



Apostolic Preaching in a postmodern Context: Discussing the Viability of First Century Biblical Expression in a Twenty-First Anti-biblical Western World.

William Wade, August 2012

Abstract

Index

Introduction

The Context in Which We Find Ourselves

A Definition and Application of the Term 'Apostolic Preaching'

Postmodern Apostolic Preaching

Conclusion

Abstract

Preaching as both an ecclesiological necessity and as an evangelistic strategy has come under an increasing measure of scrutiny in recent years. This dissertation argues for the possibility of a contemporary revival of the basic tenets of apostolic preaching (as found primarily in the book of Acts) within a Western postmodern context.

An affirmation of the impact of postmodernism on both Western culture and specifically Western ecclesiology, focusing on the act of preaching, is expressed here, as well as potential opportunities for cultural engagement for the contextually-aware preacher.

Controversially perhaps, the mainstay of evangelical preaching – the expository form – is robustly challenged not only as unbiblical, but anti-biblical, and a thesis for the need of ‘postmodern apostolic preaching’ is both investigated and offered as a viable means of communicating biblical truth in an anti-biblical age.

Critical engagement with a wide range of writings including Brian McLaren, Pete Rollins, Martin Lloyd-Jones and David Dockery reveal insights into evangelical and emerging church/liberal theology, concluding with a contextually-appreciative and biblically orthodox merge of preaching the message of the apostles (though reworded for a biblically illiterate generation) with a measure of postmodern communicative methods.

Introduction

It would not take an extensive stretch of the imagination to suggest that as we move further into the twenty-first century, the societal relevance (or need) of the Christian Church could increasingly be brought under scrutiny. The onset of postmodern thinking is radically reducing the exclusivity of the Christian message to being a merely obnoxious and irrelevant inconvenience which could be quite easily ignored. J. Thwaites concurs with this suggestion, stating, 'In a postmodern world, the very foundations of western thinking are crumbling and a new way of constructing reality is emerging.'¹ This postmodern way of constructing reality is aggressively suspicious of any claims of objective truth and has been hailing the twin philosophies of relativism and subjectivism as the new gods of the age.² As far as postmodernism is concerned, the truth claims of the Christian Church are neither 'attainable nor desirable'.³ This rejectionist stance has a direct bearing on not only the identity of the Christian Church today, but also on the speech of the Christian Church, or more specifically, in her preaching.

In the modern era (1750 – 1980)⁴, preaching in the Christian Church elevated the Church into a place of vocal, literary and moral prominence. Figures such as C. H. Spurgeon, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa and Billy Graham were synonymous with a valid and acceptable sense of relevant cultural morality. The present landscape though is rapidly under construction, or to use a better term, deconstruction. The very term 'preaching' is being undermined, not only from outside of the Christian Church, but also from within. B. McLaren highlights the present cultural conflict, writing, 'Jesus preached his message of the kingdom of God in public on many occasions over a period of about three years. *Preached* might be a misleading word, though, because to us it's a religious word evoking solemn, well-planned sermons delivered in sacred buildings.'⁵ The 'us' McLaren is speaking of is not society at large, but the Christian Church. He is portraying the scene where Christians are tired of sermons, and of preaching in general.

Nevertheless, the Christian Church today is still preaching, and based on a biblical mandate (Matt. 28:19-20, Mk. 16:15, Rom. 10:14, 2 Tim. 4:2), will no doubt continue

¹ J. Thwaites. *The Church Beyond the Congregation*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999, p. 3.

² D. S. Dockery. "The Challenge of Postmodernism" in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001, pp. 11-12.

³ D. A. Carson. *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005, p. 97.

⁴ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999, p. 13.

⁵ B. McLaren. *The Secret Message of Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2006, p. 35.

to do so as the twenty-first century rolls on. The blatant challenge facing the contemporary Christian Church, particularly in the West, is not merely one of speaking, but of actually being heard, and as at other times in Church history, she may not be the relevant moral voice she once was in recent modern history. Bryan Chapell observes, 'The modern church has significantly yielded to the cultural displeasure with religious exclusivity.'⁶ S. Reid also laments, '...we as preachers have lost much of our credibility. Those listening in the pews sometimes doubt whether we have much of an understanding of the world in which they live their lives.'⁷ The world in which we live has changed, and is changing, and the Church undoubtedly needs to change along with it. Of course, the age-old tension of message and methods comes into focus, with the need for the message to remain and the methods to evolve with the pressing needs of the age. It is within this tension that this dissertation plans to argue for a new approach of preaching which has the ability to combine both apostolic and postmodern ingredients. The terms 'apostolic' and 'postmodern' need to be defined, and in the process of uncovering these message/method approaches, a concrete solution is put forward which arguably has the ability to bridge the age-old with the present/future and bring the biblical mandate to 'preach the word' (2 Tim. 4:2) into a postmodern context.

