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ABSTRACT

PREACHING WITH AUDIO-VISUALS

by

Ervin K. Thomsen

Chairperson: Steven P. Vitrano

## ABSTRACT

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: PREACHING WITH AUDIO-VISUALS

Name of researcher: Ervin K. Thomsen

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

Date completed: June 1977

### Problem

The increasing usage of audio-visuals in modern communication has brought about an increase in communication efficiency, an efficiency that is sometimes lacking in sermons. Audio-visuals can be viewed by the Christian church as either legitimate or illegitimate means of communication in preaching. If the church accepts these media as genuine and valid vehicles of communication of its message, it must then discover ways of employing audio-visuals effectively and responsibly in preaching.

### Methods

For the development of guidelines for the utilization of audio-visuals in preaching, data and information from the following areas have been studied and surveyed: (1) Scriptural data on communication and revelation; (2) the theology of preaching; (3) the literature of communication, education, and audio-visuals; and (4) a survey conducted among the members of one congregation to discover their response to audio-visual sermons.

### Results

A study of the Scriptures reveals that God has employed a variety of multi-sensory methods in seeking to communicate with men. While both Old and New Testaments strongly support the idea of the prominence of the word, yet the oral-auditory channel is by no means

exclusive to other forms of communication. The literature of the audio-visual field and audio-visual education is rich in sound theoretical principles that can readily be adapted to preaching to insure efficiency of communication. The model of "instructional development" is here of particular benefit in that it seeks to consider the totality of the communication situation. This model also suggests that audio-visuals are not necessarily suited for all kinds of sermons and audiences, but that each particular communication situation must be viewed individually. While the employment of audio-visuals may improve information transmission efficiency in preaching, yet the use of such media is not totally without danger to preaching. To insure that the preacher is aware of such dangers, this project report examines in particular the role of the interpersonal relationship in communication as well as the ethics of human persuasion and suggests responsible ways in which audio-visuals may be used in preaching. A survey conducted among the members of one congregation generally showed favorable responses to audio-visual sermons as well as to various issues arising in such preaching.

### Conclusions

The impact of modern media on man makes it necessary for preaching to respond somehow to the contemporary situation. Audio-visuals in preaching is one way through which greater information transmission efficiency may be achieved, for they are media with which modern man is thoroughly familiar. The employment of audio-visuals in preaching, however, needs the guidance of both theoretical principles from the field of communication and also Biblically informed theological principles. From a study of Scriptural evidences, communication literature, and a personal survey it is suggested that the use of audio-visuals in preaching may be one viable means of increasing the church's effectiveness in the communication of the gospel.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

PREACHING WITH AUDIO-VISUALS

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

by

Ervin K. Thomsen

June 1977

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Ervin K. Thomsen

APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE:

Steven P. Vitrano  
Chairperson: Dr. Steven Vitrano

7-6-77  
Date approved

W. Johnson  
Committee Member: Dr. William Johnson

Lyndon Furst  
Committee Member: Dr. Lyndon Furst

W. G. C. Murdoch  
Committee Member: Dr. W. G. C. Murdoch

Donald E. Van Duinen, Thomas H. Blincoe  
Committee Member: Dr. Donald Van Duinen      Dean, SDA Theological  
Seminary

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## INTRODUCTION

It is the task of this subject to develop a theoretical-theological framework on the role of audio-visual media in preaching and to formulate guidelines for the responsible utilization of selected audio-visual media in preaching.

The project was undertaken for the following reasons. First, the prominent use of audio-visual media in modern communication processes, such as advertising, entertainment, television, and education, has brought about an increase in communication effectiveness. Because the same kind of efficiency is not always present in sermons, the contemporary preacher could profitably study principles of audio-visual communication so that an awareness of such principles might facilitate the effectiveness of the church's communication to modern man. Second, research findings in communication and allied sciences generally indicate greater efficiency for audio-visual media in terms of information transmission than is the case for what is considered the more ordinary means of communication. Because of such effectiveness, is it not then possible to use audio-visual aids in preaching to facilitate the communication of the gospel? Thirdly, the writer's own past and current usage of and experimentation with audio-visual aids in preaching has brought personal conviction of the need for further study in this area.

In an attempt to achieve its objectives, the project proceeds as follows: Chapter I examines the impact of mass media on

modern man and suggests that the church needs to respond to the present situation by developing greater efficiency in its communication processes. Chapter 2 develops a theology that may guide such preaching by building on insights both from the Scriptures and contemporary studies. Chapter 3 examines the particular kind of efficiency obtained through audio-visual usage and suggests a model which may guide the technical and pedagogic aspects of preaching with such media. Lastly, chapter 4 describes personal preaching practice with audio-visual aids and analyzes the congregational response thereto.

It is believed that this project has aided in the writer's personal growth and understanding of a theology of preaching as well as assisting in developing greater personal facility and expertise in the utilization of audio-visual media in his own preaching. It is hoped that this project may provide resources and information to assist preachers who are already using audio-visual media and also to those contemplating such usage. Lastly, it is hoped that this project will provide incentives and information for helping the church in continuing appraisal and improvement of its task of communication of the gospel.

## CHAPTER I

### MODERN MAN AND MEDIA

If the modern Christian preacher is to communicate successfully with contemporary man, the success of his endeavors will be dependent to a large degree not only on his faithfulness to the Scriptures as the source of his message but also on his responsiveness to the human situation that now exists.

As a result of human technological advances, not only has man's environment been altered but man himself has undergone changes as well. No matter how theologically orthodox the message of a sermon may be, failure to transmit it in new and fresh ways that take into account modern man's changes may be a sign of religious and human irresponsibility. Hence, the preacher must know the kind of persons who are to receive his message, and he must choose an appropriate medium or combination of media to transmit that message. Failure to do so could lead to one of the greatest illusions in all communication, namely, the assumption that it has taken place. An awareness of the impact of modern media on contemporary man would thus seem to be in order, for such an awareness may provide portions of a framework within which the modern preacher may work for the responsible utilization of audio-visual media in preaching.

The Effect of Modern Media on Man

While numerous studies have been made of the affects of mass media on man, probably no other person has written more extensively on this subject than H. Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan's thesis is that the use of television and other media of communication in this age are producing a social and psychological revolution more profound than that inaugurated by the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century. In an attempt to describe and analyze these effects, McLuhan has divided human history into three ages signifying the order in which each of the senses became dominant in receiving communications: (1) the preliterate or tribal age (the ear-hearing), (2) the Gutenberg or individual age (the eye-seeing), and (3) the electric or retribalized age (the entire central nervous system in total sensory experience).<sup>1</sup>

In spite of many sweeping assertions and lack of hard data, McLuhan's observations are valuable because they challenge accepted and often cherished perspectives on communication.

As one who has examined preaching in view of McLuhan's theories, Thor Hall notes that the common perspective is that communication is a problem, and the media are the tools by which one seeks a solution. In contrast, McLuhan's perspective seems to be "that communication is a process, and the media are simply the instruments by which the process functions."<sup>2</sup> To put it another way:

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<sup>1</sup>Thor Hall, The Future Shape of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

McLuhan has confronted communication theorists with the basic theoretical question concerning the epistemological impact of the media. By doing so, he has turned the attention away from the superficial concerns about what to do with the media and has challenged us instead to understand what the media do to us, so that we may eventually learn how to live with them.<sup>1</sup>

Hall observes that because communication and culture are so closely intertwined, the organization of man's perceptive apparatus is at one and the same time "the determinant of culture and determined by culture."<sup>2</sup>

McLuhan's slogan, "the medium is the message" indicates that man's concern should no longer center around the media themselves but more on how people are affected by the media. In past ages, the problem of communication was that man, in order to learn, had to go out and discover the universe around him. Because of the current impact of the mass media, man is faced with the problem of implosion; he no longer has to go out to meet the universe, because the universe now comes to him. The problem now becomes how to survive and resist the invasion of one's senses by the media. The following statement indicates the ethical implications of this:

Once we have surrendered our sense and nervous systems to the private manipulation of those who would try to benefit from taking a lease on our eyes and ears and nerves, we don't really have any rights left. Leasing our eyes and ears and nerves to commercial interests is like handing over the common speech to a private corporation, or like giving the earth's atmosphere to a company as a monopoly.<sup>3</sup>

In the area of communication, television has probably done more than any other communication media to affect modern man in

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>H. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is the Message (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 26.

Western civilization. John Culkin, director of Fordham University's Center of Communication, has estimated that the average eighteen-year-old has seen five hundred feature films and watched about 15,000 hours of television during his lifetime. In contrast, the same eighteen-year-old has spent only about 10,800 hours in school from kindergarten through high school.<sup>1</sup> When the number of hours the developing adolescent is involved with radio, magazines, newspapers, comics, billboards, and books are added to this, it is evident that exposure to mass media consumes most of his waking hours. The youth who has spent this many hours watching television and motion pictures does not bring to a church service the same kind of mind as did his counterpart of an earlier generation.

Communication specialists have attempted to identify and describe the effects of the mass media on man. Some of these are summarized below.

Superficial understanding. Much of modern man's understanding of people and events is inextricably linked to the visual and aural experiences he has had via television and radio.<sup>2</sup> Although these media provide him with details of the lives of others, his knowledge of them is only superficial and gives him the illusion of having established personal relationships with them.

Sensory stimulation. The development of the mass media has extended man's body and given him a new awareness of his senses. "All

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<sup>1</sup>McLuhan, "Media Long," in Explorations in Communication: An Anthology, eds. Marshall McLuhan and Edmund Carpenter (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 182.

<sup>2</sup>William Kuhns, The Electronic Gospel (New York: Herder & Herder, 1969), p. 144.



media are extensions of some human faculty--psychic or physical," McLuhan claims.<sup>1</sup> The electronic media have amplified man's need to see, hear, and be involved. Thus modern man is becoming controlled by the media to an extent he scarcely realizes. Modern man has become dependent upon sensory stimuli in order for him to start thinking, buying, working, communicating, and praying.<sup>2</sup>

Nervous system exposed. As the mass media have amplified man's need to hear, see, and be involved, apathy and numbness to the world around him increases, though he experiences the illusion of being deeply involved. Scenes of war, riot, crime, and assassination are now directly experienced, rather than being read about in the newspaper. Merrill Abbey points out that one of the effects of this direct experience is that the nervous system is exposed to the all-at-onceness of the electronic media. He notes that "we can endure pain only by a numbing process that produces the phenomenon of quick excitement and quick forgetfulness that easily becomes apathy."<sup>3</sup>

Visual language. Words are encountered, more often than not, in the context of visual expression either in pictures, drawings, or the design of the packaging and advertising of almost everything.<sup>4</sup> Written language is either accompanied by or replaced with a new

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<sup>1</sup> McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New American Library, 1964), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Pierre Babin, "Mass Media and Catechetics," in The Audio-Visual Man, ed. Pierre Babin, trans. C. Balisle et al (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1970), p. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Merrill R. Abbey, Communication in Pulpit and Parish (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Kuhns, p. 147.

visual language, with every picture and image being a statement in and of itself.

Inability to think logically. A growing illiteracy and inability to engage in abstract and logical, conceptual thinking has also occurred. Reasoning seems to follow new patterns; its logic works not only with information but with all the sensory signals and impulses that are encountered. "Abstract reasoning, formal thinking and literary precision are giving way to more spontaneous and creative expression."<sup>1</sup> "The brain finally becomes equipped to handle only diffuse ambiguous wholes, instead of precise articulations."<sup>2</sup> Truth for modern man seems thus to be a matter of total sensory awareness, rather than clear, logical reflection on various informative propositions.

In his exposure to mass media, modern man is becoming increasingly involved with media produced with the specific design of communication effectiveness, an effectiveness that is sometimes lacking in sermons. While testing lay persons from a number of churches in the Detroit metropolitan area, Parsons found that the content of the sermon was very poorly communicated. In a meeting immediately following the worship service, less than one-third of the persons tested could give a reasonably clear statement of the primary "question" of the sermon or the "answer" suggested in the message. "The church and sermons are experiencing widespread criticism for

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<sup>1</sup>Babin, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Ross Snyder, The Ministry of Meaning (New York: World Council of Churches and World Council of Christian Education, 1961), pp. 9, 10, cited in Reid, p. 59.

failing to communicate meaningfully in contemporary society," Parsons concluded.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Clyde Reid makes the following charges against much contemporary preaching:<sup>2</sup> (1) preachers tend to use complex, archaic language which the average person does not understand; (2) most sermons today are boring, dull, and uninteresting; (3) most preaching today is irrelevant; (4) preaching today is not courageous preaching; (5) preaching does not lead to change in persons; (6) preaching does not communicate; and (7) preaching has been overemphasized.

Over against such criticisms, evidence toward the continuing popularity of some preaching must not be overlooked. Without using audio-visual aids in their sermons, Billy Graham, Rex Humbard, John Stott, and many others still draw large audiences. Even though pre-evangelistic publicity and other promotional factors must be considered in some instances, the fact still remains that people will come to hear preaching that is Biblical and that is permeated with personal conviction.

The question for the church then is not whether to take this situation seriously, but how to respond to it constructively.

#### The Response of Preaching to the Contemporary Situation

Though the data regarding the impact of mass media on modern man do not always show unanimity, yet the changes in society that they

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<sup>1</sup>R. Parsons, "Lay Perception and Participation in the Communication of the Sermon" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1966), pp. 184, 217, cited in Clyde Reid, The Empty Pulpit (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>Reid, pp. 25-31

suggest are significant enough to be taken into account by preachers. Thus, "the study of communications media belongs . . . inextricably within the ecology of homiletics."<sup>1</sup> In an age when modern man has been inundated by words and other stimuli through the mass media, the church's answer must be more than solely to pour on more words. The church must be willing to accept other media than words as valid in communicating the faith. Perhaps one's reliance on words belong to a generation when words were the only available means of communication. Basic to successful communication is the avoidance by the church of the idolizing of any medium of communication. B. F. Jackson defines this idolatry as "the absolutizing of a symbol, making it identical with the ultimate reality it points to."<sup>2</sup>

The church must explore the possibility of seeing audio-visual language as a legitimate language to be used in the proclamation of the gospel through preaching. The church must find means of communication that will reach people who have been conditioned by the mass media. The preacher may lament these changes, but he cannot ignore them. Rather, he should seek to use a variety of methods to communicate to modern man, avoiding an artificial dependence on the mere repetition of words.

It becomes imperative, then, for the modern preacher to maintain a faithful adherence to the content of the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures, while at the same time involving himself and his

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<sup>1</sup>Hall, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>B. F. Jackson, Jr., ed., Communication--Learning for Churchmen, 3 vols. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 1:95.

message in the modern mind-set. This calls for sermons that are not finished literary products to be delivered, but rather processes for the communication of God's message, informed by insights from both theology and communication science. (Is it still not often the case that sermons are prepared for one medium [print], and then delivered in another?)

Perhaps the church's nonacceptance of audio-visual technology in preaching is part of the church's rejection of the world. The church must realize that these modern media are not "of the devil" but are essentially neutral. Rather than being threatened by this exploding communication technology, the church must see the possibility of harnessing it--making it a servant of the church in developing greater communication effectiveness, especially in preaching. The church must not resist secularization to the extent that it resists new and more efficient methods of communication.

The mission of the church is to become secularized in the sense of taking the present world seriously, while seeking to transmit God's revelation to it. To do so will always involve a certain amount of tension between faithfulness to the Word and responsiveness to the hearers. This is because the preaching of the Word always takes place in a cultural situation and thus demands a certain participation in culture. Tillich has noted that "communication is a matter of participation. Where there is no participation there is no communication."<sup>1</sup> Clyde Fant capitalizes on this by asserting that

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Tillich, A Theology of Culture, ed. C. Robert Kimball (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 204.

"being overimpressed with culture causes the preacher and his message to be dominated by it; being underimpressed with culture causes the preacher and his message to ignore it."<sup>1</sup>

To say that preaching with audio-visual media is without risk is to be naive. The use of audio-visual media will always pose some threats to the church. Some Christians might be shocked by the new mode of transmission, or the church may attempt to become relevant by imitating the entertainment milieu, thereby eventually facing the threat of being drawn into it.<sup>2</sup> Recognizing these and other dangers, the church must, nevertheless, seek to build some bridge to modern man through the use of audio-visual aids in preaching. The nature of such a bridge should, however, be carefully thought out not only in light of insights from communication and behavioral science studies but also, and more importantly, in light of a responsible theology of preaching.

To develop theological principles that may guide in the application of audio-visual media to preaching, the following chapter will examine such scriptural and contemporary evidence as may have a bearing on the problems and issues of such an application.

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<sup>1</sup>Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 43-44.

<sup>2</sup>Kuhns, p. 144.

## CHAPTER II

### A THEOLOGY OF PREACHING

One way through which the Christian preacher may increase the effectiveness of his communication of the gospel to contemporary man may be by the shaping of the forms of preaching. Since preaching is the primary means by which a minister communicates with the congregation, the preacher needs to ask himself the question: what are the forms by which the Word of God is most powerfully communicated? Or by what media is the Word most likely to be communicated in such a sense as to be faithfully received and deeply experienced by the listeners?

The preacher must not be so intent on communicating the content of the faith that he fails to see communication theories as valuable allies in the preaching task. Thus the Christian preacher must be equally concerned for both theology and methodology. To ignore methodology in preaching could lead to communicative dullness and inefficiency; to ignore theology could lead to a manipulative kind of irresponsibility. Though preaching is not theology, yet it must be anchored in theology. Clyde Fant has rightly noted that both methodology and theology must be included in the preacher's concerns:

No theologian would argue that an unstudied exposition of a Biblical text is superior to one which gives careful attention to the text in light of the most modern hermeneutical theories. But is it not utterly contradictory of theology to insist that it is our right--indeed, our absolute responsibility--to use the best of recent research in arriving at a proper interpretation of the

Old Testament Studies in Communication

The Old Testament bears witness to a variety of methods of communication between God and His people. It is, however, necessary to view these methods from the proper perspectives. While it is essential to look at the Old Testament from within itself, it is also vital, because of the nature of the Christian gospel's promise-fulfillment theme, to view the Old Testament from the perspective of the New Testament. Any attempt to describe the variety of methods of communication employed by God in the Old Testament thus needs the perspective of redemption-history as provided in the Christo-centric focus of the New Testament. Consequently, it is from these perspectives that this chapter examines (1) the nature of revelation, (2) the multiplicity and variety in methods of communication, and (3) the nature of Hebrew thought and culture.

#### The Nature of Revelation

In order for man to have fellowship with his Creator, God has chosen to reveal Himself. This revelation, initiated by God, is God's self-disclosure to communicate to man knowledge about Himself. Yet to limit this revelation to knowledge only does not seem to take into account the fact that God reveals Himself as well (Ex 3; Ex 33:17-23; 34:4-9). These two concepts should not be seen as being in sharp antithesis to each other, as has been done by some theologians, for such a distinction seems to undermine the wholistic emphases of Old Testament, where man's experience of God and man's knowledge of God cannot always be distinctly separated. The experience of Isaiah, for instance, in his theophany of God (Isa 6) cannot stand in utter isola-



tion from the content of the Word of God as declared later in the book.

Consequently, when revelation is viewed only as knowledge, then man is seen only as the recipient and the transmitter of such knowledge. Such a view disregards the stamp of individuality impressed upon the revelation by various individuals chosen by God. The Old Testament views man as more than a recipient; he is a participant, closely involved in the revelatory process. Though revelation is viewed as process, it is nevertheless necessary to guard against the temptation to discard or minimize the literary objectification of revelation in Holy Scripture. This objectification is likewise a product that has emerged out of the life of the Jewish community, and as such partakes of the culture and language of that particular community. Revelation is thus to be understood in its so-called "social character" which seeks to understand the communicative processes of God, not in isolation from, but in the totality of the Jewish cultural context.<sup>1</sup> This view allows for other media than words and writing to become bearers of communication, for it sees God's communicative processes operating in and through whatever media God chooses.

