre.

The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text by Sidney Greidanus will provide additional help with various genres of Scripture. Not only does Greidanus describe the various genres he elaborates on the risks in preaching them. For example, after describing many advantages of narrative preaching, Greidanus describes the pitfalls as well. He elaborates: "The first pitfall is that preachers become so enchanted by

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[63] John MacArthur. "The Spirit of God and Expository Preaching," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching,* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 103.
[64] (1) The Christian is not enslaved to tradition or dogma. (2) Every Christian can understand Scripture. (3) Through illumination, Bible study becomes personal communion with God. (4) Illumination produces joy. Ibid. 114-115.
[65] The various genres are: Old Historical books, Poetic Literature, Prophets, Gospels, Parables, Epistles, Apocalyptic Literature, Narrative. Michael Duduit, editor, *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching,* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), contents.

the narrative form that they adopt this as their one and only sermon form."[66] Because we are creatures of habit and because much of the Bible is written in narrative form, it is easy to understand the "rut" that many preachers can fall into. This explanation will be very helpful for the Burmese pastors. Burmese culture loves stories so narrative preaching does well in that setting. However, much of the Bible is written in other genres that must be preached, as the expositor is to preach the whole council of God. Therefore, it is important to understand and practice preaching all of the various genres of Scripture.

CONCLUSION

This review covers only a sample of books that will be used in this thesis. The contribution of these authors and others will enhance the effectiveness of this project with the preachers of Myanmar. The intent of this thesis is to produce a guide that will raise the quality of preaching so that the gospel will continue to be expounded with relevance. Solomon declares, "But in the abundance of counselors there is victory" (Proverbs 11:14b NASV). These authors are the counselors that will help produce an effective handbook.

[66] Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and The Ancient Text,* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988), 152.

CHAPTER FOUR

A HANDBOOK OF HOMILETICS FOR THE PASTORS OF MYANMAR

INTRODUCTION

My desire is that God will use this handbook to help the pastors of Myanmar improve their skills of preaching within the framework of their own culture. My desire is not to change the pastors so that they preach like they would if they were in America, but to preach better to their own people. I believe there are skills to be learned that will assist in the endeavor to be better communicators of the gospel. There is too much at stake to neglect our responsibility in continuing to learn how to better ourselves as preachers. Matthew Simpson said it best when he described the position of the preacher.

> "His throne is the pulpit; he stands in Christ's stead; his message is the word of God; around him are immortal souls; the Savior, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation; angels gaze upon the scene, and heaven and hell await the issue. What associations, and what vast responsibility!"[67]

The world is getting smaller. I don't mean that the earth itself is getting smaller; I mean that access to the whole world is getting easier. My grandfather never traveled more than 100 kilometers from his home. I have had the privilege of traveling around the world. It is not uncommon for many people to travel yearly from one country to another. Not only is travel easier, but also communication is easier. With the use of satellites, people can communicate with friends around the globe.

[67] Matthew Simpson, *Lectures on Preaching,* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1879), 166.

Television has become global. MTV, CNN and other shows are seen in almost every country in the world. With this easy access in travel and communication, our world is getting smaller.

There are now more and more opportunities for people to involve themselves with activities that cater to their wants and desires. Travel is becoming much easier because more and more Burmese have use of cars. Myanmar is continually becoming a commercialized State creating more jobs for people as well as providing a variety of goods and services such as Television and radio. There are more pleasurable places to go to and spend time with family and friends in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Because of these influences it becomes harder to attract and hold people's attention in order to minister the Word of God. Therefore, it is apparent that if ministers today are going to effectively communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world, they must continually improve their skills of communication.

The format for the rest of this chapter will be in lesson plan form. This format makes it easier to understand the material as well as assist those who may teach the handbook to other pastors.

LESSON ONE

THE DEFINITION OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING

OVERVIEW

The Apostle Paul tells Timothy to, "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (II Timothy 4:2). Our assignment as pastors is not to entertain others or preach some political agenda. Our assignment from God is to preach the Word of God with authority. The type of preaching that best fulfils this assignment is expository preaching. This lesson will begin the process of sermon development by defining what it means by expository preaching.

GOALS

1. Define what is meant by expository preaching.
2. Explain each part of the definition and clarify how crucial each part is to the aspect of preaching.

OUTLINE

I. DEFINITION OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING

a. Haddon Robinson states that, "Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical idea, resulting from the study of a passage

in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.[68]

II. **EXPLANATION OF EACH PART OF THE DEFINITION OF EXPOSITORY PREACHING**

a. The passage governs the sermon

   i. The sermon is NOT a collection of my ideas.

   ii. The sermon is derived from going to the Scriptures and allowing the Scriptures to speak for themselves.

b. The expositor communicates a Concept

   i. As communicators of God's word we must be concerned not only what the individual words mean but what the biblical writers meant through their use of words.

   ii. The concept is what God uses to change lives.

c. The concept comes from the text

   i. As communicators, it is essential that we communicate God's Word and not our own ideas.

   ii. As communicators, we must first go to the text and allow the text to speak to us and not go to the text looking for support of our own ideas.

[68] Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*: *The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2ed. 2001), 21.

iii. It is important to read and reread the passage, praying that the Holy Spirit will show us what truths He wants to be preached to our hearers.

d. The concept is applied to the preacher

i. The concept must minister to the heart of the preacher first in order to minister to the hearts of the congregation.

ii. Seven steps must be followed for the concept to move from the head of the preacher to his heart.

1. Wait –A few moments before studying the text, sense the presence of God, seek His purpose, and see His power preparing the heart for study.
2. Read –Reverently open the Bible and read the text in its entirety several times.
3. Think –Reflecting on the passage is of great value. Ask the following questions:
    a. Is there a promise to claim?
    b. Is there a lesson to learn?
    c. Is there a blessing to enjoy?
    d. Is there a command to obey?
    e. Is there a sin to avoid?
    f. Is there a new revelation of God in Christ or the Holy Spirit?

g. Is there a new thought about the devil?[69]

4. Write –Record briefly the thoughts gleaned for personal and practical application.
5. Pray –Praying back the text to God will help adjust the preacher's will to the will God.
6. Share –Sharing thoughts with others help formulate ideas that can be presented in a sermon so that the congregation can understand.
7. Obey –Many times when the preacher is studying a text he will discover a truth that he needs to obey. Blessings always follow obedience.

e. The concept is applied to the congregation

i. Every person in the congregation asks, "so what?" and "what difference does it make?"

ii. As preachers, it is important to translate the message of God's Word to the congregation's every day life.

iii. Questions that the preacher can ask himself that will help to apply the idea of the text to his congregation.

1. How do the characters in the text relate to one another?
2. How are they related to God?
3. What values lie behind the choices they made?

[69] Stephen F. Olford, David L. Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 22

4. What went on in the minds of those who were involved?
5. How can we today relate to the world of the biblical writer?
6. Are the issues the same or similar?

REVIEW

1. It is important to allow the passage to govern the sermon
2. It is important to communicate a concept and not just words of the text
3. It is important to receive the concept from the text
4. It is important that the concept is first applied to the preacher himself
5. It is important that the concept is then applied to the congregation

ASSIGNMENT

Read carefully James 1:1-8. Practice the following steps:

1. Read the text carefully at least seven times.
2. Practice the steps in II. d. (The concept is applied to the preacher)

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

"But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:22-25 NASV).

LESSON TWO

DEVELOPING THE MAIN IDEA

OVERVIEW

A major part of Haddon Robinson's definition of expository preaching is: "expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept."[70] A sermon should not present many small, unrelated ideas, but a single idea supported by other ideas, all from a main passage. The purpose of this lesson is to understand how to identify the main idea of a given passage of Scripture.

GOALS

1. To understand the importance of ONE main idea for each given passage of Scripture.
2. To be able to identify the two parts of the main idea
3. To be able to identify the main idea of any given passage of Scripture.

OUTLINE

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF ONE MAIN IDEA FOR EACH GIVEN PASSAGE

a. One common practice of the biblical writers was to preach a single idea directed at a particular audience in order to receive a specific response.

[70] Robinson, 21.

b. Most congregations today cannot and will not remember a sermon that has many minor points. However, they will remember a sermon which has been developed around one major point.

II. THE TWO PARTS OF THE MAIN IDEA

a. The question

(There are only six questions that a passage of Scripture will ask)

i. Who –Some passages center around a person and their actions.

ii. What –Some passages center on an event that has or is taking place. Some passages center on an object or action that has taken place.

iii. Where –Some passages center on a place that an event has happened.

iv. Why –Some passages center on a reason for certain actions that have taken place.

v. When –Some passages center on a time that something has or will happen. Some passages center on a time that someone did or will do something.

vi. How –Some passages center on an explanation for certain actions that have taken place.

b. The answer

i. A question cannot stand alone. It needs an answer.

ii. The answer responds to the question, "What am I saying about what I am talking about?"

III. AN EXERCISE THAT WILL HELP IDENTIFY THE MAIN IDEA OF A GIVEN PASSAGE OF SCRIPTURE

a. James 1:5-8 will serve as a good example of discovering the main idea.

> "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a doubt-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (NASB)

b. Which of the six questions does James answer in this passage?

--This passage is a "how" passage. He answers the question, "How to obtain wisdom in the middle of trials?"

c. What is the answer or answers to the question, "How to obtain wisdom?"

--The answer is, "Ask God for it in faith."

d. By placing the answer with the question, we form a sentence that becomes the main idea of the text.

--The main idea of the text is, "Wisdom in trials is obtained by asking God for it in faith."

REVIEW

1. Each passage of Scripture has only one "main idea."

2. Each "main idea" is made up of two parts. The question and the answer.
3. The question and the answer go together to form a sentence that is the "main idea."

ASSIGNMENT

The following is an exercise that will help the expositor in forming *questions* and *answers.* (The answers are located in appendix 1).