In the Old Testament, God's revelatory processes are seen particularly at work among the Jewish people. Central to much of Jewish thought was the belief that God has chosen to enter into a personal relationship with man (Ex 6:7; 19:5,6), and that He, therefore, communicated with a particular group of people at a particular time. God

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<sup>1</sup>See Gabriel Moran, Theology of Revelation (New York: Herder & Herd), pp. 38-45, 99-103.

is here seen as meeting with the individual and communicating to and with him within the context of the community of Israel in real-life situations. The consciousness of this relationship was reinforced repeatedly as God acted in historical situations for the redemption of His people, and as the celebration and remembrance of these events were passed from generation to generation (Dt 6, 29, 30). It is against this backdrop of history that Old Testament revelation must be understood.

Finally, the communicative processes of the Old Testament must be understood in the context of the plan of salvation. The multiple means of communication employed by God in the Old Testament are seen as culminating in the ultimate and supreme revelation of His son, Jesus Christ (Heb 1:1,2), through whom the promises of the entire Old Testament (2 Cor 1:20) find their fulfillment. To rightly appreciate the ways by which God communicates with man, it is hence necessary to view these ways in the context of God's ongoing redemptive activity in behalf of His people. This activity finds its climax in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

#### Multiplicity and Variety in Communication

The multiple and various ways used by God in Old Testament times to communicate with His people strongly suggest that God desires to continue to communicate with His people, even though sin has cut off original face-to-face communication between God and His creatures. The design of man by His creator gives evidence that through the five basic senses God gave to man the capacity to learn, to discover, and to enjoy the world about him. It is significant that after the fall

God did not cease to make use of these senses, but that they continued to be the avenues through which God used a variety of multi-sensory approaches to reveal Himself and His ways to men.

One such multi-sensory approach was the Old Testament system of sacrifices and offerings, first as practiced by Adam and his descendents, and later as elaborated through the instruction given by Moses. It would be somewhat difficult to deny that the slaughter, shedding of blood, offering, and burning of innocent animals spoke to the Israelites something about the seriousness of sin and its punishment as well as the Promised Remedy.

The Old Testament bears witness to other ways through which God revealed Himself to His people. The rainbow (Gen 9:8-17) became a symbol to Noah and succeeding generations of God's faithfulness. The building of the ark became an impressive visual aid reinforcing the preaching of Noah, warning of judgment to come (Gen 6, 7). In God's choice of Abraham to be the father of the covenant people, God used the reality of the world that Abraham visually knew, stars (Gen 15:5) and sand (Gen 22:17) to impress upon his mind the certainty of His promises. The burning bush (Ex 3:3) became a forceful way of gaining the attention of the one who was to be the leader of the children of Israel. When verbal symbols were not enough, ten forceful, multi-sensory approaches, commonly referred to as plagues, were needed to convince Pharaoh to let the children of Israel leave Egypt. In the deliverance of the Israelites from bondage, God designed that the celebration of this event (Ex 12:11-28), the Passover, would be a perpetual reminder of the redemption of His people. During the journey toward Canaan, the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire

by night (Ex 13:21, 22), the manna (Ex 16:11-36), the brazen serpent (Num 21:9), and the urim and thummin in the garment of the high-priest (Ex 29:30) were evidences that through multiple and various ways God wanted His people to be assured of His leading that they might respond to Him in loving obedience. Other ways through which God spoke and gave directions to men included dreams (Dan 2), Balaam's ass (Num 22:30), the "still, small voice" (1 Ki 19:12), nature (Ps 19:1, 2), angels (Gen 19:15), preincarnate appearances of Christ (Gen 18:1, 2), and the ministry of prophets (Amos 3:7; 2 Chr 36:15; Num 12:6).

In the ministry of the prophets is seen an example of the multiple ways by which God guides His people. The prophets were not self-appointed visionaries; they claimed not only to speak for God (Amos 3:1) but also to have been chosen by God (Jer 1:5) for a specific task at a specific time. While in their ministry they expressed an overriding concern for communicating only the words and messages that God had entrusted to them, their messages were not transmitted in a sterile way but were stamped with the individuality of each prophet. The functions of the prophet were many and diverse. They spoke for God and revealed God's purposes; they strengthened and guided rulers (Isa 36:2-7); they encouraged the people to faithfulness (Josh 24:20-23); they protested against evils (Hos 4:1, 2); they directed various activities such as building projects (Ezr 5:20); and they engaged in teaching the people. Their ministries were not limited to the Hebrew nation but included Gentile nations and cities, such as Nineveh, Egypt, and Babylon. In fulfilling their various roles the prophets communicated orally (Amos 1, 2), through writing

(Dan 12:4; Jer 36:2-4), and by enacting their communication in parables (Jer 13:7-11; Ezek 4:1-3).<sup>1</sup>

The various festivals and celebrations instituted by God also served as powerful media of communication. The Psalms give evidence of the holistic responses of man to God through all his senses. For example, highly developed senses are necessary to enjoy and participate in Ps 150, which enjoins man to praise the Lord with his whole being and with everything that affects his life.

The preceding items by no means constitute all the ways through which God communicated in Old Testament times. A clear understanding of these ways can only be gained through a consideration of the nature of Hebrew thought and culture.

#### Hebrew Thought and Culture

Central to Hebrew thought was the belief that God had chosen them, and, therefore, He desired to communicate with them, His people. God's choosing was manifested in historical situations in which God established His covenant with them (Gen 17:1-8; Ex 19:1-6), and also in the historical events through which God acted in a redemptive way in behalf of His people, such as the Exodus. It seems quite clear that God intended for the memory of these events to be preserved through the oral teaching of parents to children. This then became the basis of Hebrew education, since the word of God was diligently taught to the children not merely as verbal symbols but as living truths in the course of everyday life (Dt 6:6-9). Thus God not only

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<sup>1</sup>T. Housel Jemison, A Prophet Among You (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association), pp. 33-73.

revealed Himself through His acts (Ps 103:7) but also through His word which preceded, accompanied, and followed after His acts and explained these acts to His people. The necessity of His word accompanying His acts and their subsequent celebration cannot be too highly stressed, for the concept of the word seem to be utterly central to all of Hebrew thought.

Any reading of the Old Testament Scriptures should readily reveal that to the Hebrew mind the word was powerful and alive. This is seen in the significance attached to the word in the notion of blessing and curse. It is seen in the sense of reverence attached to the word.

The spoken word to the Hebrew was fearfully alive. It was not merely a vocable or sound dropped heedlessly from unthinking lips. It was a unit of energy charged with power. It flies like a bullet to its billet. It is energized for weal or woe. Words fall from our lips so easily and idly. But the Hebrew was economical of word: there was a marked austerity about his utterance. . . . Thus a word to the Hebrew was something to be thought about and expended carefully. It is significant that in Hebrew the word for thought and speech is the same ('amar). Hebrew speech is just thinking aloud--but it is thinking . . . . The Hebrew knew there was power in word and that such power must not be used indiscriminately. Words "run" and have "free course": they run to realize themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Testifying further to the dynamics of the word are the songs, poetry, metaphors, and imagery that serve as more than illustrations and are indeed an integral part of capturing and compressing ideas and concepts in such ways as to help men imagine and grasp them.<sup>2</sup> In a time when Christian and other communicators are liable to doubt the

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<sup>1</sup>John Paterson, The Book That Is Alive (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), pp. 2-3, cited by Frank E. Eakin Jr., The Religion and Culture of Israel (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1971), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>Harry Boonstra, "Biblical Metaphor--More than Decoration," Christianity Today 20 (17 December 1976), pp. 22-23.

efficiency of oral and verbal communication, the Old Testament Scriptures still provide evidence of the power of both the spoken and written word.

While it is quite evident that in Hebrew thought the word comes across as powerful, unique, important, and primary, yet an examination of the Old Testament reveals that it is by no means an exclusive medium of communication. Since God's communications in the Old Testament come to us in the form of Hebrew culture, the question that naturally arises as to what extent the forms of Hebrew culture and thought should be normative for the forms of Christian communication in later generations. If one sees the distinctions between Hebrew and Greek thought as being as sharp as does Boman,<sup>1</sup> then the increasing usage of pictures and art in Christian churches about 200-900 A.D. would be looked upon as quite disastrous to the faith. The history of revelation among the Hebrews, however, strongly suggests that God appealed and communicated with men through other senses than the auditory.

One must not assume that only Hebrew thought and culture is used by God in revelation and that these stand in utter and total independence of all surrounding cultures. Scholars today generally seem to be in agreement that Hebrew culture did not exist in isolation from the influences of other nations. For example, it is claimed that the

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<sup>1</sup>Thorleif Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared with Greek (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), p. 206. Boman's thesis, in this instance the organizing of the Hebrew mind in an auditory way versus the Greek mind being organized in a predominantly visual way, is generally recognized as being overstated.

Israelite priesthood partook of Midianite traditions.<sup>1</sup> Other scholars see Hittite, Ugaritic, and Canaanite influences at work in Hebrew culture. Hence, the Christian communicator must be careful not to set Hebrew thought and culture in too distinct antithesis to other forms of thought, lest he end up insisting that only Hebrew forms of communication, primarily the word, whether spoken or written, can be employed in the communication of the gospel.

In order for God to communicate with men, His communication must necessarily partake of such form as can readily be perceived and understood by the receiver. If one thing is clear from the Old Testament it is that communication is a matter of participation in culture; where no participation exists, no communication takes place. Such participation should not always be looked upon as contamination by culture. Rather, such participation should be viewed as an indication that God strongly desires to communicate with His people, and that to do this He employs a variety of means appealing to all of man's senses. The participation of communication in culture suggests that God adapts His methods of communication to meet man in his particular situation. The Christian preacher must be willing, therefore, to adapt his communication, so that the message of the gospel might become "incarnate" in cultures and ways of thought other than those of Bible times.

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, 2 vols. trans. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), 1:393.



New Testament Studies in the Communication  
of the Gospel

The center of the New Testament is the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It would, therefore, seem proper to examine the methods and forms of communication used not only by Jesus but also his followers in their teaching-preaching ministries. Accordingly, this section will deal with implications for Christian communication drawn from (1) the life and ministry of Jesus, (2) the parables of Jesus, (3) the distinctions and similarities between teaching and preaching, and (4) the nature of the response of man to the communication of the gospel.

The Life and Ministry of Jesus

The incarnation of Jesus Christ strongly suggests that God desires communication efficiency. This is not to say that everything there is to know about God has been exhaustively communicated, but that in Jesus Christ it has been faithfully and truly communicated. To understand this more clearly the life and ministry of Christ must not be divorced from the perspective of salvation-history, through which Christ's life and ministry is seen as the supreme revelation, superceding and surpassing all other forms of revelation (Heb 1:2, 3; Jn 1:17, 18; 12:45; 14:6) of the character of God the Father. This revelation of God in the person of Christ is apprehended not only through the hearing of the words and teachings of Christ (Jn 14:10, 24) but also through the works of Christ (Jn 5:36, 14:11). The incarnation is thus the supreme example of the "medium being the message" (see Mt 1:23), and it suggests that nothing in the life of Christ is without communication value and content. Thus, man sees Jesus Christ

communicating something about the Father through His miracles, His acts, His relationships with people, as well as through His teaching and preaching ministry.

The healing ministry of Jesus speaks strongly to the fact that God uses a multi-sensory approach in revealing Himself.

Christ comes to restore man's capacity for relationships. Indeed, man's whole being is involved in knowing others and creating relationships with them. And he relates especially by seeing, hearing, and touching. That is why, when Christ cures the sick, he restores them to the wealth of their sensory ability or their capacity to know and to relate as complete persons. The restoration of the physical and sensory integrity of the person is basic to each one of these cures. Having "ears to hear" (Mt 11:15) is just as important as having "the ability to distinguish" (1 Cor 12:10). Even Thomas is not censured for wanting to touch. Thus, man's sensory capacities have a definite relationship in God's work and revelation. Furthermore, man is expected to fully integrate his senses in his worship of God and in his service to neighbor.<sup>1</sup>

This ministry, in its wholistic approach, is then seen as a facilitative means in man's apprehension and understanding of God's revelation. This revelation comes to man not only through the Word of God but also through the amplification of that Word in everyday objects, things in nature, and man's social relationships.

Though Christ employed a multiplicity of ways in His communication, yet there seems in His ministry to be an overriding concern for having people respond and believe in Him on the basis of His Word. This is seen in the incident connected with the feeding of the multitudes (Jn 6:22-30) where the people were attracted to Him merely because of a satisfied hunger. Furthermore, the remarks of Jesus to

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<sup>1</sup>H. Kunzler, "Audio-Visuals and Revelation," in The Audio-Visual Man, ed. Pierre Babin, trans. C. Belisle et al (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1970), p. 65.

Thomas indicate the importance of believing the primary witness of the Word, in this case the account of the other disciples (Jn 20:24-29). The postresurrection walk with two of His disciples to Emmaus suggests that Jesus was reluctant to provide a full sensory revelation of His person to His disciples until they had first been directed to the primary witness of the Word, in this case the Old Testament Scriptures (Lk 24:13-20).

The teaching-preaching ministry of Jesus reveals Him as an altogether unparalleled master of psychology. The following are some principles of communication taken from His teaching which could profitably guide the preaching of any preacher: (1) He avoided dissension, (2) He presented truth in the most direct and simple way, (3) He spoke as one having authority, (4) He did not deal in abstract theories, (5) He sought to arouse inquiry, (6) He varied His teaching to suit His audiences, (7) through the imagination He reached the heart, (8) His illustrations were taken from the simple things of life, (9) His teaching was backed by the way He lived, (10) He was personally involved with His pupils, and (11) His personal sympathy with people attracted many to listen to Him.<sup>1</sup>

There seems to be little doubt that His authoratative form of teaching caused audiences to throng about Him. In His teaching, ancient truths were seen in a fresh and new light. One means of teaching that facilitated communication was Jesus' use of parables.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages (Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1898), pp. 243-55.

## The Parables of Jesus

While Jesus' method of teaching and preaching had several elements in common with the teaching methods of the rabbis of His day, yet it was also amazingly distinct from their methods. Among the Pharisees and scribes of Jesus' day, the parables were commonly used for instruction, exhortation, and scholarly argument in which the arguments of one's opponents were systematically and effectively destroyed and reduced ad absurdum.<sup>1</sup> That the teaching of Jesus met with opposition from His contemporaries was probably due not only to the content of His teaching but also due to the fact that He was not a product of their rabbinical schools (Jn 7:15).

Too often the parables are looked upon as only clever ways of illustrating the content of His discourses, but the recent work of the German scholar Eta Linneman suggests that the parables were actual "language-events" showing deep involvement of the speaker in the listener's situation.

A parable is an urgent endeavour on the part of the speaker toward the listener. The man who tells a parable wants to do more than utter something or make a communication. He wants to affect the other, to win his agreement, to influence his judgment in a particular direction, to force him to a decision, to convince him or prevail upon him. Even when it is only the narrator who speaks, a conversation is really taking place. He has already anticipated the possible objections of the hearers, because it is to overcome such resistance that he has chosen the parable as his form of speech.<sup>2</sup>

While there is no doubt that the parables reinforce learning through the facilitation of recall and through arousing inquiry, the parables

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<sup>1</sup>Eta Linneman, Jesus of the Parables, trans. John Sturdy (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Linneman, p. 19.

also show a depth of involvement between the teacher and his listeners. Sallie TeSelle has thus defined the parable "as a metaphor drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought."<sup>1</sup> The parable is not only a fit vehicle for the transmission of truth, but also enables the listeners to interpret themselves. The parable becomes a way of obtaining objective assent to the truth and judgment is passed before the judge realizes that he is the accused.

It would seem that the present-day attempt of preachers to take the parables of Jesus and transform them into hortatory material fails to take into account the original Sitz im Leben of the parables.<sup>2</sup> The contribution of the methodology of the parables of Jesus thus lies mainly, not only in their illustrative application, but in their being genuine vehicles of communication, taking into consideration both the nature of the message and the nature of the receiver.

One is still left, however, with the question of the ethics of persuasion. One Christian writer has observed that in His teaching methods, "Christ seldom attempted to prove that truth is truth. He illustrated truth in all its bearings, and then left His hearers free to accept or reject it, as they might choose. He did not force anyone

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<sup>1</sup>Sallie M. TeSelle, Speaking in Parables: A Study in Metaphor and Theology (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus, trans. S. H. Hooke (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954), p. 31.

to believe."<sup>1</sup> The parables thus stand in stark contrast to the teaching methods of the Pharisees, whose religious system was spelled out plainly, defined precisely, codified, and repeated ad nauseam to the last letter. The oral style of the messages of Jesus was not heavy in conceptual thinking, but in images, parables, and concrete expressions. Jahsmann has noted that such indirect speaking preserves in a way the freedom of the listener.

In speaking indirectly through symbols (figures, characters, pictures, actions) art challenges a person to think, and stimulates and deepens personal insights. By using the kind of symbolic language . . . characteristic of spiritually religious language, art allows the freedom of the mind and spirit of both the creator and the consumer. This is the kind of freedom needed if the Word and Spirit of God are to speak to both of the human parties in communication.<sup>2</sup>

The parables, along with the other teaching methods of Jesus, were persuasive in driving a person to make some kind of decision, but were balanced by a respect for human freedom.

#### Preaching and Teaching

In New Testament studies, a distinction has sometimes been made between teaching and preaching as methods of communication.<sup>3</sup> This distinction arises out of an analysis which sees preaching as primarily the proclamation and heralding of the Christ-event, whereas teaching is seen primarily as ethical instructions for believers.

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<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1956), p. 171.

<sup>2</sup>Allan H. Jahsmann, Power beyond Words (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1969), p. 162.

<sup>3</sup>See C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1936).

Besides the numerous times that didasko occurs alone, it is also found eight times in conjunction with the various verbal forms of kerusso (Mt 4:23; 9:35; 11:1; Lk 20:1 concerning Jesus; Acts 4:1, 2, 5:42, 15:35, 28:30, 31 concerning the teaching and preaching of the apostles). According to Robert C. Worley, the evidence of the New Testament suggests preaching and teaching as a pluralistic activity.<sup>1</sup> He suggests that there is no sharp separation between teaching and preaching. The basic content is the same; teaching will include the basic gospel message, though it will deal more with the understanding and living of the Christian life in light of the gospel. Vincent takes the position that no clearcut distinction can always be made between the content of preaching and teaching. His formula is: "The didache was the gracious kerygma of God. The kerygma was that the didache described God."<sup>2</sup>

Other elements are also seen as being present in apostolic preaching. For instance, Kerr sees the following elements in the preaching of the apostles: (1) iteration of the prophetic proclamation of the Old Testament concerning the coming Messiah, (2) the story of the earthly life of Christ, (3) the importance of the death and atonement of Christ, (4) the resurrection of Christ, and (5) the necessity of repentance,<sup>3</sup> to which Foster adds (6) the witness to

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<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Worley, Preaching and Teaching in the Earliest Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), pp. 87-130.

<sup>2</sup>John J. Vincent, "Didactic Kerygma in the Synoptic Gospels," Scottish Journal of Theology 10 (1957):273.

<sup>3</sup>H. T. Kerr, Preaching in the Early Church (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1942), ch. 1, cited by David Waite Yohn, The Contemporary Preacher and His Task (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1969), pp. 25-26.

one's own conversion, (7) the demonstration of the Christian life, (8) the attraction of the Christian community, and (9) testimony of success in Christian living.<sup>1</sup>

When consideration is also given to the variety of places and circumstances under which teaching and preaching took place, the sharpness of distinction between preaching and teaching seems to be dulled. For instance, Luke records five sermons of Peter: (1) on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-38), (2) to the crowd after the cure of the cripple in the temple (Acts 3:12-26), (3) before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8-12), (4) to the high priest (Acts 5:29-32), and (5) to the congregation assembled in Cornelius' house (Acts 10:33-43).