Determine the question and answer in the following statements:[71]

1. A good sermon leaves you wondering how the preacher knew all about you.

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

   _____

2. "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." (Prov. 3:5,6 NASV)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

   _____

3. "There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death." (Prov. 14:12 NASV)

   Question: _____

[71] Some of the following illustrations are taken from Robinson. 47-50.

Answer: _____

_____

4. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16 NASV)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

   _____

5. “Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” (John 14:6 NASV)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

6. “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

7. “Remember your Creator in the days of your youth before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you say, ‘I find no pleasure in them.’” (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

   _____

8. “Do not speak harshly to a man older than yourself, but advise him as you would your own father; treat the younger men as brothers and older women as you would your mother. Always treat younger women with propriety, as if they were your sisters.” (I Timothy 5:1-3)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

   _____

9. “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8, 9 NASV)

   Question: _____

   Answer: _____

   _____

10. “Blessed is the person
    whose transgressions are forgiven,
    whose sins are covered.
    Blessed is the person
    Whose sin the Lord does not count against him
    And in whose spirit is not deceit.” (Psalm 32:1-2)

    Question: _____

    Answer: _____

    _____

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

“Now you, son of man, listen to what I am speaking to you; do not be rebellious like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you.” Then I looked, and behold, a hand was extended to me; and lo, a scroll was in

it. When He spread it out before me, it was written on the front and back, and written on it were lamentations, mourning and woe. Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth. Then he said to me, "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them." (Ezekiel 2:8-3:4 NASV)

LESSON THREE

DEVELOPING THE PATH OF THE SERMON

OVERVIEW

The focus of this lesson will now center on the congregation. No sermon is affective unless the congregation understands and can apply it to themselves. To make the sermon meaningful, we will develop the purpose of the sermon followed by an outline that the congregation will be able to follow.

GOALS

1. Explain the value of stating the purpose of the sermon.
2. Develop a meaningful outline that will be easy for the congregation to follow.

OUTLINE

I. THE PURPOSE OF THE SERMON

- **a.** Sermons are meant to change lives and if the sermon has no practical purpose it accomplishes little.
- **b.** The purpose of the sermon is what you expect to happen in the hearts of the congregation after the sermon is preached.
- **c.** The "main idea" states the truth of the text in modern terms and the "purpose" states what that truth is to accomplish.

II. THE OUTLINE OF THE SERMON

a. The purpose of the outline is to organize thoughts that the congregation can follow.

i. The outline clarifies the relationships between the different parts of the sermon.

ii. The outline places in order the parts of the sermon so that the congregation can follow.

iii. The outline helps to recognize the required additional supporting materials that must be used to develop the points of the sermon.

b. The parts of the outline

i. Introduction –This is at the beginning of the sermon where the main idea is introduced. This will be discussed at length in lesson five.

ii. Body –This is the main content of the sermon.

iii. Conclusion –This is at the end of the sermon and is where the main applications are to be made. This will be discussed at length in lesson six.

c. Example outline of James 1:1-8

i. The "main idea" is, "Wisdom in trials is obtained by asking God for it in faith."

ii. The purpose of the sermons may be, "Encouragement for the congregation knowing that when they go through trials they can ask God in faith for wisdom."

iii. The Outline

1. Introduction

--An illustration of a Burmese family trying to care for their elderly parents and not having enough food or housing to meet the need.

2. Body

a. Trails work for our good

i. They produce endurance

ii. They produce more Christ-likeness.

b. God gives wisdom to those who ask

i. God gives generously.

ii. We must ask in faith that does not doubt.

3. Conclusion

--A further illustration of the family in the introduction and how they were able to discover how to produce more rice on their land as well as find more bamboo in order to add on to their existing house.

REVIEW

1. The purpose of the sermon is to change lives.
2. The "main idea" states the truth of the sermon.
3. The purpose of the outline is to organize thoughts.
4. The parts of the outline are: introduction, body, and conclusion.

ASSIGNMENT

Read James 1:1-8 again. Write your own purpose statement as well as an outline that your congregation could easily follow.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

"I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the Word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." (II Timothy 4: 1-4 NASV)

LESSON FOUR

MAKING THE SERMON MEANINGFUL TO YOUR CONGREGATION

OVERVIEW

In order for a sermon to become meaningful it has to come to life. This lesson helps the preacher bring the sermon from the skeleton of the outline to a living sermon that has flesh and personality.

GOALS

1. To help the preacher determine what kind of congregation he is preaching to.
2. To identify supporting materials that will help make the sermon meaningful and practical.

OUTLINE

I. EVALUATING THE CONGREGATION

--The following questions will help determine what kind of audience the preacher will have.

a. How old is the congregation?

--Is the congregation primarily young, middle age, or old people?

b. How mature is the congregation?

--Is the congregation primarily young or mature Christians?

c. Do they understand the text and what the biblical author is generally saying?

--Is the congregation familiar with the passage or not?

d. Are they interested in spiritual things or are they in the audience for other reasons?

--Some people come to hear the Word of God while others come to be with their friends.

II. SUPPORTING MATERIALS

a. The need for supporting materials

i. It creates greater interest in the subject.

ii. It helps to explain the points of the sermon.

iii. It helps make the subject meaningful.

iv. It helps the congregation to remember the points of the sermon.

b. Kinds of supporting materials

i. Illustrations are the most used form of supporting materials.

1. Illustrations make the truth clear.

2. Illustrations make the truth believable.

3. Illustrations apply ideas to people's daily lives.

4. Illustrations help to remember points of the sermon.

ii. Types of illustrations that are most effective.

1. The most effective illustrations are those where the preacher's personal experience and the congregation's personal experience is the same.

--Building a bamboo house

2. The second most effective illustrations are those that have been learned by the preacher but are experienced by the congregation.

--visiting a Buddhist temple

3. The third most effective illustrations are those that have been experienced by the preacher but have been learned by the congregation.

--Flying an airplane

4. The fourth most effective illustrations are those that have been both learned by the preacher and congregation.

--Walking on the moon

REVIEW

1. Supporting materials are important in bring life to a sermon.
2. The best supporting materials come from a variety of personal experiences.

ASSIGNMENT

Select a personal illustration that fits into each of the descriptions under the topic, "Types of illustrations that are most effective."

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

"For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12 NASB)

LESSON FIVE

INTRODUCTIONS

OVERVIEW

Introductions are a very important part of the sermon. Without a good introduction, the congregation will very seldom participate in the sermon as an attentive listener. This lesson will help the preacher develop effective introductions by understanding its meaning and characteristics.

GOALS

1. Help the preacher understand the meaning of an introduction.
2. Explain the functions of an introduction.

OUTLINE

I. DEFINITION OF AN INTRODUCTION

--An introduction introduces the congregation to the sermon idea and its development.

II. THREE FUNCTIONS OF AN INTRODUCTION

a. An introduction gets attention.

i. Why is it important to get attention?

1. People come to church with many different thoughts on their minds. They may be thinking about their jobs, or what they are going to cook after church. They may be

thinking about going to the house church in the afternoon and what will be served there. They may be thinking about school or how they are going to care for their elderly parents in such a small house and income.

2. People need to care before they will listen.

ii. How does an introduction "get attention" for the idea?

1. It demonstrates that the idea is important

2. It demonstrates that the idea is practical

3. It is important to pay close attention to the first few sentences of the introduction

iii. Illustration of an introduction for James 1:1-8

--Zin Wa has been providing food and shelter for thirty-four orphans for the past six years. Many of these children's parents have either died or have abandoned their children.

b. An introduction generates interest in the idea.

i. Why is it important to generate interest in the idea?

1. Interest "holds" their attention for the duration of the sermon.

2. Interest is essential to call for life-change.

ii. How does an introduction generate interest in the idea?

1. It must create a need that is relevant to the listener.

2. It must be a need that *this* sermon idea clearly addresses.

3. There are five levels of human need that can be used in an effective introduction.

a. The highest level is call "self-actualization."

--People want to help and be involved.

b. The next level is called "love/acceptance."

--People want to be needed.

c. The next level is called "esteem."

--People want to feel good about themselves.

d. The next level is called "job security/safety.**"**

--People want job security, safe marriages, freedom.

Lowest level is called "physiological."

--People want to know they have shelter and food.

iii. Further illustration of James 1:1-8

-- Zin Wa has been providing food and shelter for thirty-four orphans for the past six years. Many of these children's parents have either died or have abandoned their children. **However, over the years Zin Wa has noticed that the girls in the orphanage have no hope of an education. Zin Wa wants to provide an education for these girls but needs help."**

c. An introduction moves the congregation into the idea of the text.

i. Why is it important to move into the text?

1. The congregation must see that this text addresses their needs.

2. The authority to address this need is found in the text, not the preacher.

ii. How does an introduction move logically into the text?

-- Zin Wa has been providing food and shelter for thirty-four orphans for the past six years. Many of these children's parents have either died or have abandoned their children. However, over the years Zin Wa has noticed that the girls in the orphanage have no hope of an education. Zin Wa wants to provide an education for these girls but needs help**. Zin Wa knows that she could provide for the education for awhile. The problem is what would happen if she were to die? Why has God placed this burden and responsibility on her shoulders? How will she know what is the best way to provide for these girls? Our text gives the answer."**

REVIEW

1. We have learned that an introduction introduces the biblical idea to the congregation.

2. We have learned the three functions of an introduction.

    a. It gets attention.

    b. It generates interest in the idea.

    c. It moves the congregation into the idea of the text.

ASSIGNMENT

Write an introduction of James 1:1-8 using the three functions of an introduction.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105 NASV)

LESSON SIX

CONCLUSIONS

OVERVIEW

Conclusions are like landing an airplane. It is important to make a smooth and safe landing. Some pastors conclude their sermons abruptly. That is like an airplane falling from the sky. Some pastors continue to conclude their conclusions. That is like an airplane running off the runway. This lesson will teach the pastor how to make an effective, smooth conclusion that will be safe and have lasting results.

GOALS

1. To learn the purpose of a conclusion.
2. To learn the three characteristics of a conclusion.
3. To learn different ways in which to conclude a sermon.