The missionary activity of Paul as recorded in Acts (5:35; 11:26; 18:11; 20:20; 28:30-31) also suggests that teaching was not exclusively directed at believers, but was aimed at anyone who listened in the various places where teaching took place.<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of this study the position is taken that preaching, as far as methodology is concerned, must have within it something of the character of teaching as well. This is not to say, however, that preaching is equated with teaching. Christian teaching must be informed by the kerygma, as seen in the instructions given by Paul to believers, instructions which are given in the perspective of Christ's example and saving work (Php 2:1-12).

The New Testament Scriptures generally insist on the importance of preaching as the primary method of communicating the good

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<sup>1</sup>J. Foster, After the Apostles (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1951), ch. 3, cited by Yohn, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Worley, p. 35.



news of the Christ-event and its implications for all, both Jew and Gentile (Acts 2:14-42; 10:33-43). Paul also testifies to the importance of preaching in communicating the gospel and facilitating a faith response among the listeners (Rom 10:11-17; 1 Cor 1:21).

The Christian proclamation of the Christ-event differs significantly from the Greek idea of proclamation and heralding. The Greek heralds commonly relied on such qualities as a good voice, rhetorical skills, and also the politico-religious significance attached to them by their society.<sup>1</sup> From the standpoint of the New Testament, kerusso "does not mean the delivery of a learned or hortatory discourse in well-chosen words and a pleasant voice. It is the declaration of an event."<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the Greek herald, the credentials of the Christian preacher do not lie in cleverness of speech (1 Cor 1:17) but in the content of what is proclaimed. A word study of 1 Cor 1:21 suggests that it is not "the foolishness of preaching" but the "foolishness of what is preached" that is the concern of this particular passage. It is to be noted that

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<sup>1</sup>Since the most common expression translated "to preach" in the New Testament is kerussin, it could be expected that the most common New Testament word for "preacher" would be kerux. But this term only occurs three times in the New Testament (1 Ti 2:7; 2 Ti 1:11; 2 Pet 2:5). Jerome Murphy-O'Connor suggests the following on the rarity and lateness of the occurrence of this term: "Apparently the term was avoided because it was widely used by the pagan Stoic preachers of that day and also because the New Testament writer wished to distinguish Christian preaching from the rather mechanical heralding of the Greeks which was principally repetition by rote, and as such thereby violated the personal dynamic inherent in Christian proclamation." Paul on Preaching (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), cited by Fant, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Gerhard Friedrich, "Kerux," in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1965), 3:703.

When we say that the main concern of the New Testament is with the act of proclamation, this does not mean that the content is subsidiary. . . . The content is not determined, of course, by the situation of those who hear or read. . . . It is fixed in advance.<sup>1</sup>

This does not mean that preaching as an activity is unconcerned about its listeners but only that the response to preaching must be more than the response to an activity; it must be a response to the claims and content of the gospel.

#### The Response of Man

The purpose of Biblical communication is more than the transmitting of Biblical information. It is the declaration of the Christ-event for the purpose of eliciting a faith-response among the hearers. The Scriptures generally refer to this response of man to the gospel in terms of "faith" or "the obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5; 10:17; 16:26). This response is hindered by what is referred to as "blindness" (2 Cor 4:4, 5, Jn 9:40, 41), deafness as "dull of hearing" (Mt 13:15; Acts 28:27), or "hardness" of heart (Mk 16:14; 2 Cor 3:14) due to the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb 3:13).

To bring about the response of faith the Scriptures refer to the necessity of hearing the word of God, the message of Christ (Rom 10:17). Here the word "hearing" should not be understood in the narrow sense of referring solely to auditory perception. The Greek idea of akouo implies not only perception but also response; hupakouo implies an obedience to the Word. The following explanation is given for the predominance of the concept of hearing.

The prevalence of hearing points to an essential feature of biblical religion. It is a religion of the Word, because it is

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 710.

a religion of action, of obedience to the Word. The prophet is the bearer of the Word of Yahweh which demands obedience and fulfillment. Man is not righteous as he seeks to apprehend or perceive God by way of thought and vision, but as he hears the command of God and studies to observe it.<sup>1</sup>

The emphasis on hearing thus refers not so much to the exclusiveness of the oral-auditory channel of communication as it does to the essential response of faith and obedience to the message of Christ.

To elicit a response among the hearers is definitely a legitimate concern of the preacher. However, some preachers view the employment of certain persuasive and communicative techniques in preaching as a violation of the gospel as well as the nature of man. Litfin, for example, insists that the messenger of the gospel is only responsible for seeing that all hear; the response of the hearers is not the messenger's affair. "The use of persuasive techniques might indeed win a response, but it would be a response based upon 'the wisdom of men' and not the 'power of God.'"<sup>2</sup>

It would seem that all that communicative techniques should really accomplish should be a faithful and more effective transmission of the Word. This takes into account the nature of the Word portrayed in Scripture (Isa 55:10, 11; Mk 4:26-29, Heb 4:12) as powerful and having within it a regenerative and supernatural power. It is only as this Word is faithfully transmitted and communicated that the full weight of the necessity of decision and action will be laid on

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<sup>1</sup>G. Kittel, "akouo" in Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1964), 1:217.

<sup>2</sup>A. Duane Litfin, "The Perils of Persuasive Preaching," Christianity Today 21 (4 February 1977):16.

the heart of the hearers, and it should be in this context that any persuasive aids and techniques in preaching are used.

### Preaching: History and Theory

An examination of the history of preaching as well as an understanding of various contemporary views on preaching can be of immense help in discerning various factors that are central to preaching as an activity. Thus, this section will concern itself with (1) history of preaching, (2) contemporary views on preaching, and (3) the role of the interpersonal relationship in this activity.

#### History of Preaching

The entire history of Christian preaching generally shows that Christian preaching has always borrowed and relied upon the principles of both ancient and contemporary rhetorical practices. For example, in the classic work of John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons,<sup>1</sup> the discussion of how to construct and deliver sermons is more indebted to the rhetorical forms of Aristotle and Cicero than to the practices of Peter and Paul.<sup>2</sup> This dependence is not necessarily bad. Even the allegorical preaching of Origen (185-254) had, no doubt, a communicative value in his day; its abuse lay in that it ignored the basic theological unity of the Old and New Testaments. Similarly, a reading of Dargan's A History of Preaching<sup>3</sup> readily reveals that not only has preaching partaken of contemporary

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<sup>1</sup>(New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1890).

<sup>2</sup>Litfin, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Edward C. Dargan, A History of Preaching, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1954).

categories of thought but has also been influenced by the theology of the church.

Based on an analysis of Brillioth, Yohn suggests three elements which must guide preaching to have it remain thoroughly Biblical. This analysis arises out of Jesus' sermon in Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30) and points out the following factors:

1. The liturgical--it forms a part of a divine service and is itself a mode of worship.
2. The expository, or exegetical--it starts from and expounds a text from Scripture.
3. The prophetic--it is a message from the present time, making the scriptural text a living word in the actual situation.<sup>1</sup>

The Greek Church provides an illustration on why adherence to all of these elements is essential. Preaching in the Greek church died because of the overemphasis on liturgics. When the pastors lost the prophetic and exegetical moods of the sermon, they were soon speaking only in a liturgical, pastoral way to the awakened.<sup>2</sup> This points out the necessity for not divorcing methodology from theology.

As a result of the Reformation, emphasis was again placed upon the importance of declaring the Word. Yet, according to Hendrik Kraemer's analysis of preaching in the light of changing communications environments, this emphasis brought about a stress on verbal communication that has not always been in balance with other forms of communication.

The extravagant and nearly exclusive stress on verbal communication, on preaching and sermonizing, in the world of the Churches, which issues from the Reformation, is a degeneration or distortion

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<sup>1</sup>Y. Brillioth, Landmarks in the History of Preaching (London: SPCK, 1950), pp. 2, 3, cited by Yohn, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Yohn, pp. 35, 36.

of the Reformer's discovery of the prophetic character and quality of the Word of God. This stress has closed the eyes of the Church to the manifold means of communication which we find in the Bible, which in contradiction to our Western World is not confined to, or imprisoned in a "verbal culture."<sup>1</sup>

Who is to say that perhaps society's increasing usage of modern communication media could not open the eyes of the Church again to the variety of media available to it for the communication of the Gospel?

#### Contemporary Views

Though preaching is held in very high esteem among many modern-day theologians, yet such esteem may not always do justice to the place of preaching as informed by the New Testament. Karl Barth insists that Christian theology starts from and centers in proclamation.<sup>2</sup> Likewise H. H. Farmer maintains that "Christian preaching, rightly understood, is sui generis, because the Christian faith, with which it is organically one, is sui generis. It cannot be understood according to the general principles of propaganda." Therefore, "the activity of preaching is not merely a means for conveying the content of the Christian faith, but is in a real sense bound up with that content itself."<sup>3</sup>

In recent years, there has also been a shift away from the objectivity of the revealed Word of God in the Scriptures toward the

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<sup>1</sup>Hendrik Kraemer, The Communication of the Christian Faith (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, The Preaching of the Gospel, trans. B. E. Hooke (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963).

<sup>3</sup>H. H. Farmer, The Servant of the Word (New York: Charles Scribner's & Sons, 1942), pp. 14-15.

subjectivity of apprehending the Word primarily in a "personal encounter." Preaching is consequently viewed as "incarnation" and "sacramental." Representative of this view is the following:

"Preaching does more than tell of this gift of life. It gives it. Through preaching God tells of His life in the world, but more: through preaching God gives Himself to the world."<sup>1</sup> Leslie Tizard maintains that "the preacher tries to bring about a personal encounter between God and the souls of his hearers."<sup>2</sup> Another speaks of the sermon as a demonstration in which the Word of God is again made flesh in the preacher himself. Accordingly, the minister experiences God as he preaches, and so the sermon becomes an event.<sup>3</sup> In this kind of thinking, preaching and the preacher are looked upon as extensions of the incarnation. Clyde Fant defends "incarnational preaching" this way:

Even God himself had to become incarnate to communicate with man at the most profound level. . . . The incarnation, therefore, is the truest theological model for preaching because it was God's ultimate action of communication.<sup>4</sup>

Amos Wilder insists that "the basic character of the gospel . . . is revelation, not persuasion. Persuasion may take a great deal of talk and argument, revelation does not."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Richard R. Caemmerer, Preaching for the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 1, cited by Clyde Reid, The Empty Pulpit (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), p. 38.

<sup>2</sup>Leslie J. Tizard, Preaching, The Art of Communication (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Roy Pearson, The Ministry of Preaching (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), pp. 19-20, cited by Reid, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup>Fant, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup>Amos N. Wilder, Early Christian Rhetoric: The Language of the Gospel (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964), p. 29.

It is evident from this that what is communicated in preaching may not always be the unadulterated proclamation of the Word of God as much as it is an interpretation thereof, even as it is revealed in the methodology of communication. McLuhan's thesis, "the medium is the message," certainly applies here. Those who hold to the sacramental or incarnational views of preaching generally show very little interest in the improvement of preaching through principles of persuasion and communication. The extreme view of this is typified in Ritschl's complete disdainment of contemporary speech and communication theories, theories which he believes can only elevate the human at the expense of minimizing the divine element in preaching.<sup>1</sup>

A study of contemporary views of preaching reveals that methodology in communication is heavily dependent on theological presuppositions. This is illustrated by Thor Hall,<sup>2</sup> who showed that eight different theological methodologies each resulted in a particular hermeneutical theory, as well as a particular theory of communication. For instance, adherents of the "encounter hermeneutic" look at preaching, not as the interpretation of a Biblical passage, but as a situation in which the preacher is a medium of communication, and the text is involved only incidentally. As the listener experiences an encounter with God, this encounter is then equated with or even placed above the revealed truth of the Word of God in the Scriptures. Norval Pease, in an analysis of Hall's book, makes the following caution to

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<sup>1</sup>Diétrich Ritschl, A Theology of Proclamation (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1960). See also Ronald F. Sleeth, "Theology vs. Communication Theories," Religion in Life 32 (Autumn 1963):549.

<sup>2</sup>Hall,



preachers: "When we choose our theology, our hermeneutics and our theory of religious language comes in the same package."<sup>1</sup> And the same is true for one's theory of communication or lack thereof in regard to preaching.

Based on a review of the literature of audio-visual media in Christian education, it can be said with some degree of certainty that writers who adhere to preaching as "sacrament," "revelation," "encounter," or "incarnation" show little or no interest in the application of audio-visual technology to preaching. On the other hand, individuals who take a more traditional stance toward preaching and the Word of God, and who have a burden to communicate that Word, often are willing to adapt techniques for the improvement of communication in preaching with only little consideration for theological justification thereof. The achievement of efficiency in communication is often the only justification offered for the employment of audio-visual media.

Yet, while contemporary views on preaching may not always do justice to the role of the Word of God as it is transmitted content-wise, such views do place an important emphasis on the place of the person of the preacher.

#### The Interpersonal Relationship in Preaching

In the preacher's eagerness to communicate the Word of God there is always the danger that he may overlook or minimize the place

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<sup>1</sup>Norval F. Pease, "Interpretation in Proclamation," in A Symposium on Biblical Hermeneutics, ed. by Gordon M. Hyde (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1974), p. 252.

of the person of the preacher in preaching. There is little doubt that both Old and New Testaments give a great deal of consideration to the role of the human element in communication. The apostle Paul writes of "the ministry of reconciliation" which is given to him; "the word of reconciliation" is thus "committed to" or "placed in us." Therefore, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:18-20). The choosing and calling of and the responding of the man to that ministry is thus an essential part of the divine communicative process. This means that before the Word can be communicated by the preacher to others, it must somehow speak to and control him personally. Paul also pointed out that the message and meaning of the Word are most convincingly communicated by human character and actions. He said that the expression of the Christian faith by the followers of Christ made them "a letter from Christ," a letter "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor 3:2, 3). In this context one must understand preaching as proclamation through persons or, as Phillips Brooks termed it, "the bringing of truth through personality."<sup>1</sup> It is the double process of receiving and transmitting truth which constitutes the act of preaching.

The intensively personal character of preaching is again evidenced in the preacher's use of the spoken word as his primary means of communication. At a time when the increasing usage of a variety of modern communication media bombards man, it is tempting to think

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<sup>1</sup>Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1969), p. 5.

of words and speech as inefficient means of communication. What must be understood is that since words are extensions of persons, the spoken word carries a unique power which distinguishes it from every other form of communication.

Because preaching is an activity with words, it is an activity which is essentially personal. The words the preacher uses are the man, that is to say, they are extensions of him and according as he is effective or ineffective, so are his words, so is his utterance, so is his preaching.<sup>1</sup>

H. H. Farmer has observed that "God never enters into personal relationship with man apart from other human persons."<sup>2</sup> Speech is utterly central to all personal relationships, because words reveal the true person.

Sound is a special sensory key to interiority. . . . Sight reveals surfaces. Sound reveals the interior without the necessity of invasion. . . . Because the spoken word moves from interior to interior, encounter between man and man is achieved largely through voice.<sup>3</sup>

The preacher consequently must not be so intent on transmitting concepts, information, and propositions that he neglects the tremendous communicational and transformational possibilities inherent in developing and maintaining close personal relationships with his hearers. The preacher should not need to veil or mask his humanity, but needs to develop the kind of relationship described by Paul this way: "We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very own selves, because you had become so very dear to us" (2 Th 2:8).

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<sup>1</sup>D. W. Cleverley Ford, Preaching Today (London: Epworth Press & SPCK, 1969), p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Farmer, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Walter J. Ong, The Presence of the Word (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 117, 118, 125.

One Christian educator notes that

A great trap into which evangelicals have fallen in the past has been to assume that since we have a true content, we need only make that content known. A search for a Biblical theology of communication leads us to see that equal consideration must be given to the person in the communication setting.<sup>1</sup>

This calls for an "exploring of the divinely ordered mix between relationships and content in the communication of the Word." Either approach has its dangers: "emphasis on relationships at the expense of content will lead to an empty humanism. . . . An emphasis on content at the expense of relationships has already led to a dead and deadening kind of evangelical orthodoxy."<sup>2</sup> The implications of this for the application of audio-visual media in preaching and teaching are clear--audio-visual media are only aids to communication. They must be used in such a way so as not to damage the sensitive personal relationship in preaching between preacher and hearers.

Having examined something of the nature of communication in light of the Scriptures as well as from historical and contemporary perspectives, the next section will summarize these principles with a view to suggesting how they might guide the application of audio-visual media to preaching.

#### Principles to Guide the Application of Audio-visual Media to Preaching

The study of Old and New Testament concepts on communication, particularly as exhibited in the categories of revelation, preaching, and teaching enable men to develop theological principles to guide

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<sup>1</sup>Larry Richards, "Church Teaching: Content Without Context," Christianity Today 21 (15 April 1977):18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

their methods in preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ. Here the normative character of the Scriptures should not be looked upon as alien to communication efficiency but as facilitative of such efficiency.

The Old Testament generally shows that though God reveals Himself primarily through the Word, both oral and written, yet God also employs multi-sensory approaches adapted not only to meet man in his sinful condition but also in his cultural setting. This participation in culture is utterly essential in order to establish communication efficiency.

The centrality of the New Testament, as also foreshadowed in the Old Testament, is the Christ-event. The incarnation speaks strongly to the fact that God desires communication efficiency. The preaching-teaching ministry of Jesus reveals that He extensively used such forms of communication for the transmission of truth that took into account the totality of all the factors in the communication situation. This is especially evidenced by His use of parables as more than illustrations but as genuine vehicles of communication. Jesus' healing ministry suggests that His restoration of men to sensory wholeness was an important aid in enabling men to respond to God. Yet Jesus did exhibit a high regard for the Word as inscripturated in the form of the Old Testament as being normative both for His mission and for the content of His message.

Though a study of the concepts of teaching and preaching reveals distinctions, yet their similarities somewhat minimize those distinctions as far as both content and audiences are concerned. For the purposes of this study the position is taken that preaching for

efficiency of communication must partake of something of the character of teaching. Teaching and preaching through the medium of the person of the preacher in the New Testament becomes a primary means for the communication of the Christ-event. While preaching has always been informed to some extent by the Scriptures, as far as methodology is concerned, an examination of the history of preaching reveals that generally Christian preaching has partaken of the principles of secular, contemporary rhetorical practices.

The contemporary theories of preaching with their emphasis on preaching as "encounter," "sacrament," and "incarnation" shows the necessity of not divorcing medium from passage. The danger in these theories is that they seem to make medium and message altogether too synonymous. While such preaching generally lays a great deal of stress on the medium as the words of the preacher become the Word of God as they are personally apprehended by the listeners, the content of whatever revelation occurs in such preaching must always be checked against the objective content of Scripture, as understood in the perspective of the theme of redemption. This calls for a careful blending of both relationship and content, encounter and proposition, in order to most effectively communicate through all available media the Word in such a way as to make man's faith-response possible. Consequently, audio-visual aids in preaching should facilitate such communication of the Word, but without damaging the sensitive interpersonal relationships between preacher and hearers. It would seem that the judicious usage of audio-visual aids in preaching could enable preachers to keep preaching in balance as both activity and content.