OUTLINE

I. THE PURPOSE OF A CONCLUSION

- **a.** The purpose of a conclusion is to conclude.
- **b.** It should produce a feeling of finality.
- **c.** It is the place for the preacher to call for a response from his congregation.

II. THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CONCLUSION

- **a.** It reaches the hearts of the congregation.

--The conclusion should touch their emotions and create concern.

b. It reaches the will of the congregation.

--The conclusion should motivate them to action.

c. It reaches the mind of the congregation.

--The conclusion should give them suggestions as to what they should do.

III. WAYS IN WHICH TO CONCLUDE A SERMON

a. A summary

--A summary is restating the main idea of the sermon.

b. An illustration

--An illustration is the most effective way to conclude a sermon. The preacher can either finished the illustration that he started in the introduction or tell a new story.

c. A quotation

--Sometimes a fitting quote from someone that everybody knows and respects will conclude a sermon well.

d. A prayer

--Sometimes the last point of the sermon summarizes will and a fitting prayer at the end becomes an appropriate conclusion.

e. An example conclusion

--Zin Wa had no idea what to do for the girls that God had burdened her to help. So she began to pray and ask God for direction. Time went by and no answer from heaven. God seemed to be ignoring her.

However, she never stopped praying for she knew in her heart that God was more concerned for these girls than her. One day as she was traveling from Rangoon to Mitchena she passed an orange grove. Then the idea came to her about starting an orange grove that would produce enough money to pay for the girl's education. The problem was, she had no idea how to grow oranges. Then, in God's timing, a man from America came to her town who was a Christian businessman and his business was growing oranges. Because Zin Wa waited for God's timing, He showed her His way of providing for the girls education. I am sure you have burdens that God has placed on your heart. I want to encourage you to wait and trust God for the wisdom to deal with your burdens as Zin Wa did.

REVIEW

1. The purpose of a conclusion is to conclude.
2. The characteristics of a good conclusion is to:
    a. Reach the hearts of the congregation.
    b. Reach the will of the congregation.
    c. Reach the minds of the congregation.

ASSIGNMENT

Based on James 1:1-8 develop a conclusion that involves the three characteristics mentioned above.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14 NASV)

LESSON SEVEN

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

OVERVIEW

The best sermons in the world will have little effect if the preacher does not present himself well to the congregation. In a famous study, psychologist Albert Mehravian offered this formula: "Only seven percent of a speaker's message comes through his words; thirty-eight percent springs from his voice; fifty-five percent comes from his facial expressions."[72] This lesson will help the preacher discover what he can do to present himself well to his congregation.

GOALS

1. To understand why physical appearance is important.
2. To understand what can be done with physical appearance that will enhance the message.

OUTLINE

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

a. Sermons are not only heard but are also seen.

[72] Robinson, *Biblical Preaching,* 203. Quoting Flora Davis, "How to Read Body Language," in *The Rhetoric of Non-Verbal Communication: Readings.*

b. The word of God should be the center of every sermon. If the preacher's appearance draws attention to himself then he becomes the center of the sermon.

c. The preacher is God's representative in the pulpit. Therefore, he must look and do his best to represent God properly.

d. The congregation, because of the way the preacher greets people before the service or how he approaches the pulpit, have already made up their minds as to whether they will listen to him or not.

II. THINGS THAT THE PREACHER CAN DO THAT WILL MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE CONGREGATION

a. The clothes we wear

- **i.** Clothing supports the message. It is possible to over dress as well as under dress. It is important to dress for the occasion. What we wear should represent God well.

b. The movements and gestures we make

- **i.** The preacher's body is expressing a message as well as his voice.
- **ii.** It is important that the body says the same things that the message says.
- **iii.** Movements mean body motion such as: walking forward, backward, side to side.
- **iv.** Gestures means what the preacher does with his hands such as: raising and waving them, point and pounding with them.

v. Movements and gestures help convey the message.

1. If the preacher is preaching a subject that is full of excitement he can enhance that excitement by movements he makes on the platform.

2. If the preacher is preaching a subject that has a progression of thought (such as before, during, and after) he can illustrate by moving from right to left on the platform.

3. If the preacher is describing a thought (such as going *down* to Egypt) he can enhance the image by pointing his hand downward.

4. If he is describing a thought (such as going *up* to heaven) he can enhance the image by pointing his hand upward.

5. Movements and gestures also help with stage fright. When the body moves freely the speaker will feel more confident and alert. The congregation easily recognizes this confidence and alertness.

6. Movements and gestures also help the congregation experience what the speaker is feeling as they identify with him.

c. Eye contact

i. The way we look at people conveys a message.

ii. Christ conveyed an impressionable message to Peter after the rooster crowed in Luke 22:61.

iii. Eye contact helps the preacher understand whether the congregation understands what he saying or not. If they *do not* understand they will have a puzzled look on their face. If they *do* understand they will show signs on their faces such as nodding or smiling.

iv. When the eye of the preacher meets the eye of an enthused listener it encourages the preacher to keep pressing the point home.

v. Eye contact also conveys the message that the preachers *wants* to speak to them. The opposite is also true. The preacher that makes no eye contact conveys the message that he *does not* want to speak to them.

d. The voice we use

i. The voice helps the preacher convey ideas, feeling, and emphasis of thought.

ii. The voice also conveys the preacher's health, confidence, and emotions.

iii. Three things that must be kept in mind about the voice we use.

1. The preacher must speak correctly.

--He must not strain his voice by speaking too loudly or use too high of a pitch in his voice.

2. The preacher must speak fully.

--Each preacher has a range of sound. He can raise his voice to a high pitch or lower his voice to a low pitch.

3. The preacher must speak attractively.

--The congregation should find the preacher's voice interesting and pleasant.

III. A WORD ABOUT STAGE FRIGHT

a. Signs of stage fright are: the knees become wobbly, the mouth becomes dry, the throat tightens, and the speaker forgets what he wants to say.

b. Stage fright is not a spiritual problem but a preparation problem.

c. The best way to cure stage fright is to be fully prepared.

d. The best way to be fully prepared is to practice preaching in front of a mirror.

e. A little stage fright is a good thing. It helps the preacher to stay alert and not become too relaxed.

REVIEW

1. Physical appearance is as important to the message as words.
2. Things that a preacher can do that will make an impact on his congregation:
    a. The clothes that he wears.
    b. The movements and gestures he makes.

c. The eye contact we have.

d. The voice we use.

3. Stage fright is not a spiritual problem but a preparation problem.

ASSIGNMENT

Preach the sermon on James 1:1-8 in front of a mirror at least five times. Play close attention to movements, gestures, and eye contact.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION

"Having arrested Him, they led Him away and brought Him to the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, 'This man was with Him too.' But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know Him.' A little later, another saw him and said, 'You are one of them too!' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' After about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, 'Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are talking about.' Immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and *looked* at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times,' And he went out and wept bitterly." Luke 22:54-62 NASV)

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHING EXPERIENCE AND SUMMARIZATION

INTRODUCTION

The Thesis project has stretched my ability to place in words what has been processed in my mind. The developmental process of writing a handbook on Homiletics has been an enlightening experience. From the research, to the writing of the handbook, to the testing in the field, it has been a rich and rewarding endeavor. My desire is that more of this exercise can be realized in my further pilgrimage of faith. The following is a detailed progress report in regard to the field testing of the project.

SURVEY

The survey that was conducted among the pastors in Myanmar is located in Appendix 2. This survey became the basis of understanding the limitations and needs that would make the handbook specific for the pastors of Myanmar that are already preaching in their churches.

It was impossible for all the pastors to take this survey before the handbook was written. Therefore, I asked Dr. Zauba Lahpai to take the survey for me prior to writing the handbook. Dr. Zauba received his D-Min at Baptist Bible Seminary in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania. He is Burmese and presently a professor at the Hanson Baptist Bible College in Myitkyina, Myanmar. He is also a pastor of one of the Baptist churches in the town of Myitkyina. He knows the general condition of the

pastors in his country and provided a good authority for the basis of the project. After the handbook was written, it was field tested in October, 2004, at the Kachin Baptist Convention which was held in Myitkyina, Myanmar. During the convention, the survey was conducted with fifty-nine pastors from throughout the country participating. The results of that survey are found in Appendix 3.

The comparison of the pastors' survey and Zauba's was remarkable. However, there were a few discrepancies. Zauba had evaluated the pastors in numbers one through six of the survey, as being younger (41-60), with less education (middle school), and pastoring smaller churches (51-100). After further examination and consultation with the pastors at the convention and with Zauba, it was concluded that Zauba's analysis was more in line with the pastors throughout the country than with those at the convention, seeing that only the older and more experienced pastors were able to make the trip to Myitkyina and attend the conference.

ANALYSIS

Appendix 4 presents the results of the general survey taken by fifty-nine pastors. It also has the results of the breakdown of pastors according to age (20-40, 41-60, and over 60). The following analysis is as follows:

1. More pastors older are than forty than younger.
2. Older pastors are staying longer in their churches than younger pastors.
3. Eighty-seven percent of Burmese pastors have a high school education or less. The trend is less education. The reason is the repression brought on by the military controlled government. Educational opportunities are less now than twenty years ago.

4. The average pastor, regardless of age, spends approximately two hours in sermon preparation.
5. Older pastors (over 60) feel that praying is enough for developing good sermons. Younger pastors (under 60) feel that praying and collecting sermon illustrations are enough for developing good sermons.
6. Most pastors recognize they need help developing expositional sermons.
7. Sixty percent of the pastors declared they owned at least five books on preaching. This is probably due to a misunderstanding. They interpreted the question relating to all books that they possess. There are no books in the Burmese language that relate to homiletics. Any pastor that has a book on homiletics also knows the English language. Not many pastors know English.
8. The vast majority of pastors said they would use a handbook on homiletics if they had one.