Audio-visual media in preaching should, therefore, not be viewed as essentially evil. In and of themselves they carry no value or meaning except as application is made by the preacher. It is for this reason that one's concern for these media should lie in the area of their application to preaching as guided by a Biblical theology of preaching and communication. Audio-visual media should not stand in competition with the power of the spoken word. The use of such media should aid in the clarification and communication of Biblical concepts, but always accompanied by the spoken word. Audio-visual media can help concretize verbal symbols, thus enabling persons to better grasp their meaning. Both audio-visual media and verbal symbols are efficient means of communication within their own particular sphere. Audio-visual media usually exhibit communicative efficiency in compressing, condensing, clarifying, and transmitting with greater speed, the exact, factual, and objective information. The efficiency of words lies in their revelation of personal "interiority;" as such, words have the ability to hurt, heal, inspire, discourage, enrage, or pacify. Words and audio-visual media are thus not competitive but complementary media.

The use of audio-visual media in preaching can be a way of coming to grips with the two poles in preaching: faithfulness to the Word of God, and faithfulness to those who receive it. Thus, through the means of modern communication technology, the word of the gospel, whose content is unchanging and timeless, is addressed to modern man, in his changing cultural setting, through a medium with which he is familiar. This calls for an application of media to preaching in a way that enables the preacher to maintain close adherence to the con-

tent of the gospel while at the same time involving himself and his message in the secular situations of the modern mind-set.

Even though the majority of Christian preaching today takes place within the church, the preacher must not assume that people are unaffected by their culture to the extent that his language can be understood by all "insiders." Here the preacher must remember that any usage of audio-visual media in worship must take into account the multiple ways in which communication takes place in worship, through liturgy, through sacrament, through architecture, through music, through readings and responses, and through the arts. Audio-visual media must be used with carefulness here, lest a disruption of traditional forms prevent effective communication of the gospel. On the other hand, the preacher must be equally sensitive to the ways in which traditionalism could inhibit effective communication. "To think that God's holiness must be protected by cultural archaisms is to admit precisely that what one is worshiping is not the God of the biblical revelation."<sup>1</sup> When it is claimed that only one medium, words, can give a privileged and adequate representation of God, perhaps man then falls into the trap of idolatry.<sup>2</sup> Though the spoken word is primary in preaching, the Scriptures generally reveal that the "Word of God is not limited to words even though it is limited by the words when the Scriptures serve as the norm."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>David J. Randolph, God's Party: A Guide to New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>H. Kunzler, "Audio-visuals and Revelation," in The Audio-visual Man, ed. Pieere Babin (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1970), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>Jahsmann, p. 50.



Preaching with audio-visual media is then more than making use of a modern means of expression. The real concern should be that the message and its presentation are anchored soundly in a theology of communication that meets modern man, not only in his contemporaneity, but also in his basic sinfulness and alienation from God. So the fundamental question about the relevancy of preaching is much larger than the mode of transmission; it has to do with the genuineness of preaching more than its contemporaneity: Does it deal with the essence of human nature and of human experience?<sup>1</sup> No homiletical method in and of itself can ensure the contact between the human and the divine. Regardless of whether preaching is expository, problem-solving, life-situational, or doctrinal, unless it is communicated by a person who communicates it with love under the direction of the Holy Spirit, communication can not be guaranteed by form alone. Nothing could be more tragic, on the other hand, than having great powers of expression and communication and nothing really important to communicate. Audio-visual usage, it seems, becomes one way of combining faithfulness to the historical revelation of God's Word in Scripture with faithfulness to man in his historical and cultural situation. This is not without danger, as William F. Fore has noted:

As a channel of communication the church is both proclaimer of the Word and distorter of that Word. It is at once required to become involved in the world's techniques, and yet is caught up in the distortions which these techniques bring. It is judge of culture, yet is judged by culture.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Kyle Haselden, The Urgency of Preaching (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 39 cited by Chevis F. Horne, Crisis in the Pulpit Grand Rapids, Mich.: 1975), p. 49.

<sup>2</sup>William F. Fore, "A Theological View of Communication," in Communication--Learning for Churchmen, vol. 1, ed. B. F. Jackson, Jr., (Nashville: Abindon, 1968), p. 82.

Kunzler also sees the same danger:

Although the media transmit knowledge, they do so with a bias; they translate, but in so doing betray; they reflect, but also diffuse like a prism. They are the prerequisite and the condition of our knowledge, yet they are simultaneously the cause of its distortions. Any communication of the Word of God through audio-visual means therefore will obviously both gain from the assets, and suffer from the liabilities of the use of such media.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamental question of Christian preaching is to confront persons with the alternative and necessity of responding for or against the claims of Christ. The communication of the church must be to provide such clarification of the claims of the Word that man is able to understand those claims and thus able to respond.

In order to provide such efficiency and clarification in communication, we must now turn to the audio-visual field to discover not only the particular kind of efficiency that can be gained from the use of various media but also principles for their responsible and efficient application in teaching and preaching.

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<sup>1</sup>Kunzler, p. 57.

## CHAPTER III

### AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA: THEORY AND PRACTICE

In order that the preacher may use audio-visual media responsibly, consideration must be given to audio-visual theory and practice. It is altogether too easy and too tempting for the preacher to utilize audio-visual equipment and technology without consideration for the insights that the behavioral sciences have made available to insure the most efficient usage of such technology. Thus this chapter will concern itself with (1) a brief survey of the development of audio-visual media; (2) their efficiency in human information processing; (3) problems and issues in audio-visual communication; (4) the application of audio-visual media to teaching (instructional development), with suggestions on areas in which instructional development could aid in the preaching task; and (5) the advantages of specifically selected audio-visual aids.

#### Definition of Terms

Because of the nature of the audio-visual field, useful theory is not to be found only in its own literature. Human communication is related to all of the behavioral and many of the physical sciences. Literature having a bearing on audio-visual theory and practice comes from the areas of film, photography, museum, and drama. Audio-visual theory may be drawn from educational psychology, instructional methodology, and curriculum development. It also borrows from

the literature of art, anthropology, mass media, and the expanding field of communication.<sup>1</sup>

The definition of "audio-visual aids" has evolved through the years, but today no one precise definition is available. In the early stages of the development of this field, "visual aids" was the term predominantly used; it was defined in the following way:

A visual aid is any picture, model, object, or device which provides concrete visual experience to the learner for the purpose of (1) introducing, building up, enriching, or clarifying abstract concepts, (2) developing desirable attitudes, and (3) stimulating further activity on the part of the learner.<sup>2</sup>

With the development of electric projection and recording devices the term "audio-visual aids" gained currency in usage. This term did not confine itself exclusively to motion pictures, slide projections, tape and disc recordings, but included also pictures and graphics in direct presentations, natural objects, manufactured objects, replicas, models, and mockups. In the past ten years new terms that have gained increasingly in usage are "educational media," "instructional media," "instructional technology," and "instructional communication." The comprehensiveness of the total instructional task seems to be the goal of each succeeding definition. Because there seems to be no unanimity in the literature of this field regarding the use of terms and their definitions, the following working definition will be used in

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<sup>1</sup>James D. Finn, "Professionalizing the Audio-visual Field," Audio-visual Communication Review, 1 (Winter 1953):14; cited in Raymond V. Wiman and Wesley C. Meierhenry, eds., Educational Media: Theory into Practice (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969), p. ix.

<sup>2</sup>Charles F. Hoban, Charles F. Hoban Jr., and Samuel B. Zisman, Visualizing the Curriculum (New York: The Gordon Company, 1937), p. 9.

this report: audio-visual aids and/or media refer to any real object, man-made device, or process designed to aid in instruction and communication. It is to be noted, however, that sources quoted or cited by this author may use various other terms or definitions.

From a theological point of view, preaching and teaching are sometimes looked upon as quite separate and distinct activities. For the purposes of this chapter, which concerns itself mainly with methodology, it is suggested that such distinctions be somewhat lessened. To successfully communicate knowledge, preaching must necessarily partake of the elements of teaching and instruction as well.

#### The Development of Audio-visual Media

In the oral tradition of preliterate times, the main instruments for instruction were the teacher's voice and the pupil's ear, and successful memorization of the spoken word was considered the mark of the educated person. There is evidence to indicate that among the Sumerians (3000 B.C.) reverence for the spoken word was replaced with respect for the written word. Instructional aids found in Sumerian ruins consist of clay tablets on which the students practiced writing with a stylus.<sup>1</sup> Yet some of the most famous teachers of a later age, the Greek Sophists of the fifth century B.C., seemed to have insisted on teaching by lecture, discussion, and questioning methods--all part of the oral tradition. The chief subject of their curriculum was rhetoric, for the spoken word was both socially and politically important in Greece. Socrates is reported to have warned

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<sup>1</sup>Samuel N. Kramer, From the Tablets of Sumer (Indian Hills, Colorado: Falcon Wing Press, 1956) chap. 1, cited in Gillett, p. 12.

about the impending threat of intellectual decadence if the pupils resorted to the use of external adjuncts to learning by using written materials instead of memory.<sup>1</sup> Ironically, resistance to the usage of modern media employs the same kind of arguments.

In the early history of education, textbooks flourished as an invaluable learning tool, and the age of reverence for the spoken word was superceded by the age of reverence for the written word. In the Western world, the alphabet and technology were brought together in the invention of printing by moveable type (Gutenberg, 1456). Yet education of the young consisted mainly of the "pouring in" concept. Traditional schoolmasters perceived their role as that of a fountain of knowledge, and students were looked upon as little more than empty containers to be filled full of information, facts, and words. John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), keenly aware of the educational pitfalls of his day, produced the first illustrated textbook for children, Orbis Pictus, first published in 1657 or 1658.<sup>2</sup> Comenius realized that learning takes place through all the senses. Another attempt to combat the verablism of his day was made by Johann H. Pestalozzi (1746-1827). Based on the revolutionary theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Pestalozzi believed that the moral, intellectual, and physical powers of each learner should unfold according to natural laws, and that this unfolding should begin with the senses. Later, Maria Montessori (1879-1952) also emphasized learning through the senses, giving special attention to the freedom of the child to learn through various

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<sup>1</sup>Plato, "Phaedrus," in The Dialogues of Plato, trans. Benjamin Jovett (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), pp. 138-139, cited in Wiman, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Wiman, pp. 11, 12.

kinds of instructional media adapted to the child.<sup>1</sup>

Motion and still picture projection, invented around the turn of the century, initially found employment in the entertainment field. The real impact of this modern technology of communication on education did not take place until the Second World War. Faced with the problem of training large numbers of inductees quickly and efficiently, motion pictures, slides, and many other "multi-sensory" aids became efficient aids in training in a minimum of time millions of armed forces personnel in complex and vital task. "The development of audio-visual techniques by the armed forces far exceeds any precedent in scope, variety, and intensity; and it is replete with invaluable lessons for the guidance of education and industry."<sup>2</sup> These experiences of instruction were not hit-and-miss affairs and are evidence favoring the efficiency of audio-visual instruction that cannot easily be dismissed.<sup>3</sup>

Today the audio-visual field permeates almost all educational endeavors. In the classroom audio-visual experiences are no longer looked upon as entertainment but are an integral part of the instructional process. The preacher who desires to communicate the gospel

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<sup>1</sup>Gillett, pp. 22-24.

<sup>2</sup>William R. Exton Jr., Audio-visual Aids in Instruction, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1947), p. 3. For a report on the use of audio-visual aids in instruction in the armed forces, see John R. Miles and Charles R. Spain, Audio-visual Aids in the Armed Services: Implications for American Education (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1947).

<sup>3</sup>For a complete discussion of the development of audio-visual media in education, see Margaret Gillett, Educational Technology--Toward Demystification (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1973), pp. 11-28; and Raymond V. Wiman "A Historical View of Communication in the Classroom," in Wiman, pp. 5-26.

effectively with the present generation cannot ignore the way audio-visual media are shaping the present generation. The church may well ask itself the question: Why, in spite of all these technological advances, is the church not communicating better? In fields such as counselling, Christian ministers have learned from allied behavioral sciences. Why should preachers object to using insights from recent research in arriving at an effective method of presenting the Christian message? If the "word about us educates in electronics, the Christian church must use more than candlelight."<sup>1</sup>

The Efficiency of Audio-visual Aids  
in Human Information Processing

Although a great deal of literature is available in the audio-visual field regarding the efficiency of audio-visual media in education, there is no clearcut unanimity among specialists regarding the efficiency of such media. Therefore, rather than merely looking at numerous individual studies indicating or contraindicating the efficiency of audio-visual media, a study of the major trends of this field will be more fruitful for the purposes of this project report.

One of the earliest attempts (1947) to synthesize the research of the audio-visual field into some general, but rather conclusive, trends was made by Edgar Dale. Dale, then professor of education and head of the Curriculum Division, Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, constructed a model in an attempt to illustrate the effectiveness of various media and/or experiences in

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<sup>1</sup>Oscar J. Rumpf, The Use of Audio-visuals in the Church (Philadelphia: Christian Education Press, 1958), p. 4.



the instructional process (see fig. 1). This "cone of experience" was divided into three parts, indicating the relative effectiveness of various media and experiences and indicating that learning by doing and observing is superior to learning through mere symbolizing.<sup>1</sup> It is easily seen from this that a major portion of the world which education introduces to the child is represented by proxy through symbolizing.

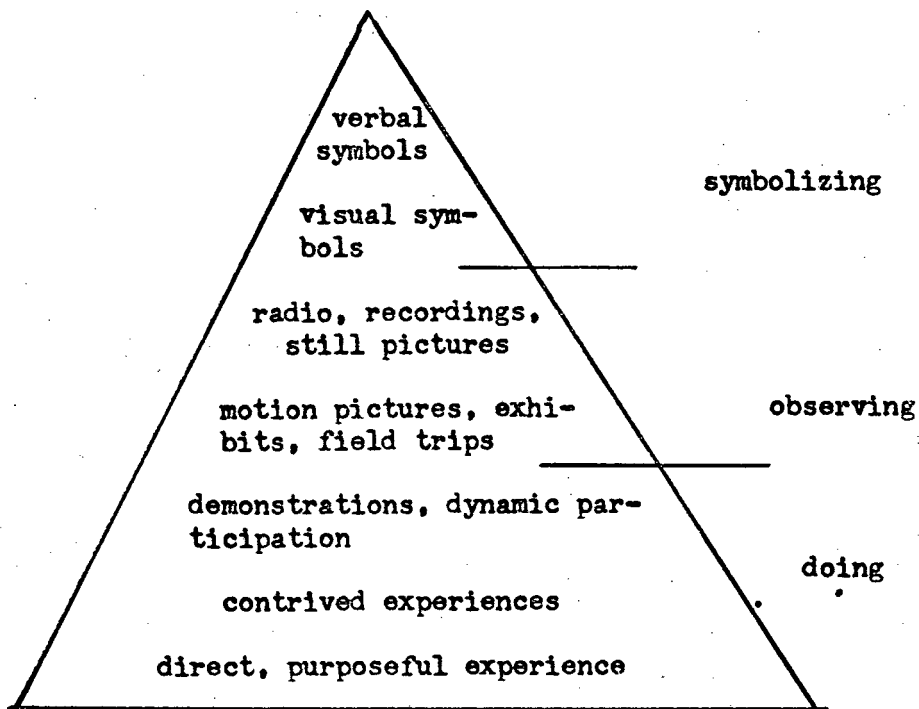


Fig. 1. Dale's "cone of experience"

Typical of the numerous studies and experiments conducted indicating the efficiency of audio-visual aids is the following by Harry A. Wise of Yale University. In 1939 two groups of students were tested over a semester's work in eleventh-grade United States

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Dale, Audio-visual Methods in Teaching (New York: Dryden Press, 1947), p. 39.

history. The experimental group was shown ten moving pictures of American history along with the oral teaching. The control group had the regular teaching methods only. At the end of the testing period, examinations indicated that the experimental group had about a 20 percent higher grade average than the control group.<sup>1</sup>

In various texts on audio-visual teaching methods even higher rates of effectiveness have been reported. Margaret Gillet states that retention rates calculated according to channel are roughly: reading--10 percent; hearing--18 percent; seeing--25 percent; and seeing and hearing--48 percent.<sup>2</sup> Other literature makes similar claims. The Socony-Vacuum Oil Company studies indicated that 11 percent of learning comes through hearing and as much as 83 percent through sight. A study of the learner's ability to retain information indicated that of what is read 10 percent is retained, of what is heard 20 percent is retained, of what is seen and heard 50 percent is retained, of what is seen as people talk about it 70 percent is retained, and of what is seen and performed as a task 90 percent is retained.<sup>3</sup> Emery Tang cites studies by the Mobil Oil Company that indicate that hearing and sight combined account for 94 percent of all our learning. Furthermore, as this study examined recall, the findings

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<sup>1</sup>F. Hoban and E. B. Van Ormer, Instructional Film Research, 1918-1950 (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State College, n.d.).

<sup>2</sup>Gillett, p. 35.

<sup>3</sup>Instructional paper (Mimeographed) claiming to report for Socony-Vacuum Oil Company Studies, reprinted as a service of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Corporation.

showed that after three days only 10 percent of the material which was shown was recalled, while 65 percent of the material taught by both telling and showing was recalled.<sup>1</sup> These studies are typical of numerous others which claim advantages for audio-visual communication, without always citing the hard data for such claims.

In his book Map of Educational Research, Robert H. Thouless takes a much more cautious stance toward the effectiveness of audio-visual learning aids. Citing studies by M. D. Vernon (1953),<sup>2</sup> he points out that even the use of pictorial illustrations in a textbook does not necessarily help in the acquisition of knowledge from the text. Thouless also refers to over four hundred American studies on this topic by Wilber Schramm (1962).<sup>3</sup> The results of these studies, comparing the efficiency of lessons by television and conventional methods, are as follows: In grades three through nine, sixty-three studies indicated that television teaching is more efficient, 109 studies showed no significant difference between television lessons and conventional teaching, and twenty studies showed television to be less efficient. On the high-school level, eleven studies showed television teaching to be more efficient, twenty-one studies showed television teaching to be less efficient, and fifty-seven studies

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<sup>1</sup>Emery Tang, "Understanding the Listener as a Movie-Goer," Preaching 2 (September-October 1967):28.

<sup>2</sup>"The Value of Pictorial Illustration," British Journal of Educational Psychology, 23:180-87, cited in Robert H. Thouless, Map of Educational Research (London: National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales, 1969), p. 253.

<sup>3</sup>"Learning from Instructional Television," Review of Educational Research 32 (April 1962):156-67, cited in Thouless pp. 254-55.

showed no significant difference between television teaching and the conventional method.

Erwin P. Bettinghaus also cites studies indicating that multi-channel communications may have no significant advantage over single-channel communication. In summing up, he notes that

This research suggests that multiple channels are of dubious value when the information to be presented via one channel is different from the information to be presented via the other channel. The research further suggests that when the presentation is made at high speeds, multiple channels are not particularly helpful.<sup>1</sup>

In pointing to a distinction between research done by physiologists and research done by communication researchers, Bettinghaus notes that such research suggests "that when the material to be presented is highly redundant and also difficult, and when the channels are not used simultaneously, but sequentially, then multiple channels are likely to be of value." Situations in which this may be the case are as follows:

1. When it is likely that visual displays might be unfamiliar to the viewer, the auditory description will help in identification.
2. When the communicator wishes the receiver to focus on a particular portion of a visual presentation. . . .
3. Multiple channels may be of help in gaining initial attention for a message.
4. Multiple channels may be helpful in keeping the interest and attention of an audience when long messages are to be presented. Receivers seem to grow fatigued with the

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<sup>1</sup>A. P. VanMondfrans, "An Investigation of the Interaction between the Level of Meaningfulness and Redundancy in the Content of Stimulus Material and the Mode of Presentation of the Stimulus Material," (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1963), cited by Erwin P. Bettinghaus, Persuasive Communication, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 167.

presentation of any materials in a single channel for long periods of time. The addition of other channels may be helpful in reducing this fatigue effect.