TEACHING PROCESS

October 18-23, 2004, the Kachin Baptist Convention held their bi-annual pastors' conference in Myitkyina, Myanmar. I was invited to attend and conduct a seminar on Homiletics over a period of twenty-six sessions, each lasting one hour. One hundred twenty pastors attended the conference and fifty-nine senior pastors attended the seminar on Homiletics. Zauba Lahpai translated my sessions in both Kachin and Burmese. Twenty-four of the twenty-six sessions were lectures spending about two sessions per section of the handbook. Two sessions were set aside for

preaching. The first preaching session was given the first night of the conference. The second preaching session was given towards the end of the conference.

After each session Zauba would consult with me as to the positives and negatives of the previous lesson we conducted. Suggestions were given that were implemented in the sessions that followed. At the end of the conference we selected three pastors from the conference that knew English and asked them to evaluate the lectures and the two illustrated preaching sessions as well.

BURMESE REVIEW

As was stated in chapter three, it is hard to receive an objective review from Burmese culture. Buddhist culture suggests that teachers are revered highly and are never questioned. This culture has also carried over into the Christian community. However, the three pastors that took part in the review were well educated and gave an honest analysis. The five questions that were asked and their responses are as follows:

1. Was the presentation clear?
    a. Very clear. Repetition was good and helped to understand what was being presented.
2. Were you able to understand the material?
    a. Yes, we were able to learn new words.
3. Will you be able to use the material in your ministry?
    a. Yes, we are excited to take this material home and begin practicing it.
4. What part of the material did you think was the most profitable?

a. The sessions on introduction and conclusion. Especially the illustration of landing an airplane to explain the conclusion of a sermon.
b. All illustrations were good and easy to understand. The only exception was the last illustration that concluded the last sermon. It was too long and became boring.
c. Mind mapping

5. What part of the material was new information for you?
    a. Mind mapping
    b. Dividing the process of sermon development into *hermeneutics and homiletics*
    c. Bringing the "big idea" from the ancient audience to the modern audience
    d. The different "genres" of Scripture
    e. Difference between textual and topical sermons
    f. Platform mannerisms
    g. Monotone voice

INSIGHTS LEARNED

The following is a list of the practices that were good as well as suggestions for future cross-cultural teaching.

Positive Practices

1. I began the first session by introducing myself and giving a biographical presentation that helped to identify myself with the pastors from Myanmar.
2. As we moved along in the seminar, we spent a few minutes at the beginning of each day answering questions that the pastors had about the previous lessons.
3. At the beginning of each lesson, I repeated the general information of past lessons in order to keep the progression of sermon development before them.
4. I preached a sermon towards the beginning of the seminar. I then was able to use that sermon to illustrate various points that I was making about sermon development.
5. When I began to present the material on sermon development, I selected a passage (Psalm 73) that was used for the rest of the conference. At the end of the conference, I preached Psalm 73 to illustrate how the process came together. The last session was an evaluation of that sermon.

Suggestions For Future Cross-Cultural Teaching

1. Spend more time looking for illustrations that both the audience and the speaker had experienced. When these were used, they were very effective.
2. Because the sessions were given via translator, it is important to keep words to no more than three syllables.
3. Because of the cross-cultural experience, there is a tendency to over state a point or illustration. When it comes to illustrations, the suggestion is to keep them short.

4. Next time I should spend more time explaining and illustrating the concept of "mind mapping."

APPENDIX 1

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE IN CHAPTER FOUR, LESSON TWO[73]

1. Question: What is the text of a good sermon?

   Answer: It reveals what you are.

2. Question: How can I know that I am going in the right direction?

   Answer: By trusting in the Lord and not myself.

3. Question: What way leads to death?

   Answer: Ways that may seem right to man.

4. Question: How can I have eternal life?

   Answer: By believing in the Only Begotten Son.

5. Question: How can I come to the Father?

   Answer: Through Jesus Christ.

6. Question: Who enters the kingdom of heaven?

   Answer: Those who do the will of the Father.

[73] Robinson. *Biblical Preaching*. 225-226.

7. Question: When should you think about God?

   Answer: While you are still young.

8. Question: How should we relate to others as we minister to them?

   Answer: Treat them as you would members of your own family.

9. Question: How can a person become saved?

   Answer: By faith and not by self.

10. Question: Who is a blessed person?

    Answer: The honest individual whose sin the Lord has forgiven.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONAIRE FOR A BOOK ABOUT PREACHING

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1. How old are you? ◯ Under 20 ◯ 20-40 ◯ 41-60 ◯ over 60