5. The use of multiple channels may be extremely useful in situations where the topic is unusually complex.<sup>1</sup>

In an attempt to build upon the significant trends of many studies in the audio-visual field, Smith and Nagel have constructed a "cone of experience" somewhat similar to Dale's (see fig. 2).

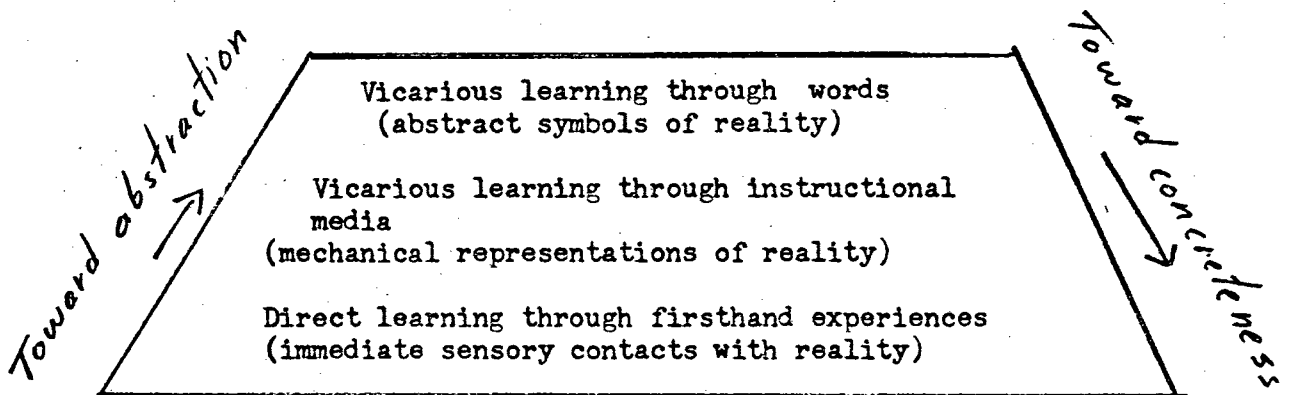


Fig. 2. Smith and Nagel's "cone of experience"

What is not forgotten, they point out, usually involves "total sensory experience." However, since direct learning experiences are not possible in most classroom situations, learning must be managed by the teacher for the students through various types of vicarious experience.<sup>2</sup>

Among the more enthusiastic proponents and opponents of audio-visual instruction, the argument concerning information-transmission efficiency will probably continue for a long time to

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Hayden R. Smith and Thomas S. Nagel, Instructional Media in the Learning Process (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1972), p. 6.

to come. Thousands of studies are available for the support of either viewpoint.<sup>1</sup> However, a survey of the vast research and literature of this field seems to indicate some rather conclusive trends favoring the greater instructional efficiency of audio-visual media over the conventional methods of teaching. Such efficiency is always dependent on the particular application a teacher makes of audio-visual media in designing the total instructional task. It may be said with some degree of certainty that the results of two media working together are greater than the sum of two media working independently.

Pictures and words together perform a more effective function than either can perform alone. . . . In some instances, the picture can have value in excess of the accompanying words; in other instances the opposite can be true. The ideal is reached when the values are equal and in balance, for then the single expressive statement has maximum impact.<sup>2</sup>

An illustration of the various factors that often cause communication breakdown has been made by A. Walden Ends (see fig. 3).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For a comprehensive analysis and digest of the complex and often conflicting research regarding audio-visual efficiency in human information-processing, see Robert M. W. Travers et al., Research and Theory Related to Audio-visual Information Transmission (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah, Bureau of Educational Research, 1967). A perusal of the following works will indicate some of the trends and results of research in the audio-visual field: Research, Principles, And Practices in Visual Communication (Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, Department of Audio-Visual Instruction, 1964); Charlene D. Kirschner, Joseph L. Mopes, and Ray L. Anderton, Doctoral Research in Educational Media 1969-72, a paper of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources, Stanford Center for Research and Development in Teaching, School of Education, Stanford University, Stanford, California, 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Robert C. Snider, "Selection and Use of Visual Aids," in Research, Principles, and Practices in Visual Communication, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>A. Walden Ends, "Proficient Teaching: Communication in Process," in Raymond V. Wiman and Wesley C. Meierhenry, Educational Media: Theory into Practice (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1967), pp. 187-89.

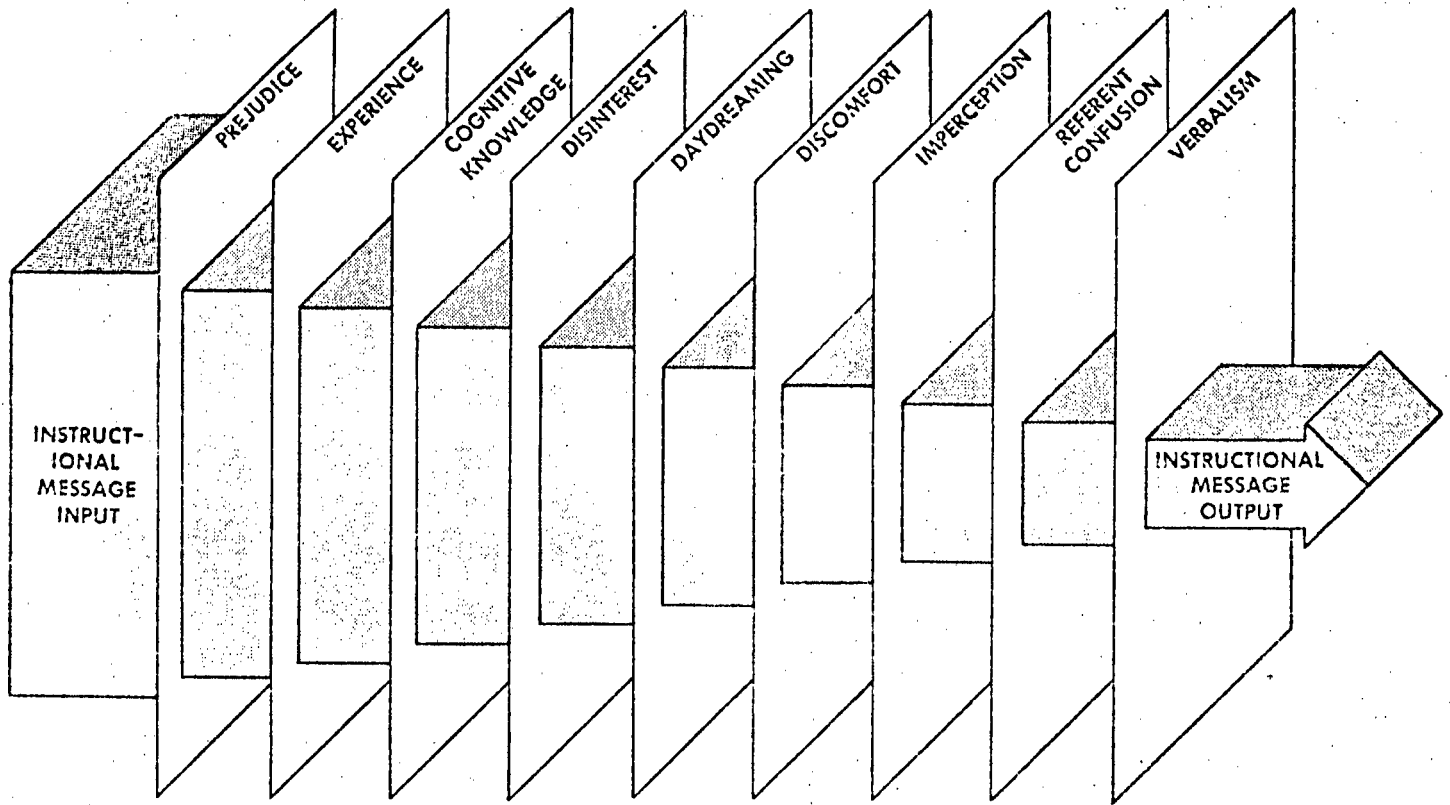


Fig. 3. Factors in the breakdown of communication

Building on the work of Wittich and Schuller,<sup>1</sup> who have identified six elements which interfere with the process of effective communication, Walden identifies three more elements, which he terms "intervening variables." Among the variables identified, three distinct groupings seem to be present. One group includes factors which may have their origins outside the classroom or be attributable to physical causes. These factors (external variables) are: disinterest, day-dreaming, and physical discomfort. The second group includes factors which are attributable to the teacher and his presentation of the lesson; those factors (internal variables) are: referent confusion, imperception, and verbalism. Walden adds to these factors a third group, which he identifies as "intervening variables" in that they affect the behavioral habits of both teacher and students. These factors are: prejudice, experience, and cognitive knowledge. While these latter variables are extremely difficult to control, Walden maintains that both the external and internal variables can be dealt with through the application of some measure of vividness; this can be accomplished by the skillful application of audio-visual media to the learning situation.

Other specialists have made similar observations and claims in regard to what audio-visual media can accomplish in the teaching process. According to Smith and Nagel, instructional media can

1. Provide concrete experience.
2. Motivate and arouse interest.
3. Increase retention.
4. Develop continuity of thought.

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<sup>1</sup>W. A. Wittich and C. F. Schuller, Audio-visual Materials: Their Nature and Use, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), pp. 6-12.



5. Contribute to growth and meaning of vocabulary.
6. Provide variety in learning.
7. Provide experience not otherwise easily obtained.
8. Save instructional time.<sup>1</sup>

Rumpf provides the following observations about audio-visual aids.

They can: (1) condense time and space, bridge gaps in history; (2) give form to words, phrases, and imaginings; (3) provide a setting and create an atmosphere; (4) show relationships; (5) enlarge what may be too small for the eye to see; (6) make possible satisfying, aesthetic experiences, reinforce or channel ideas which help persons to change attitudes; and (7) provide help in concentration on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to suggest that any or all audio-visual media will accomplish these effects in a given instructional task. Audio-visual media of themselves carry no meaning and value, except as assigned and applied by the teacher. To obtain the maximum efficiency in an instructional task the teacher must, however, consider the nature of the materials he has before deciding on the type of presentation he will use. Each case must be looked upon individually in terms of the teacher's objectives, the nature of the topic, and the nature of the receiver.

#### Problems and Issues of Audio-visual Communication

To suggest that the use of audio-visual media is the answer to most of the communication problems in preaching is to overrate such media. While it is true that audio-visual aids may help in overcoming

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<sup>1</sup>Smith and Nagel, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Rumpf, pp. 9-17.

some of the barriers of communication, it is also true that certain critical issues arise in regard to their operation. Two such major issues concern the interpersonal relationship in communication and the ethics of human persuasion. In order that the preacher may make responsible use of audio-visual media in preaching, an awareness of these issues and problems seems to be rather essential.

### The Interpersonal Relationship

The use of technology in teaching and preaching is seen by some as a curse that robs people of their worth as individuals and does not respect their human dignity. Some have called for the abolition of such technology in teaching on the basis that it is a superficial gimmick with only entertainment value. Others see audio-visual aids as a threat to preaching, which is evident in the following response made to a survey regarding visual aids:

I am of the conviction that visual aids are not a necessity to successful evangelism. The best visual aid, after all, is the SPEAKER. The danger in visual aids is that one may use<sup>1</sup> them as a crutch, and not develop the personal pulpit power.

Because the danger expressed here is no doubt valid, it is to be hoped that the usage of audio-visual media in preaching would not hinder the further development of personal communication skills on the part of the preacher.

One charge leveled against the usage of audio-visual media is that it brings about a diminishing of the sensitive person-to-person relationship that should always be maintained in any communication

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<sup>1</sup>Milton T. Reiber, "Visual Aids in Seventh-day Adventist Evangelism, Principles and Practice," (B.D. thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., 1958), p. 91.

process. Because some communication researchers estimate that as much as 65 percent of the total meaning of a spoken message is stimulated by nonverbal clues,<sup>1</sup> some seem to fear that audio-visual media could harm this sensitive relationship. Furthermore, there seems some evidence to indicate that in adopting and translating information received into action, the influence of persons in face-to-face relation is absolutely crucial.<sup>2</sup> The ethos, those indicators and clues that the speaker uses to establish himself as a person of intelligence, moral character, and goodwill, could somehow be concealed or diminished through audio-visual media use. Martin Buber's "I-Thou" relationship, summarized by Johannesen as consisting of such qualities as mutuality, open-heartedness, directness, honesty, spontaneity, frankness, lack of pretense, nonmanipulative intent, communion, intensity, and love, could be hurt.<sup>3</sup>

With the increased attention that may be necessary on the part of the preacher to operate the audio-visual equipment, there could be a danger of losing eye contact with the audience. This loss of contact might hinder him in discerning feedback, thus preventing the speaker from adapting to the response cues of a listener. Clyde Reid reports an experiment conducted in which the instructor carried on instruction with varying degrees of feedback from the students. The

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<sup>1</sup>Mark L. Knapp, Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), p. 12, cited in Richard L. Johannesen, Ethics in Human Communication (Columbus Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1975), p. 77.

<sup>2</sup>Merrill R. Abbey, Man, Media, and the Message (New York: Friendship Press, 1968), p. 59.

<sup>3</sup>Johannesen, p. 44.

results revealed not only a steady increase in learning as student feedback was permitted, but also an increase in the build-up of hostility in the group when no feedback was permitted.<sup>1</sup> Hence the preacher should be aware that audiences rarely want to listen to anyone who fails to visually acknowledge them as listeners. It is to be hoped that in preaching with audio-visual media, the preacher would use only such media, under such conditions, and with such facility of operation, that eye-contact and other nonverbal clues would not be significantly diminished.

While it is true that media may have contributed to the depersonalization process in modern culture, is it not also possible that the proper use of these same media could lead to improved personal relationships? With some of the burden for successful transmission of information shifted from the preacher to the audio-visual media, is it not possible that closer audience-preacher relationships might be facilitated? Carl Rogers has rightly observed that the facilitation of learning does not rest merely upon teaching skills, techniques, and audio-visual aids, but upon certain attitudinal qualities which exist in the personal relationship between preacher and learner.<sup>2</sup>

Audio-visual media thus should not replace the teacher, but should enable him to establish closer personal relationships with his listeners. Audio-visual teaching aids are no substitutes for

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<sup>1</sup>Harold J. Levitt and Ronald A. H. Mueller, "Some Effects of Feedback on Communication," Human Relations 4 (Spring 1951):401-410, cited in Clyde Reid, The Empty Pulpit, A Study of Preaching as Communication (New York: Harper & Row), pp. 79, 80.

<sup>2</sup>Carl R. Rogers, "The Interpersonal Relationship," in Flowers Can Even Bloom in Schools, ed. Marcia H. Perlstein (New York: Westinghouse Learning Press, 1974), p. 8.

personal contact. There should not be an overemphasis on pictures or illustrations alone to the neglect of verbal communication.

Audio-visuals and personal contacts are to be seen in the teaching situation as mutually complementary and enriching rather than competitive techniques.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of what audio-visual aids are used, preachers must never forget that they are the primary aids. They must give purpose to their materials; they must interpret their audio-visuals.

To resist audio-visual media in preaching and teaching on grounds that only face-to-face communication is genuine is perhaps also to misunderstand the way the real world operates. Rather than adopting an oversimplified view of media, Wm. A. Fore urges Christian communicators to consider all media as valid:

. . . we cannot pretend that mass media do not exist as genuine communication vehicles. All media are genuine vehicles for communication. Nor can we pretend that these media are inherently negative or even basically inferior media. Some are better suited for particular communication tasks than others. Some by their very nature mold perception in different ways from others. But we must start with the assumption that all media are genuine and that, therefore, they are part of the raw material which the churchman has to take into account in his communication problems.<sup>2</sup>

#### Ethical Considerations

If the Christian faith were simply a matter of words and the church's task merely the transmission of words to the human intellect, then all the latest developments in programmed learning and machine

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<sup>1</sup>Pierre Babin, ed., The Audio-visual Man, trans. C. Balisle et al. (Dayton, Ohio: Pflaum, 1970), p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>William A. Fore "The Church's Communication Task," in Communication--Learning for Churchmen, Vol. 1, ed. B. F. Jackson (New York: Abingdon, 1968), p. 86.

teaching might be the ideal method for carrying out the church's mission. The educational task of the church would be rather simple. It would use propaganda; conditioning methods; and printed, visual, and recorded materials over and over again. It is readily seen, however, that such a process and its effects would not be in keeping with the nature of the gospel, though communication efficiency is not alien to the purposes of the gospel.

Some objections are raised against the usage of audio-visual media in any setting, including preaching, on the grounds that the resulting communication bombardment and overload renders people susceptible to unethical persuasion through the private manipulation of those operating such media. As communication overload increases, it is claimed, the individual becomes so busy sorting out the various inputs that he increasingly becomes incapable of critical evaluation of these inputs. Overcommunication thus could tend to overwhelm the critical faculties so that persons might become incapable of protecting themselves. There is no doubt that Churchill's statement, "we shape our buildings, and they shape us," holds some equivalence for media as well. Research has, however, generally established that the human brain has a sort of built-in filtering mechanism that automatically excludes many communications as a result of people's pre-existing needs, drives, motives, values, and attitudes. In response to messages transmitted, the human brain seems to exercise a selective perception function, evidenced by selective exposure, selective

attention, selective retention, and selective response to such messages.<sup>1</sup>

The selectivity of human perception is also evidenced by the observation that in a congregational setting where audio-visual media are initially used with preaching, people might get little of the substance of the preaching because of the shock to their expectancies of the new mode of transmission. Clyde Fant makes an important distinction between shock and impact in communication.

Every sermon should ideally have an impact upon its hearers. Impact is the product of two forces, predictability and distance. . . . Impact is in inverse proportion to both: the greater the predictability and distance of a communication the lesser the impact. Too much predictability and too much distance causes a message to have zero impact; but too little predictability at point-black range can lead to communicative shock. . . . Shock in communication means that the level of impact has been raised to intolerable levels. The listener drops a barrier between himself and the speaker to prevent further communication. Hearing is no longer possible. The message itself is lost, because its impact stunned rather than motivated.<sup>2</sup>

If all a preacher cares for is impact, then he is likely to fall into the trap of misusing instructional media, and he may not always be able to discern the moment when communicative shock takes place. An illustration of a multi-media sermon which might shock most traditional churchgoers is found in the "sermon of the future" presented by Father Schillaci in 1968 to the Catholic Homiletic Society in Toronto. Five 16 mm motion picture projectors and four slide projectors were

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<sup>1</sup>The evidence of more than 400 studies in this area is summarized in James F. Engel, David T. Kollat, and Roger D. Blackwell, Consumer Behavior, rev. ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1973), pp. 209-26.

<sup>2</sup>Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), pp. 89, 91, 93.

used in a multi-screen presentation to speak on the "passion, death, and resurrection of man." Footage included Second World War combat scenes, bikini-clad girls, motorcycle gangs, and soldiers dying in Vietnam. Intermittently a slide projector flicked on a wall the question, "Why do things the hard way?" Major portions of the soundtrack consisted of the music and lyrics to "What the world needs now, is love, sweet love." Father Schillaci argued for the legitimacy of his presentation by saying that it was an attempt to reach "the whole man."<sup>1</sup> It thus becomes the responsibility of the preacher to seek to use only such media in preaching, and in such a manner, that the human powers of reason and reflection will neither be stunned, bypassed, or rendered inoperative.

While the use of audio-visual technology in preaching or teaching may carry with it dangers of unethical persuasion, it is to be noted also that ordinary speech, without any media, may also be unethical. Just because speech uses mainly words and operates primarily in the oral-auditory channel does not exempt it from ethical considerations. Johannesen makes the following pertinent observations regarding ordinary speaking situations:

When employing a tough style the speaker's tone is ego-centric, brow-beating, no-nonsense, domineering, curt, and covertly intimate, intense, and often omniscient. The sweet style, frequently found in advertisements, finds a speaker revealing attitudes of condescension, solicitousness, cuteness, and covert intimacy. A speaker in the stuffy style, with a message-centered orientation, shows toward the audience attitudes which are impersonal,<sup>2</sup> cold, standoffish, unfeeling, objective, and non-judgemental.

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<sup>1</sup>"The Audio-visual Sermon," Time 91 (26 April 1968):49.

<sup>2</sup>Johannesen, p. 53.



William F. Fore adds the following perspectives:

Communication through mass media is considerably more democratic than many person-to-person forms. The old platform days of oratory were hardly nonmanipulative, and neither is much of the person-to-person buttonholing of any generation. The person on the receiving end of mass media still has the option of turning off, tuning out, or throwing away. Though the mass media may manipulate persons, so may all other forms of communication, in which case distortion occurs regardless of the media.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the preacher who sells salvation, manipulates. The preacher who presents genuine values based on the Word of God and guides their exchange for the benefit of his hearers, merely motivates. Manipulation involves force; motivation is based on insight.<sup>2</sup>

To insure that the sermon does not degenerate into mere propaganda, there are two effects of propaganda that should be noted. First, the critical faculty is suppressed, and second, the technical processes of persuasion themselves become "sacred," that is, they become outside criticism, beyond themselves, and as ends in themselves. Thus, in Paul Tillich's terms, "technique becomes the object of ultimate concern, which is idolatry." This process is not often willfully planned by power-mad individuals. It is often simply the result of the laws of development of the technique itself.<sup>3</sup>

Basic to whether or not manipulation takes place in the communication process is one's view of man. If one operates from a behaviorist point of view, there is always the possibility that manipulation may take place. This point of view may see man as homo-

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<sup>1</sup>William F. Fore, "A Theological View of Communication," in Jackson, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Craig Skinner, The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1973), p. 109.

<sup>3</sup>William F. Fore, "Technology and Communication," in Jackson, p. 64.

mechanious, a machine the inner workings of which are not known.

Rather than being concerned with and speculating on what takes place in man, advocates of the behaviorist point of view may prefer to deal with the machine's input and output, stimuli and responses. In this way man is treated much like a robot or a programmable computer.

There is also the possibility that working wholly within a humanistic framework, the communicator may view man as homo-volens, where man's inner urges constitute the only reality; through satisfaction of these urges the communicator may manipulate behavior as well. Then man may also be viewed as homo-sapiens, man as a being attempting to realize the meaning and structure of the world around him; he acts as he does not solely because of his inner urges, but he is a rational cognitive creature, capable of perceiving and understanding, judging and deciding, on the basis of evidence.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that this latter view of man, coupled with the Judeo-Christian doctrine of man, would enable the preacher to engage in audio-visual media usage in the sermon with a minimum of risk of unethical manipulation of the listeners.

It is to be noted, however, that the responsibility for avoiding unethical persuasion is a joint responsibility to be shared between speaker and listener alike. The listeners must not become so absorbed in the audio-visual media themselves that they fail to reflect upon the ideas being presented as well. Some audio-visual media presentations would even seem to safeguard human freedom; in a

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<sup>1</sup>Abraham S. Luchins, "Implications of Gestalt Psychology for AV Learning," AV Communication Review 9 (September-October 1961):8, 9.

multi-screen approach, for example, the listener is forced to make his own choices and determine his own focus.

To say that preaching accompanied by audio-visual media is altogether without risks is far from the case. A new despotism is possible, for the predominance of sound and visual stimuli could lead to sensory overstimulation where the tyranny of "happenings" could replace a meaning culture with a sense culture. Furthermore, the use of multi-media could also swamp the listeners with information, creating a spectator-sport type of Christian preaching which eventually might result in passivity and apathy.<sup>1</sup> If, however, Christian proclamation of the gospel is to be effective, it must lead to something. The worst possible thing that could happen is that people might go away from preaching as if nothing had happened. If instructional media are used in preaching in order to arouse interest and hold attention, in order to clarify issues and heighten listener understanding and involvement with the message, and on the basis of such understanding and clarification of the message a listener says "no" to the gospel, then the preacher must respect this decision, for it has been intelligently, willfully, and deliberately made. If, on the other hand, a person never says "yes" or "no" to the claims of the gospel, and if his reasons for rejecting or ignoring it are because of the preacher's inept and inefficient way of transmitting the gospel, then that preacher is under solemn responsibility to both his God and his listener. The prime concern of the preacher must always be to communicate God's revealed truth in such a manner that

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<sup>1</sup>H. Kunzler, "Audio-visuals and Revelation," in Babin, pp. 66, 67.

God's word is amplified to the extent of making a clear understanding thereof possible. Audio-visual media thus could be used to facilitate such amplification and understanding of the message without which a listener would not truly be able to respond for or against the gospel.

The Application of Audio-visual Technology:  
Instructional Development

As has been noted earlier, it is not audio-visual media that in and of themselves accomplish the instructional objectives in a given communication situation. If this were the case, then the latest and best of audio-visual media and equipment would suffice. Audio-visual media only perform the tasks that people assign to them. No device, technique, material, or process is superior to another per se. Each has certain unique contributions that it can make to an instructional situation. Like any communication media, audio-visual materials must be selected with proper regard for the needs and abilities of both communicator and recipient. A communication medium, regardless of its nature, succeeds only when geared closely to the needs and abilities of those with whom communication is attempted. Hence, audio-visual media, like any other communication media, must be used properly by the communicator to achieve his purpose. No tool does its job unassisted; someone has to make certain that it starts its job and that it does its job satisfactorily.

A rather recent development in the educational field is "instructional development" or "instructional technology"--terms sometimes used interchangeably. A recent definition places these concepts in the following perspectives:

. . . instructional technology goes beyond any particular medium or device. In this sense, instructional technology is more than the sum of its parts. It is a systematic way of designing, carrying out, and evaluating the total process of learning in human learning and communication, and employing a combination of human and non-human resources to bring about more effective instruction.<sup>1</sup>

Instructional development, taken point by point and in the preferred order of occurrence, would require the communicator to look carefully at a model of a systems approach to learning (see fig. 4).<sup>2</sup>

According to this approach, the teacher must seek to: (1) define objectives and select content; (2) select appropriate learning experiences and seek, where possible, to individualize them; (3) select one or more appropriate formats in which to carry out the learning; (4) select physical facilities in which to carry on the learning experiences; (5) assign personnel roles; (6) choose appropriate materials and equipment; and (7) evaluate results and recommend future improvements.

An awareness of and an adherence to the steps of such a model could help prevent many unfortunate breakdowns in communication. Even though this model is primarily applicable to teaching, it could also be applied to evaluating certain aspects of the preaching task, regardless of whether or not audio-visual media are used. The preacher needs to ask himself, What goals am I seeking to reach through my preaching? What changes in behavior am I looking for,

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<sup>1</sup>To Improve Learning, A Report to the President and the Congress of the United States by the Committee on Instructional Technology (USGPO 40-7105), Washington, D.C., 1970, p. 5, cited in James W. Brown, Richard B. Lewish, and Fred F. Harcleroad, AV Instruction, Technology, Media, and Methods, 4th ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>Brown, Lewis, and Harcleroad, p. 4.

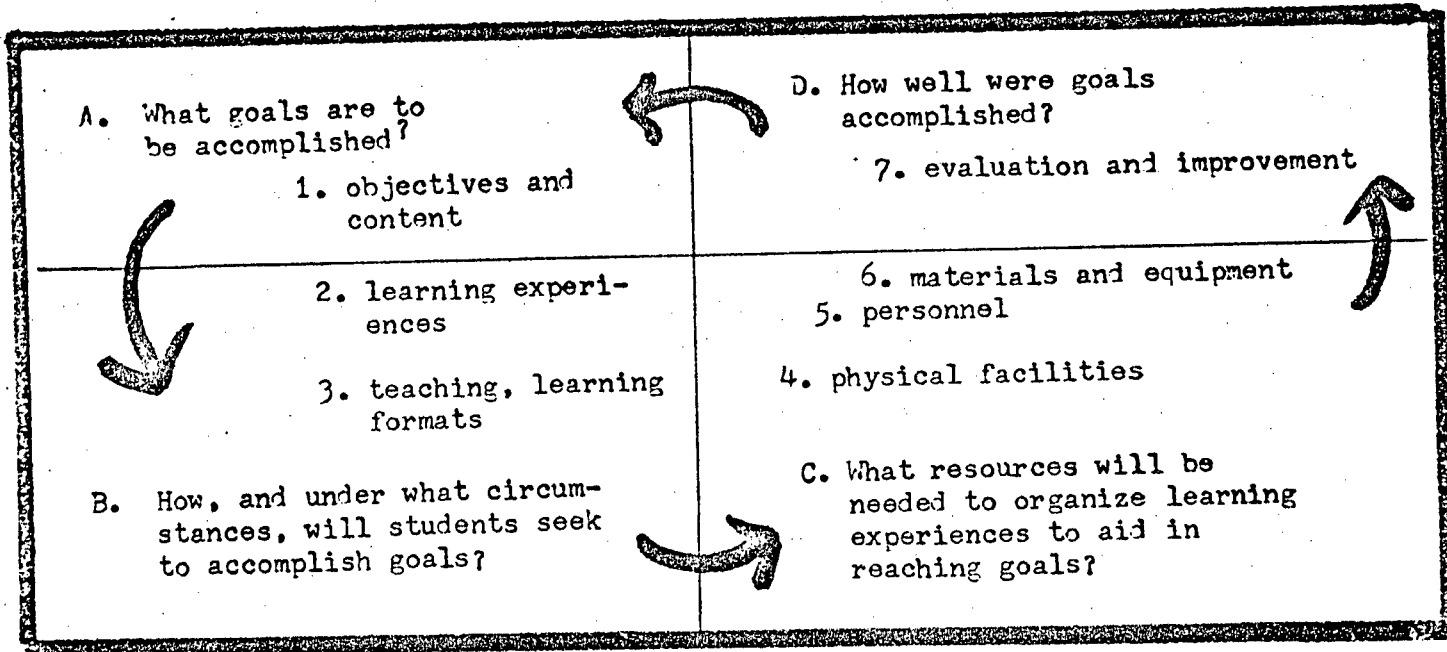


Fig. 4. Instructional development model

based on a prior faithful interpretation of the Scripture passage (s) under consideration? In order to assess and evaluate one's communicative endeavors, a breakdown of the goals of preaching into specific behavioral objectives may sometimes be necessary.

Another question of importance is: Do I possess sufficient awareness of the needs and problems of my listeners so that I will take such needs and problems into consideration in seeking to communicate effectively? Is the audience to which I am preaching composed predominantly of individuals of high verbal ability who will have little or no difficulty in following what I am saying? or are there those whose inadequate command of verbal communication skills would require the extensive use of audio-visual media? This is not to say that verbal communication is superior to audio-visual communication, for audio-visual media stand equal to other media of communication. One of their functions is to relieve the verbalistic load imposed by the spoken and written language. Effective communication sometimes requires the use of mass media less symbolic and more concrete than language, in order to make communication effective.

Based on the model of instructional development, there are other questions that could be asked by the preacher in order to improve learning and communication. Under what circumstances are my listeners to learn? What formats will be most helpful to them? Would it not be both proper and helpful to share with them the responsibility for the communicative successes of certain messages by assigning homework and making available before the sermon such resources and assignments that might facilitate the accomplishment of the objectives of the sermon? Is it not possible that the distribution of printed materials during,

before, or after the sermon would aid in its communication?

Are the physical facilities, in this case the church auditorium or sanctuary, conducive to learning? Do the pulpit and pew arrangements hinder or facilitate audience-preacher contact? Does the symbolism inherent in pulpit placement communicate that the sole function of the parishioners is passively to absorb ex-cathedra statements of the preacher? It is to be hoped that in the future church sanctuaries and auditoriums would be so designed to also permit the optimum utilization of certain appropriate audio-visual media. Could not the use of charts on the overhead projector, for instance, help involve the listener in the message by showing him the basic steps involved in the interpretation of a passage of Scripture? Thus he could become an active participator in the sermon rather than merely receiving the preacher's already finished product.

Does the preacher see himself as a transmitter of the Biblical message primarily, or is he also aware that the communication of that message must involve him as an expert arranger of learning experiences and formats? In this role the preacher could draw upon his professional insights and skills, including his sensitivity to the specific interests, needs, and abilities of his audience, and attempt to be alert to the many options available to him in choosing audio-visual media and learning resources that could aid in his preaching. Thus the preacher should seek to suit audio-visual media to fit the message, the learning objectives, and the needs of the audience. He should possess enough sensitivity not to attempt the use of audio-visual aids in auditoriums unsuited for projection. Also, he should be a master of various personal communication skills to the extent that he will not



insist that every sermon be accompanied by audio-visual media. It is to be hoped that he will be sufficiently comfortable in preaching without audio-visual media, so that preaching with such media does not become a crutch, enabling him only to perform with such aids.

How often, if ever, does the preacher evaluate the success and/or failure of his preaching? Here again the model of instructional development can be of invaluable aid in detecting areas of weakness and showing areas of strength. The usefulness of the systems approach lies in that it calls attention to the multiplicity of factors and interrelationships which may retard or facilitate communication. A systems analysis could help identify the weak elements in the communication process and thus be a first step in suggesting means of improvement. Increasingly the preacher must understand and respond to the total communication situation, for messages often fail in their objectives because some aspect of the total situation has been overlooked or ignored.

The ideal preaching situation can thus no longer be typified as "a preacher on one end of a log and a parishioner on the other." As the world becomes more complex, as the body of knowledge increases, as the mass media shape people's lives, preaching must respond to these changes without distorting the word of the gospel. Though preaching is not mere instruction, yet instruction is an integral part of the preaching process. Just as in the educational field the emphasis is shifting from teaching to learning, so in preaching the preacher must seek to become a professional resource person who, in the design and implementation of his sermons, not only communicates successfully but places upon his hearers a greater share of respon-

sibility for responding to a given message.

To efficiently use audio-visual media in the sermon requires the preacher to develop certain basic competencies. He needs to know the basic types of audio-visual media, their characteristics and capabilities. Second, he must know how to operate common media devices, such as various types of projectors and recorders. Third, he must know the sources of media materials which he can draw upon for sermon usage. Fourth, he must be able to produce many kinds of simple materials for use with audio-visual media. Fifth, the preacher must become skilled in the evaluation of media materials; he needs to develop personal criteria to aid him in this.<sup>1</sup>

It is easily seen, however, that much more than technical competencies for audio-visual media usage are needed. Babin has shown an awareness of this problem:

. . . far more exacting [than technical knowledge] is the creating of a script, the combining of sounds, pictures, and words which will be spiritually significant. Herein lies the real challenge, and such a task requires prophets rather than technicians, artists rather than logicians.<sup>2</sup>

What is needed are preachers who, if using audio-visual aids, can design the totality of their message to have maximum communication efficiency, without distorting "the faith once delivered."

#### Selected Audio-visual Media to Accompany Preaching

It is often tempting to use in preaching the audio-visual equipment that is technically the latest and best, but whose

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<sup>1</sup>For help in selection of prepared media materials, see Jeffrey Schrank, Media in Value Education--A Critical Guide (Chicago: Argus Communications, 1970).

<sup>2</sup>Babin, p. 53.

utilization may not necessarily be an aid to preaching. Furthermore, some audio-visual media may actually damage the proclamation of the message, because the preacher has not been trained in the proper technical operation of such media. Based on personal experience and experimentation with such media and a survey of the literature of the audio-visual field, the following recommendations are made regarding equipment found to be of value in preaching:

- (1) The equipment should be simple. It should not be so complex that, in case of breakdown, minor repairs could not be made or back-up systems be readily available. For instance, some of the multi-media and multi-screen presentations accompanying some sermons today are so complex in their operation that the breakdown of just one component could easily cancel the remainder of the presentation.
- (2) The audio-visual media should enable the preacher to utilize them in a manner supportive of his presentation; he should be able to operate them himself and not have to depend on other persons for the proper sequencing and switching of slides and/or transparencies.
- (3) Only media whose utilization will not significantly detract from and damage the sensitive preacher-audience relationship should be used. Hence, the use of audio-visual media requiring a darkened auditorium is discouraged.

There are two kinds of audio-visual equipment that meet most of the above-mentioned criteria. These two pieces of equipment are the overhead projector and the 35 mm slide projector.

The overhead projector provides the following advantages:

- (1) It can be used in a lighted auditorium, thus not hindering audience and preacher visual contact.
- (2) It is economical, ranging in

cost from about \$100 to about \$300. (3) It is easily serviced and, in case of possible breakdown, a back-up projector can be readily available. (4) The nonglare feature on many models makes it easier for the speaker to maintain visual contact with the audiences without eye-strain. (5) Transparencies for this projector can be prepared ahead of time by the speaker or can be made while speaking, thus allowing the preacher to use this projector much like a blackboard would be used--to write, to underline, to high-light, and to make points. (6) Action can be supplied by writing, pointing, and underlining with colors, or manipulating masks or overlays to capture and hold audience attention. (7) Production of transparencies is relatively inexpensive, costing about forty to fifty cents for Diazo or Thermofax transparencies. On ordinary transparency film, words and designs can readily be drawn or written with specially produced transparency markers for a cost of about three cents per transparency.<sup>1</sup> (8) Charts and diagrams used during a presentation can also be projected later for an almost instantaneous review and summary of material. The right screen and its proper placement is of great importance.

The other piece of projection equipment recommended is the 35 mm slide projector. To maintain good audience-speaker visual contact it is recommended that this projector be used only with a rear-projection screen, allowing the major portion of the auditorium to remain lighted. One problem encountered with rear-projection is that if the viewing angle of the audience is too large, people seated at

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<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the multiple ways in which overhead transparencies may be produced and used in teaching, see Brown, Lewis and Harclerod, pp. 116-41.

the peripheries of this angle may not only experience some difficulty in viewing the projection but may also lose some of its brilliance. This type of projector is also economical, ranging in price from \$80 to \$400. It is portable and easy for the speaker to operate by remote control. Many preachers might not wish to produce their own slides, though this is done occasionally. There are several commercial companies that specialize in producing high-quality slides of Scripture passages, Biblical scenes, charts of prophecies, Christian art, nature, and contemporary events that might profitably be used as aids in a sermon. One company offers the entire New Testament in either the King James Version or the Revised Standard Version on slides for about \$300.<sup>1</sup> For the preaching of doctrinal sermons, numerous texts might be required in the presentation, the projection of Scripture texts could be an invaluable aid in teaching. Many slide projectors can also be equipped with remote control for turning the projection lamp off and on thus aiding the audience in naturally shifting its attention from the screen to the preacher. While some teachers and preachers have advocated the use of special optical effects in projection, such as fades, dissolves, and wipes, research studies generally indicate that, as a rule, technical slickness does not aid in factual learning from a presentation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gospel Services, Inc., Houston, Texas.

<sup>2</sup>John Oliver Cook, "Visual Communication Principles," in Research, Principles, and Practices in Visual Communication, pp. 92, 102.

Summary

The literature of the audio-visual field generally indicates greater communication efficiency for such media than conventional methods of communication in terms of information processing and transmission. Though the exact gains in such information processing through audio-visual media are extremely variable, it can be said with a great degree of certainty that such gains are dependent on the particular application of such media to a given situation as determined by the communicator. To aid one in the skillful application of media to preaching, consideration of the model of "instructional development" can be of real value because it seeks to take into account all the factors in the total communication situation. To use audio-visual media in preaching responsibly, the preacher must also take into account the problems and issues of such media. Two such major issues concern the interpersonal relationship in communication and the ethics of human persuasion. It is not suggested that audio-visual media will solve all the problems of poor communication in preaching. What is suggested is that an awareness of both the strengths and weaknesses of audio-visual media guide and inform the preacher as he seeks to communicate more successfully through the sermon.