2. How many years have you been a pastor?

   ◯ 1-10 ◯ 11-20 ◯ 21-30 ◯ over 30

3. How many years have you been a pastor in your present church?

   ◯ 1-10 ◯ 11-20 ◯ 21-30 ◯ over 30

4. What is the highest educational degree you have?

   ◯ Middle School ◯ High School ◯ College ◯ Seminary

5. How many people attend your church?

   ◯ 1-50 ◯ 51-100 ◯ 101-200 ◯ over 200

6. How much time is your worship service?

   ◯ 1hour ◯ 2 hours ◯ over 2 hours

7. How much time do you preach in the worship service?

   ◯ 15-30 minutes ◯ 31-60 minutes ◯ over 60 minutes

8. How many times do you preach in a week?

◯ Under 2 times ◯ 2 times ◯ over 2 times

9. How much time do you spend in preparing your sermons?

◯ Less than 1 hour ◯ 1 – 2 hours ◯ More than 2 hours

10. How do you prepare your sermons?

◯ Praying is enough ◯ Reading the passage is enough

◯ Collecting some illustrations is enough ◯ Studying the text is enough

11. Do you think you need help to improve your preaching?

◯ Yes ◯ No ◯ Don't know

12. How many books do you have about preaching?

◯ 0 ◯ 1-5 ◯ over 5

13. Would you use a book that would help you preach better? ◯ Yes ◯ No

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATED

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR A BOOK ABOUT PREACHING

1. How old are you?
    a. Under 20 0%
    b. 20-40 22%
    c. 41-60 49%
    d. Over 60 29%
2. How many years have you been a pastor?
    a. 1-10 47%
    b. 11-20 34%
    c. 21-30 9%
    d. Over 30 10%
3. How many years have you been a pastor in your present church?
    a. 1-10 51.5%
    b. 11-20 31.5%
    c. 21-30 10%
    d. Over 30 7%
4. What is the highest educational degree you have?
    a. Middle School 34%
    b. High School 53%

c. College 4%

d. Seminary 7%

5. How many people attend your church?

a. 1-50 27.5%

b. 51-100 27.5%

c. 101-200 4%

d. Over 200 41%

6. How much time is your worship service?

a. 1 hour 19%

b. 2 hours 59%

c. Over 2 hours 22%

7. How much time do you preach in the worship service?

a. 15-30 minutes 61%

b. 31-60 minutes 30%

c. Over 60 minutes 9%

8. How many times do you preach in a week?

a. Under 2 times 24%

b. 2 times 24%

c. Over 2 times 52%

9. How much time do you spend in preparing your sermons?

a. Less then 1 hour 19%

b. 1-2 hours 44%

c. More then 2 hours 37%

10. How do you prepare your sermons?

    a. Praying is enough 38%

    b. Reading the passage is enough 14%

    c. Collecting some illustrations is enough 38%

    d. Studying the text is enough 10%

11. Do you think you need help to improve your preaching?

    a. Yes 97%

    b. No 3%

    c. Don't know 0%

12. How many books do you have about preaching?

    a. 0 23%

    b. 1-5 60%

    c. Over 5 17%

13. Would you use a book that would help you preach better?

    a. Yes 95%

    b. No 5%

Further evaluation of the survey in relationship to questions 3-5, 9,10 resulted in the following.

Pastors between the ages of 20-40

3. How many years have you been a pastor in your present church?

    a. 1-10 100%

    b. 11-20 0%

c. 21-30 0%

d. Over 30 0%

4. What is the highest educational degree you have?

a. Middle School 46%

b. High School 38%

c. College 0%

d. Seminary 16%

5. How many people attend your church?

a. 1-50 38%

b. 51-100 31%

c. 101-200 0%

d. Over 200 31%

9. How much time do you spend in preparing your sermons?

a. Less then 1 hour? 15%

b. 1-2 hours 39%

c. More then 2 hours 46%

10. How do you prepare your sermons?

a. Praying is enough 33%

b. Reading the passage is enough 10%

c. Collecting some illustrations is enough 47%

d. Studying the text is enough 10%

Pastors between the ages of 41-60

3. How many years have you been a pastor in your present church?

a. 1-10 61%

b. 11-20 32%

c. 21-30 7%

d. Over 30 0%

4. What is the highest educational degree you have?

a. Middle School 28%

b. High School 61%

c. College 0%

d. Seminary 11%

5. How many people attend your church?

a. 1-50 28%

b. 51-100 14%

c. 101-200 24%

d. Over 200 34%

9. How much time do you spend in preparing your sermons?

a. Less then 1 hour 17%

b. 1-2 hours 59%

c. More then 2 hours 24%

10. How do your prepare your sermons?

a. Praying is enough 40%

b. Reading the passage is enough 5%

c. Collecting some illustrations is enough 45%

d. Studying the text is enough 10%

Pastors over the age of 60

3. How many years have you been a pastor in your present church?
    a. 1-10 7%
    b. 11-20 40%
    c. 21-30 26.5%
    d. Over 30 26.5%
4. What is the highest educational degree you have?
    a. Middle School 26%
    b. High School 67%
    c. College 7%
    d. Seminary 0%
5. How many people attend your church?
    a. 1-50 6%
    b. 51-100 0%
    c. 101-200 18%
    d. Over 200 76%
9. How much time do you spend in preparing your sermons?
    a. Less then 1 hour 29%
    b. 1-2 hours 24%
    c. More then 2 hours 43%
10. How do you prepare your sermons?
    a. Praying is enough 39.5%
    b. Reading the passage is enough 15%

c. Collecting some illustrations is enough 36.5%

d. Studying the text is enough 9%

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