## CHAPTER IV

### DESCRIPTION OF PERSONAL PREACHING PRACTICE WITH AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA

The literature of the audio-visual field generally indicates greater communication efficiency for such media than conventional methods of communication. The literature also indicates that such efficiency is due not so much to the particular audio-visual media used as it is to the application of such media to the total communication process as determined by the communicator. Accordingly, because one important expectation of this project is the gaining of greater personal facility in the skillful and responsible application of audio-visual media to preaching, it is necessary to describe and reflect upon one's personal preaching practice with such media. The development of personal competencies in this area takes place not only through an acquaintance with the literature of the audio-visual field but also as the theological principles previously discussed are allowed to guide and inform one's personal preaching practice.

Because self-evaluation is necessary to accomplish this, there is always the danger that the personal involvement in the preaching task may hinder sound objectivity. It is vital, therefore, in order for such evaluation to be of lasting personal benefit, that some degree of professional detachment prevail. Any immersion of oneself in preaching exclusively with audio-visual media would prevent self-

observation from the vantage points of other more traditional methods of preaching. It may be of interest to note here that of the total number of sermons preached during the last twenty-four months (March 1975-March 1977), only 20 percent of them were accompanied by audio-visual media.

In order that this project report may be of not only personal benefit but also of value to preachers investigating the possible benefits of audio-visual preaching, the writer in this chapter will seek to: (1) review significant literature in the audio-visual field that can have a bearing on improved preaching practice with audio-visual aids, (2) describe and reflect upon personal preaching practice with audio-visual aids as it affects both sermon preparation and delivery, (3) assess and evaluate the congregational response to such preaching, and (4) draw some tentative conclusions suggesting areas for continued personal improvement of audio-visual preaching as well as suggesting areas where further research and study may help improve the efficiency of such preaching.

#### Review of Audio-visual Literature in Christian Education

As has been noted previously, although no clearcut unanimity exists in the audio-visual field as to how much information-transmission efficiency may be achieved through audio-visual media, there seems to be general agreement among most writers that some gains do occur. This is evidenced especially by the mushrooming application of audio-visual media in the armed forces, industry, advertising, and education. Insights, information, and principles from these areas have been used extensively in books discussing the application of



audio-visual aids to Christian education.

In a review of Christian audio-visual literature, no work discussing the application of audio-visual technology to preaching has been found. Whatever principles should govern such preaching practice must consequently be gleaned from audio-visual literature in education in general, and Christian education in particular. In audio-visual literature in Christian education it is to be noted that the majority of the works deal only with audio-visual aids from purely technological and pedagogical points of view. Many of these works offer only simplistic introductions to audio-visual aids for churchmen, information which could more profitably be obtained from such standard textbooks as James W. Brown, Richard B. Lewish, and Fred F. Harcleroad's AV Instruction, Technology, Media and Methods,<sup>1</sup> and Edgar Dale's Audio-visual Methods in Teaching.<sup>2</sup> One possible exception to this may be Gene A. Getz's Audio-visual Media in Christian Education,<sup>3</sup> which, since its first edition, has become a standard text in many Christian colleges, Bible institutes, and seminaries. Another exception is a three-volume work by B. J. Jackson, Jr., Learning for Churchmen,<sup>4</sup> which emphasizes the unique capabilities of various learning resources and communication media in a Christian setting.

Most of the works on audio-visual aids in Christian education offer only brief theological perspectives. The efficiency of such

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<sup>1</sup>Fourth ed., (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973).

<sup>2</sup>Third ed., (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>Rev. ed., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1972).

<sup>4</sup>(New York: Abingdon, 1968).

media in communication is often the sole justification referred to for their employment. Two notable exceptions to this are volume 1 of B. J. Jackson Jr. and Pierre Babin's The Audio-visual Man.<sup>1</sup> Jackson's work examines audio-visual communication not only in light of learning and communication theories but also includes a section devoted to a theology of communication.<sup>2</sup> This chapter reflects some dependence by the author upon H. Richard Niebuhr's The Meaning of Revelation. The significance of revelation for communication is "that it must be expressed in terms of self and of other selves--not in terms of abstractions, concepts, principles, arguments, or proofs all of which are part of external history."<sup>3</sup> Hence revelation and communication occurs, it is claimed, when the visible and "external" symbols are related to the invisible and "internal" experience of God's revelation to man. Revelation is, therefore, not possessed but only relived as an event. Because these revelatory moments are not supernatural or otherworldly, there is then nothing which cannot become a bearer of revelation whether it be nature, history, individuals, or the spoken or written word or symbol. The weakness of this view is that it lacks a norm for the judging of the content of such revelation. Babin's work takes a similar stance in that it points out that the great moments of Judeo-Christian revelation occurred not through printed or spoken words but through the kind of total experience which media try

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<sup>1</sup>Trans. by C. Balisle et al.

<sup>2</sup>William F. Fore, "A Theological View of Communication," in Jackson, 1:78-102.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 80.

to reproduce.<sup>1</sup> The danger of this position is that too much of the attention is centered on the man who is the recipient of the communication, an emphasis that tends to ignore the objectivity of revelation as found in the Scriptures. The value of both of these works lie in that they avoid an easy acceptance of audio-visual media for Christian educational purposes, and that they carefully attempt to examine (from a theological perspective) all the pertinent issues related to audio-visual usage.

A viewpoint that frequently occurs in many of the Christian education works on audio-visual aids is that if only some medium more efficient than words could be employed in communication, then the communication problems would be solved. This view is naive in that it fails to take into account other factors that hinder communication, such as strong socio-economic forces, man's innate sinfulness, and man's finiteness. Regardless of what media he uses, the preacher needs to remember that he will still be competing with other communication from the mass media.

#### Description of Personal Preaching Practice with Audio-visual Aids

In order to describe one's personal preaching with audio-visual aids, it is necessary to look at such practice in the context of one's entire preaching ministry. Such a description will, therefore, seek to deal with the factors that led to such preaching, as well as how using audio-visuals affects both sermon preparation and delivery.

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<sup>1</sup>Pierre Babin, "Is Audio-Visual Language Apt to Express Faith?" in Babin, pp. 33-54; and H. Kinzler, "Audio-visuals and Revelation," in Babin, pp. 55-68.

When this writer entered the pastoral ministry in the summer of 1967, it was with the firm conviction that Biblical preaching, particularly expository preaching, was important for the upbuilding and maintenance of the faith of the members of the church. During the first four years of pastoral ministry, while serving as an associate pastor of a large urban church with a membership of about 675, the writer's opportunities for preaching were limited to about once every month. An examination of the sermons preached during those years indicated that about 75 percent of them were of the expository kind. In the following four years, 1971-75, two suburban congregations with a combined membership of about 250 members were served. The proximity of the churches gave opportunity for preaching twice each Sabbath morning. The conviction that the spiritual health of the congregation rests to a large degree on what takes place in the weekly hour of worship demanded that considerable time be spent in careful planning and sermon preparation. Particular attention was given to proper exegesis and arrangement of the material to facilitate efficient communication with effective introductions and conclusions.

During those years it was naively expected that a large measure of spiritual growth would take place among the members of the congregations. Instead the apparent Biblical illiteracy of a great number of members of the congregations was discovered. This illiteracy was evidenced by the various degrees of ignorance of the members in regard to the great truths of the Christian faith and, more particularly, of the distinctive beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist faith. These conclusions gradually arose from interviews, conversations, and visits among the members. The majority of these people were not new

Christians. Many of them practiced rigorously the various externals that to some give evidence of conversion experience, such as tithing, carefulness in Sabbath-keeping, and health practices. It was also discovered that many of these individuals were able to cite rather ably the tenets of their faith but were unable to give Biblical and other reasons for their faith. While it may be true that success in Christian living cannot always be measured by the amount of objective Biblical knowledge possessed by the parishioners, yet the lack of such knowledge might indicate that a breakdown in the communication of the faith from pulpit to pew had taken place. For instance, on several occasions when attempts were made to recruit volunteers to engage in home-to-home Bible studies and other witnessing activities, a predominant reason for refusal was "I don't know what I believe." It is recognized that such statements may merely be cover-ups for reluctance, fear, insecurity, and lack of Christian commitment.

It was in light of this background that serious consideration was given to improving pulpit-pew communication. A blackboard was used on one occasion to help amplify and clarify the message. The first extensive attempt at using audio-visual aids in preaching took place in April 1972, when a series of evangelistic meetings (3 weeks duration, 18 evenings) were presented. To help amplify the message and to facilitate learning, a rear-projection screen was used upon which various Scripture texts, illustrations, and prophetic charts were projected. The contents of the sermons were evangelistic, including not only the great tenets of the Christian faith but also the distinctive doctrines of Seventh-day Adventists.

No particular systematic attempt was made at that time to

assess the effectiveness of those sermons. Comments from the audience were few and generally seemed to indicate some boredom with it all, typified by such remarks as, "Oh well, we've seen that before." Conversations with the parishioners seemed to indicate no significant reaction for or against audio-visual usage in the sermon. This is probably because Seventh-day Adventists have traditionally used audio-visual aids in evangelism. It is of interest to note here that two years previous to this series of meetings, a visiting evangelist had conducted meetings in the same congregation and had relied heavily on the use of slides in the presentation of the sermons. After attending two of those meetings, a strong personal reaction was experienced against the use of audio-visual aids. This was primarily due to the fact that the slides were shown in a totally darkened auditorium with an almost total absence of audience-speaker visual contact. Furthermore, in the sermon it seemed that the audio-visual aids were central to the communication process with the spoken word taking on the form of rather redundant "editorial comment," a procedure that at times seemed to be insulting to the audience in its pedantry. Yet the writer's own preaching experience with audio-visual aids was also one of disappointment and frustration, compounded by technical difficulties, lack of proper equipment, the limited number of slides available, as well as lack of personal audio-visual skills.

During the next three years of ministry very few audio-visual aids were used in sermons. The only exceptions were the weekly mid-week prayer meetings where the informality of the setting on occasion lent itself to the use of a blackboard. Because of the previously experienced disappointments and frustrations, very little thought was

given to making extensive use of audio-visual aids in preaching. This was changed, however, due to attendance in 1973 at the Seminar in Basic Youth Conflicts conducted in Detroit's Cobo Hall by William Gothard. The basic audio-visual tool used by the preacher-instructor was the overhead projector. The lectures were continually accompanied by prepared overhead projection charts showing outlines of the lecture, relationships, a breakdown of the message into its component parts, and the practical applicability of each segment to actual living. The experience of attending these lectures resulted in a renewed personal involvement in the presentation of each message, particularly in the areas of comprehension and attention.

While Gothard's success as a Christian communicator may not be due strictly to his use of audio-visual media, yet a certain undeniable dynamic is present in his message. In judging and evaluating his lectures, it is, therefore, well nigh impossible to separate the role of the audio-visual medium from the remainder of his presentation. Because of the speed with which the lecture proceeds and the desire of the listeners to take notes on as much as possible, personal reflection on and digestion of the material become rather minimal, leaving opportunity for such reflection to take place at a later time. The danger of lock-step logic is also present. On occasion, in his eagerness to give "practical steps of action," exegetical principles are minimized. This is not to say that Gothard has not done his exegetical homework but only that, in his desire to communicate, such principles are occasionally overlooked. This is seen particularly in that the application of a text to a life situation often seems to be of greater importance than an understanding of what the text says on

its own terms. While this problem is not due to the audio-visual medium used, the use of audio-visual media only amplifies the problem.

Although the lectures are not in the style of preaching, yet as a result of Gothard's application of audio-visual media to instruction, the possibility of using such media in preaching was considered. It is difficult to deny that audio-visual media play an important role in the success of Gothard's presentations, and though Gothard on occasion ignores the standard rules for such audio-visual presentations, he does it with success. Motivated by the Seminar in Basic Youth Conflicts the writer laid plans for using audio-visual media in another series of evangelistic meetings.

These meetings were held in the spring of 1975 in another congregation, but the audience attending was largely the same as had attended the previous series of evangelistic meetings. The audio-visual equipment consisted of the following: a 35 mm slide projector, projection illustrations, charts, and Bible texts on a rear projection screen to the right of the speaker; and an overhead projector (front projection) located to the left of the speaker. All speaking was done from a lectern below the pulpit. Sensing that the traditional Seventh-day Adventist schedule of twenty-two evenings of sermons in twenty-two days might be a bit heavy as well as demanding on people's time and schedules, the speaker decided to seek not only for information-transmission efficiency through audio-visual usage but also for possible condensation of the material. As a result the number of meetings was reduced from twenty-two to thirteen without significant reductions in material. To bring further reinforcement



to the learning situation, printed materials complementary to each evening's sermon was distributed at the close of the sermon.

The sermon presentation proceeded as follows: During each sermon Bible texts were continually displayed in a predetermined sequence on the rear-projection screen. Many of the texts used were traditional "proof-texts." Along with this, the overhead projector was used to make running-commentary diagrams, charts, et cetera, to show the logical sequential development of each doctrine and its relationship to both the overall plan of salvation and practical living. All the equipment was remotely controlled and operated by the speaker.

While no official survey was conducted, some degree of positive reaction in regard to this type of presentation was soon perceived. Some of the comments that were overheard were "It kept my attention" and "It was a real learning experience." Another pastor commented, "You covered, through this method, more than twice the amount of material an ordinary sermon would dare tackle. Yet, I did not feel the least bit rushed." A middle-aged parishioner, member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for about twenty-five years, said, "I never realized that the Adventist message was this simple." It is to be recognized that such comments are by no means conclusive in regard to audience reaction and communication success. However, in the absence of a proper questionnaire at the time, it was the only way that those sermons could have been evaluated. Another piece of evidence indicating efficiency of information transmission came from a group of about six to eight deaf-mutes that attended the meetings on an almost nightly basis. Though they were aided by an interpreter,

they definitely expressed gratitude for the employment of audio-visual media in helping them receive the message.

#### Audio-visual Sermon Preparation

Audio-visual preaching is by no means exempt from the rigorous work of sermon preparation. Because of the nature of such sermons employing multi-channel communication, often more preparation and forethought is needed.

In the evangelistic meetings where audio-visual media were used, no attempt was made to build entirely new sermons. Rather, the messages were the traditional subjects that are often included in traditional Seventh-day Adventist evangelism. In constructing audio-visual sermons, the limitations of software must be taken into account. For the sermons preached in the evangelistic meetings the writer had available in his library about 750-800 slides, mostly Scripture texts. The basic tool in sermon preparation became a slide sorter on which the slides were arranged in various sequences until the best sequence was found. It is recognized that some adaptation of material was made in order to do the task with the existing software. Whereas some homiletical purists might insist that such a practice is irresponsible and that aids should fit the sermon, not visa versa, this writer recognizes and suggests that in audio-visual sermons some adaptations and compromises nearly always must be made. This is not to say that the presentations were exempt from exegetical scrutiny, but only that concern for efficient communication was coupled with an equal concern for proper exegesis and interpretation of a passage. Other limitations in the construction of audio-visual

sermons arise from the cost of slides and the suitability of art work. Certain slides and pictures of unusually poor artistic quality should no doubt be rejected because they draw attention to the medium and thus only very poorly communicate the message.<sup>1</sup>

In audio-visual sermons, the temptation also arises to use a large number of Scripture slides. While it is true that as many as thirty to forty slides can be used in about thirty-five to forty minutes without unduly rushing people, the continual "bombardment" of text upon text without the variety of other slides could also hinder efficient communication and make the sermon come across as a mere information-transmitting process.

In the preparation of audio-visual sermons, the preacher should adhere to the same rules that guide the preparation of ordinary sermons. Audio-visual preaching is by no means exempt from those rules. However, when adaptations are made to fit a certain message to a certain audience and within the limitations of available audio-visual software, such adaptations should not always be looked upon as undesirable compromises. The preacher must always be sure that such compromises do not violate the content of the Scriptures, nor the ethics of human persuasion.

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<sup>1</sup>Babin makes the following pertinent observation in regard to this: "The relationship between art and audio-visuals is a problematic one. It is very important to maintain the aesthetic requirements of audio-visual media, but it is also important to relativize the aesthetic criteria in catechetical audio-visuals. When addressing a group of scholars, the speaker must be very careful about the quality and correctness of his language. When speaking to a group of young people, repetition, and minor grammatical errors may be aids to communication. This applies to audio-visual catecheses: if they are for the general public, their quality need not be the kind required for a film club. The primary criterion of audio-visual language is that it communicate." p. 41

## Audio-visual Sermon Delivery

The delivery of audio-visual sermons can be a frustrating as well as a rewarding experience. On the first evening of the evangelistic meetings when this writer attempted to operate two projectors simultaneously and to stay close to his notes, a great deal of frustration was experienced. The dividing of the attention between manuscript, audience, and media operation proved to be an unnerving experience that led to the discarding of a complete manuscript in later sermons. Instead, a card with a list of the slides in their sequence along with minimal guiding comments was used. As facility was gained in the technical operation of the media, the writer went back to the discipline of writing a sermon manuscript that combined word and pictures into a single powerful combination. As greater facility was gained and more technical know-how was acquired, a new freedom was experienced as it was sensed that the entire burden for successful communication no longer rested on the spoken word. This was especially the case in the explanation of prophecies. Furthermore, as audio-visual aids were employed they kept the sermon moving and on target. In doctrinal sermons where a great number of Bible texts are used, the freedom of not having to turn from text to text was experienced. Often in evangelistic sermons, the listeners are asked to participate in a Scripture-finding marathon which many times leads to frustration because of their inability to find the texts quickly enough. With this burden removed from both preacher and audience, there was greater opportunity to give attention to feedback perceived by noting audience reaction to the message communicated.

In sermon delivery there is the danger that the spoken word

may take on the form of redundant editorial comment of what takes place on the screen. While the screen, as far as size is concerned, may appear to be central in the communication process, the preacher must carefully tailor its usage to insure that the spoken word does not become secondary. Furthermore, in the preparation and delivery of audio-visual sermons, the danger exists that the preacher may fail to develop personal language and verbal skills. Though a picture may be worth a thousand words, language is equally powerful if properly used and thoughtfully constructed. What is sought in audio-visual preaching is the combination of both words and pictures into a single powerful medium.

While audio-visual media may distort Scripture, it is also possible that such media may amplify Scripture in a more prominent way without damaging the concept of "truth through personality." As the Scriptures are allowed to speak for themselves, on their own terms, through their projection on the screen, they are not as liable to whatever distortions may arise through the human channel. On the other hand, this may also be undesirable and carry with it certain dangers in that the sermon may become so message and content oriented that the importance of the personal relationship in persuasion is overlooked. Yet the Word must be allowed to speak for itself, sometimes with only a minimum of interpretative and facilitative comment. Through the employment of audio-visual aids in preaching, this writer has gradually come to trust the inherent power of the Word and not just his "pulpit-power personality," and other persuasive techniques, to elicit a response from the listeners.

Anyone wanting to use audio-visual media in preaching must be

willing to live with these tensions. The preacher must be willing to see that the Holy Spirit works not only in the area of "truth through personality" but also influences the arrangement and development of his material in a manner most facilitative of efficient communication and learning. As in ordinary preaching, each succeeding sermon becomes a basis for continued development of new competencies and self-analysis toward improvement. The preaching of sermons with audio-visual aids has made this preacher realize that preaching is a process, and that as such it must be under the continual guidance of the Spirit of God to insure that each step of that process, from text to congregation, is Spirit led.

#### Evaluation of Congregational Response to Audio-visual Preaching

In June of 1975 this writer assumed the pastorate of a congregation of about 153 members. In the period of June 1975 to March 1977, audio-visual technology was used in many of the Sabbath morning worship sermons. In that period, approximately 20 percent of the sermons were accompanied by audio-visual aids. This gives some assurance that audience reactions were not based solely on the innovative nature of such sermons.

Since only members who had some exposure to audio-visual sermons could be expected to give valid responses to a questionnaire, it was decided to mail questionnaires only to those members who attended on a fairly regular basis (75 percent of the time).

The questionnaire (see appendix) consisting of eleven questions was designed by the author. The questions used were those felt to be significant in dealing not only with information transmission

efficiency but also various other issues. To insure the reliability of the questions, further refinement of the wording of the questions took place through consultation with several seminary students.

A total of seventy-eight questionnaires was mailed with an accompanying letter (see appendix). Within three weeks seventy-three recipients had responded (93.6%). An analysis of these seventy-eight individuals indicates the following:

On the educational level, 2.8% had completed high school or had an education less than high school; 38.4% had completed some college work; 23.1% had completed college; and 16.7% were engaged in graduate work or had completed such work.

Concerning ages, there were 46.1% between the ages of 15-30 years; 34.6% between 31-50 years, and 19.2% above 51 years of age.

Sex was evenly divided.

The extent to which these individuals were exposed to audio-visual sermons is as follows:

Four had listened to such sermons in this church in evangelistic meetings; sixty-seven had listened to such sermons in this church in the Sabbath morning sermons; forty-one had listened to such sermons in evangelistic meetings in other churches; and five did not respond to this question. Because some overlapping occurs here, it is of interest to note that three individuals reported they had listened to audio-visual sermons in all four locations and circumstances, and thirty-one had listened to such sermons both in Sabbath morning sermons in this church as well as in evangelistic meetings in other churches.

Questions 1 through 3 were designed to check the kind of

information-transmission efficiency that occurred as perceived by the listeners. The results (stated in percentages) are as follows:

When audio-visual aids are used in the sermon:

- (1) Does your learning of Bible facts, information, and concepts seem to

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>20.5%</u> | increase greatly      |
| <u>61.6%</u> | increase some         |
| <u>16.4%</u> | remain about the same |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | decrease some         |
| _____        | decrease greatly?     |

- (2) Does your attention during the sermon seem to

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>31.5%</u> | increase greatly      |
| <u>39.7%</u> | increase some         |
| <u>26. %</u> | remain about the same |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | decrease some         |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | decrease greatly?     |

- (3) Does your understanding of the message seem to

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>24.7%</u> | increase greatly      |
| <u>45.2%</u> | increase some         |
| <u>26. %</u> | remain about the same |
| <u>4.1%</u>  | decrease some         |
| _____        | decrease greatly?     |

The opportunity to respond in writing to an open-ended question (number 11) brought the following responses that have a bearing on information transmission:

Respondent #1: I think children and young people are more attentive when visual aids are used.

Respondent #5: Your sermons are good without audio-visuals but if it is a sermon where you have dates, etc. it is good to have it [aids].

Respondent #15: The effectiveness of visual aids can be greatly increased if the slides are chosen to fit the message, not a message formulated to use available slides.

Respondent #21: As much as I benefit from audio-visual aids, I think they are most beneficial on difficult concepts and aren't necessary all the time. I definitely benefited from audio-visual aids during sermons on the "spiritual gifts" you gave.



Christian message, and yet to object to use the best of recent research in arriving at a proper presentation of the Christian message?<sup>1</sup>

Hence, an equal emphasis on both theology and methodology should not be looked upon as abandonment of the task of the proclamation of the gospel, but rather as proper recognition of the reality of the man, his nature and needs, to whom the gospel is addressed in order to choose appropriate media for the transmission of the faith. This calls for willingness on the part of the preacher to experiment and adjust the shape of sermons to arrive at forms that facilitate efficient communication. However, to ascertain that such adjustment is responsible, methodology should be informed to some degree by theology.

It is, therefore, the task of this chapter to arrive at a theology that may guide the possible usage of audio-visual aids in preaching. Accordingly, this chapter will deal with the following: (1) the nature of Old Testament communication, with particular attention to the multiple factors of communication involved; (2) the communication of the gospel in the New Testament, particularly through teaching and preaching; (3) various views on the nature of preaching; and (4) Biblically informed theological principles, derived from the preceding studies, that may guide the application of audio-visual media in preaching.

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<sup>1</sup>Clyde E. Fant, Preaching for Today (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 50.

Respondent #23: I believe the use of audio-visual aids too much will tend to become monotonous, but used correctly it can be very effective.

Respondent #26: The aids help out where some people are slow in looking up the Bible texts . . . also with appropriate pictures the sermon is more vivid and interesting.

Respondent #27: It keeps the attention of the children and youth focused on the sermon. I personally enjoy any of your sermons.

Respondent #37: I think that they help me the most in remembering the texts . . . and I do like them [the aids] and I do feel they are very helpful. I find them a bit more lively although not enough so to detract from the sermon or make it not suitable for Sabbath. As a new Christian I am open to just about every technique there is to soaking up what I can in learning about God; this is one of the easiest and I appreciate it.

Respondent #39: Because of my lack of knowledge, at times, I have a hard time in following the sermon usually. But they [the audio-visual aids] help a lot to explain the sermon to me.

Respondent #48: Properly used it helps to coordinate the message and get the overall dimensions in proper perspective.

Respondent #50: Audio-visuals aids in which Bible texts and pictures were used were extremely helpful in seeing Scripture . . . calls forth more response in me than just hearing it. I use my Bible but in looking up texts sometimes I miss other important points.

Respondent #57: I am sure that for the young people, a-v-aids etc. sometimes could be a great help.

Respondent #60: I think it helps a lot. Sometimes when you are referring to scriptures and it goes so fast from one to another one, I can see them on the screen and write the scripture down and then refer to it later on.

Respondent #63: Can be very useful. People pay closer attention.

Respondent #67: The biggest advantage of the slides in my opinion is that the key texts are right there and I don't lose my concentration looking up texts.

Respondent #68: I feel that not only is the use of audio-visual aids helpful for adults, but also for the children. Many are more interested when there are pictures on the screen . . . too many children either talk or play or read during the sermon. Their attention is not easily held by just a sermon.

Respondent #69: I think they are very helpful in getting the message across. They are helping in holding the attention of everyone.

Respondent #71: Seeing the Bible texts greatly assist my remembering them. I think it is vital.

The responses to question #4 were as follows:

- (4) Do you feel more motivated to decision and application of the message of the sermon in your personal experience?

|              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| <u>15.1%</u> | very much   |
| <u>47.9%</u> | somewhat    |
| <u>15.1%</u> | very little |
| <u>9.6%</u>  | not at all  |
| <u>12.3%</u> | uncertain   |

The responses to question #5 were as follows:

- (5) Do you experience any difficulty or confusion by having to shift eye-contact continuously from the preacher to screen and visa versa?

|              |                            |
|--------------|----------------------------|
| <u>2.7%</u>  | a great deal of difficulty |
| <u>11. %</u> | some difficulty            |
| <u>20.5%</u> | little difficulty          |
| <u>64.4%</u> | no difficulty              |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | uncertain                  |

The following written responses show a bearing on this question:

Respondent #40: Sometimes I feel the screen is a little distracting from the sermon.

Respondent #53: Seems that change in eye-contact makes it easier to keep attention focused on what is being said.

Respondent #57: At the same time having the screen right there divides my attention between the pastor and it. I sometimes find that I get the most out of the sermon when I close my eyes and focus my concentration on what is being said.

The responses to question #6 were as follows:

- (6) In your experience, does the use of audio-visual aids and equipment in the worship hour sermon seem to detract from the sacredness of the sanctuary and the hour of worship?

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| <u>1.4%</u>  | a great deal |
| <u>13.7%</u> | somewhat     |
| <u>13.7%</u> | very little  |
| <u>67.1%</u> | not at all   |
| <u>4.1%</u>  | not sure     |

Several responded in writing in regard to this:

Respondent #4: I prefer audio-visual only for evangelistic meetings. I feel it detracts from the sacredness of the Sabbath sermon. This is just my personal view. Nothing against the pastor.

Respondent #32: I have some personal reservations about the use of audio-visuals in the worship hour (perhaps because of custom). I see advantages in their use for evangelistic meetings.

Respondent #70: I question the carryover of a "TV attitude" when viewing av aids, e.g. the amount and quality of concentration put forth. . . . Do A.V. aids perpetuate the "standard-Western-way-of-church"--that is, "let's all sit here and watch one person or one thing turn us on."--Is there less involvement with a.v. than there already is?

The responses to question #7, indicating the overall attitude toward audio-visual sermons, were as follows:

(7) Please indicate your general reaction to sermons in which audio-visual aids are used.

|              |                  |
|--------------|------------------|
| <u>24.7%</u> | very favorable   |
| <u>58.9%</u> | favorable        |
| <u>4.1%</u>  | unfavorable      |
| <u>2.7%</u>  | very unfavorable |
| <u>8.2%</u>  | not sure         |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | (no response)    |

The following may help illuminate some of the reasons for unfavorable responses, as well as favorable responses:

Respondent #8: I think my unfavorable impression is a manifestation of my conservative nature. Since it's new I'm not for it, but I think it helps, so keep it up.

Respondent #51: As with anything, balance is the key.

Respondent #63: Such sermons are unique and people shouldn't get too used to them or they can't listen to a sermon without them.

Respondent #67: I think they are good for a change of pace.

Respondent #12. Visitors to our church have commented that they enjoyed the sermon with audio-visual aids.

The responses to question #8 were as follows:

## (8) "I wish we had sermons with audio-visual aids:"

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| <u>21.9%</u> | more often            |
| <u>64.4%</u> | about the same as now |
| <u>5.5%</u>  | less often            |
| <u>4.1%</u>  | not at all            |
| <u>4.1%</u>  | (no response)         |

In the four months preceding this questionnaire, audio-visual sermons had been used in about 20 percent of the sermons. Some responses having a bearing on this are as follows:

Respondent #73: I like audio-visual aids in sermons but would not like them every week.

Respondent #18: They might be less effective if they were overused.

The responses to question #9 were as follows:

(9) Does the use of audio-visual aids make you feel that the sermon came across to you less as a sermon and more as a lecture?

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| <u>8.2%</u>  | very much     |
| <u>24.7%</u> | somewhat      |
| <u>16.4%</u> | very little   |
| <u>39.7%</u> | not at all    |
| <u>9.6%</u>  | not sure      |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | (no response) |

Respondent #50: The sermons coming across as a lecture is perhaps a carryover from school where audio-visual aids are also used.

Respondent #72: In regard to #9, it all depends on how the sermon is presented. I have seen it both ways.

The following responses were made to question #10:

## (10) Does the use of audio-visual aids in the sermon seem to detract from the persuasive power of the preacher as a person?

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| <u>2.7%</u>  | a great deal  |
| <u>15.1%</u> | somewhat      |
| <u>26.0%</u> | very little   |
| <u>50.7%</u> | not at all    |
| <u>4.1%</u>  | not sure      |
| <u>1.4%</u>  | (no response) |

Some responses in regard to this are as follows:

Respondent #52: Referring to question #10 I feel that the use of av aids does not detract from the message but does serve to de-emphasize the preacher.

Respondent #74: I found the pastor's sermons among the best I have every heard but when done audio-visually it loses a personal quality which is a tremendous strength in his ministry.

Altogether, 50 percent of the respondents wrote out personal comments in regard to the use of audio-visual aids in sermons. Some responses seemed to indicate a preference for the overhead projector over the slide projector, or visa versa.

Respondent #10: The writing with a felt-tip pen on the overhead transparency seems to be distracting. . . . I prefer slides of good quality.

Respondent #20: Some of the slides selected are too dark and are shifted too frequently. I would be interested in seeing you try using a.v. aids other than scripture slides, such as the overhead projector illustrating relationships . . . perhaps this would help making your excellent sermons more personal.

Respondent #53: Appreciate use of overhead projector and diagrams more than use of slide texts.

Respondent #61: Prefer overhead projector to slides because the outline requires you to keep up with the whole sermon rather than just catching parts of it.

Other responses indicated a variety of other concerns:

Respondent #2: Audio-visual sermons take more time and organization; therefore the content seems to be well thought out.

Respondent #3: Audio-visual aids in a sermon can be a cover-up for preachers who don't have good delivery or lack of knowledge on the subject.

Respondent #14: There is a greater need to check the accuracy of the slides--1 Jn 4:17 should have been 1 Jn 5:17.

Respondent #63: AV sermons are most helpful if they are original, not a program someone else has worked up. The sermon of April 16 was particularly good with the AV.

The above-mentioned responses taken in conjunction with the results of the survey seem to indicate that among the particular group

surveyed a great deal of benefit was derived from the use of audio-visual aids in preaching. Unfavorable responses to the media seemed to be minimal. While a sizeable majority of the individuals surveyed seemed to benefit from as well as enjoy these sermons, the survey also strongly indicates that audio-visual media should not be overused. For this reason pastors need to carefully custom design each such sermon, taking into consideration not only the message but the characteristics of his audience.

### Conclusions

The time and effort spent in the study of communication, especially preaching with audio-visual aids, has shown the complexity of the multiple factors that are at work in any communication situation, and there is little doubt that an awareness of these factors can be of immense help in the improvement of personal preaching practice, regardless of whether audio-visual aids are used or not.

When this study was first undertaken it was with the writer's conviction, perhaps premature, that audio-visual aids are very significant in developing greater communication efficiency. However, this study has shown that while audio-visual aids may improve communication efficiency, so may also a host of other factors that are often overlooked. Some of the more noteworthy of these are the interpersonal relationships, nonverbal communication, and the power of the spoken word. Even though the legitimacy and efficiency of audio-visual aids in communication have been established, this study has also helped bring about a realization that, in human communication, no one factor works in isolation from others, and an awareness

of the close relationship between the various channels of communication should definitely be taken into account.

In regard to the employment and application of audio-visual aids in preaching, this study, along with the accompanying survey, has indicated several areas where continued personal improvement of such preaching practice could be profitably conducted. The emphasis upon efficient communication should by no means overshadow the importance of correctly interpreting Scripture through the various tools available. No matter how efficient the communication of the sermon may be, unless the content of such communication has its foundation in a "Thus said the Lord" as found in the Scriptures, efficiency of communication is not of much value. Furthermore, the preacher must remember that regardless of how efficient his communication becomes, from a human point of view, he must still trust the power of the Spirit in bringing about a faith response among the listeners. Efficiency in communication is thus not alien to the purposes of the gospel, but such efficiency must be built on more than mere human devisings. It is therefore vital that in all his efforts of communication, from text to message to pew, the preacher realize the importance of submission to the Spirit, without whose aid all his communication will be in vain.

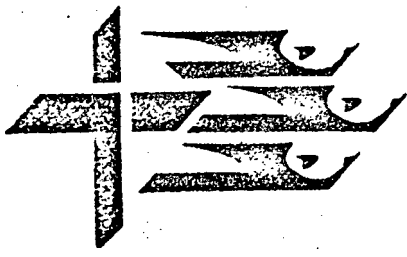
Though this study has shown some degree of favorable response to audio-visual preaching among the members of the particular congregation surveyed, a study should be given to the relationship of such factors as educational level, age, and television-watching habits and to the benefits gained by the listeners from audio-visual preaching.

Although this study supports the use of audio-visual



preaching, its real value for this writer lies in that awareness which it has brought concerning the complexity of the multiple factors at play in human communication. Such an awareness is basic for the improvement of all communication and should guard one from one of the greatest illusions in communication, namely the assumption that it has taken place.

## APPENDIX



# Seventh-day Adventist Church

8557 STEVENSVILLE - BARODA RD... STEVENSVILLE, MICH 49127

April 15, 1977

Dear Friend:

In an attempt to evaluate sermons in the Stevensville Church, I would appreciate your assistance in responding to the enclosed questionnaire. Please do so as soon as possible.

With this letter you will find two stamps. One is affixed as postage on the enclosed, pre-addressed envelope, in which you may mail back your responses. The other stamp is for you for your help in this project. If there are several questionnaires for other members of your household, please return them all together in the same envelope.

Your help in this project is genuinely appreciated. Thank you again for your assistance.

Very sincerely yours,

Ervin K. Thomsen, PASTOR

Questionnaire on Audio-Visual Aids in Sermons

You are asked to respond to what you perceive to have been your experience as you may have listened to sermons in which projected audio-visual aids (slides, Scripture slides, overhead projection charts, etc.) have been used. Mark your answers ✓. Check as many as apply.

"I have listened to sermons in which audio-visual aids were used:"

- in evangelistic meetings in this church  
 in the Sabbath morning sermons in this church  
 in evangelistic meetings in other churches  
 in the Sabbath morning sermons in other churches  
 never listened to such sermons

In comparing your impressions of sermons in which audio-visual aids were used with sermons where such audio-visual aids were not used, mark (✓) what you perceive to most closely represent your experience.

When audio-visual aids are used in the sermon:

- (1) does your learning of Bible facts, information, and concepts seem to
- increase greatly  
 increase some  
 remain about the same  
 decrease some  
 decrease greatly ?
- (2) does your attention during the sermon seem to
- increase greatly  
 increase some  
 remain about the same  
 decrease some  
 decrease greatly ?
- (3) does your understanding of the message seem to
- increase greatly  
 increase some  
 remain about the same  
 decrease some  
 decrease greatly ?
- (4) do you feel more motivated to decision and application of the message of the sermon in your personal experience
- very much  
 somewhat  
 very little  
 not at all  
 uncertain
- (5) do you experience any difficulty or confusion by having to shift eye-contact continuously from the preacher to the screen and visa versa?
- a great deal of difficulty  
 some difficulty  
 little difficulty  
 no difficulty  
 uncertain

----- (over)

- (6) In your experience, does the use of audio-visual aids and equipment in the worship hour sermon seem to detract from the sacredness of the sanctuary and the hour of worship?
- a great deal  
 somewhat  
 very little  
 not at all  
 not sure
- (7) Please indicate your general reaction to sermons in which audio-visual aids are used.
- very favorable  
 favorable  
 unfavorable  
 very unfavorable  
 not sure
- (8) "I wish we had sermons with audio-visual aids:"
- more often  
 about the same as now  
 less often  
 not at all
- (9) Does the use of audio-visual aids make you feel that the sermon came across to you less as a sermon and more as a lecture?
- very much  
 somewhat  
 very little  
 not at all  
 not sure
- (10) Does the use of audio-visual aids in the sermon seem to detract from the persuasive power of the preacher as a person?
- a great deal  
 somewhat  
 very little  
 not at all  
 not sure
- (11) Please write out any other comments and/or observations (positive or negative) that you may have regarding the use of audio-visual aids in sermons:

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## VITAE SHEET

Born in Denmark, June 16, 1942, Ervin K. Thomsen also received his elementary and secondary education there. After immigrating to the United States with his parents in 1959, he completed high school at Battle Creek Academy in 1960. Except for one year spent at Newbold College in England, he attended Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan for six years and received three degrees from that institution: Bachelor of Arts in theology, 1964, from the College of Arts and Sciences; Master of Arts in theology and Christian philosophy, 1966, from the School of Graduate studies; and Bachelor of Divinity, 1967, from the Theological Seminary. In 1966 he was married to the former Carolyn Jean Scully; they have one child, Yvonne, born 1971.

Upon graduation from Andrews University in 1967, he served as associate pastor for four years at the Detroit Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1971 he was ordained to the gospel ministry and then pastored the Farmington and Livonia, Michigan (1971-1975) and the Stevensville, Michigan (1975-1977) churches.

His particular interests lie in preaching and lay training. He has conducted a seminar on spiritual gifts in several churches in Michigan. He has also authored an article for Ministry entitled "A Theological Seminary--Why?" He is presently under appointment as pastor of the Tempe, Arizona, Seventh-day Adventist Church.