This discussion is of vital importance. Postmodernism will not herald the end of the Christian Church, and will not be the death knoll on Christian preaching. In fact, it has, inherent in its philosophy, areas of exciting opportunity for the Christian preacher. The fact that postmodernism is 'nonlinear and methodologically unvigorous' and sensitive to the diversity of cultures⁸, takes the 'humanity of people seriously and delights in...an attitude of wonder and exploration'⁹ and that it is itself a 'big story which legitimises 'little stories''¹⁰ all allow for potential in-roads for the serious Christian preacher. The challenge and opportunity both present themselves in fairly equal force, as does the echo of generations of preachers past which cry 'preach the word' and that word in its apostolic purity is that the Church is to 'preach

⁶ B. Chapell. "The Necessity of Preaching Christ in a World Hostile to Him" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004, p. 63.

⁷ S. Reid. "Connecting With the Real World" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006, pp. 322-323.

⁸ D. A. Carson. *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging Church*, p. 103.

⁹ J. Finney. *Recovering the Past: Celtic and Roman Mission*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1996, p. 34.

¹⁰ M. Moynagh. *Changing World Changing Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch Books, 2001, p. 29.

Christologically', declaring the clear metanarrative that 'Jesus is the convergence point of the story'.¹¹

If the Christian Church can engage society within its postmodern context, then the message of biblical hope concerning salvation will continue to change lives in redemptive conversion. If not, then among the myriad of voices and 'little stories' of the postmodern era, this metanarrative will have the potential to be relegated to a philosophy akin to the redundancy of communism or post-second world war national socialism. This discussion aims to lead to the firm conviction that the Christian Church can embrace her context with confidence concerning the viability of apostolic preaching within a postmodern backdrop. The argument begins with an affirmation of both the age in which we live and the need for which humanity desperately longs. J. D. Arthurs wisely observes that 'Postmodern listeners are open to the spiritual world and willing to grant us our say.'¹² Therefore, there is a staggering need for relevant biblical preaching, 'Because biblical preaching has authority and relevance for men and women to live in an anti-authority age.'¹³ Arthurs attempts to bridge the gap between context and message in hoping that the Church, specifically through her preaching, may have 'wisdom to analyze and adapt to the postmodern mind.'¹⁴ This discussion will attempt to do the same.

The Context in Which We Find Ourselves

In describing our present era, or context, D. S. Dockery holds little reservation about where we in the Western world find ourselves, stating, 'A new day has dawned. A new generation has come of age. The new generation is post-Christian, post-Enlightenment and postmodern.'¹⁵ The term is no longer a novelty, as learning centres, the philosophical world, the architectural world and now the religious world are all conversant with its impact on our thinking and its continuing potential to mould a generational worldview. An important, even necessary question which must be answered, at least theoretically if not exhaustively is 'What is postmodernism?' Unfortunately, in seeking to define this movement, the reality of its elusiveness rises

¹¹ P. Greenslade. "Preaching the Big Story" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 142.

¹² J. D. Arthurs. "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 197.

¹³ S. M. Gibson. "Biblical Preaching in an Anti-authority Age" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 226.

¹⁴ J. D. Arthurs. "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 197.

¹⁵ D. S. Dockery. "The Challenge of Postmodernism" in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 9.

to the surface very quickly. G. Aylesworth begins his search on a workable definition of postmodernism by almost giving up at the first hurdle, confessing, 'That postmodernism is indefinable is a truism.'¹⁶ He does, however, redeem something of a definition from his study, suggesting, '...postmodernism is a continuation of modern thinking in another mode.'¹⁷ First impressions on Aylesworth's definition would lead one to believe he has come up with a weak observation. However, the search to define this very fluid movement causes some difficulty to other researchers. T. C. Oden, who has written extensively on the subject of postmodernism against an evangelical background, writes, 'We are pointing not to an ideological program, but rather to a simple succession – what comes next after modernity.'¹⁸ Oden is content to acquiesce to postmodernism's refusal to brand, define or explain itself, but simply highlights the movement as an ever-morphing succession of an era. M. Moynagh describes the term 'postmodern' as 'complex'¹⁹ and D. A. Carson also confesses that postmodernism is 'difficult to define'²⁰. However difficult it may be to clearly label and define postmodernism, brave attempts have been made. E. T. H. Brann may be a little ambiguous, but guidelines are certainly laid down in this definition of postmodernism, '1. A set of sophisticated revealing texts to be gotten to when all that preceded them have been properly studied. 2. The latest 'ism' and the last on the long list of recommended inquiries for a young lover of wisdom.'²¹ The reason ambiguity is a part of Brann's two-fold definition is because the 'revealing texts' are only to be understood within postmodernism's hermeneutic – the validity of the reader over the intent of the author. E. Hulse argues that the idea of author intent, context and history are all placed under question by the postmodern hermeneutic.²² Brann's description of postmodernism being the pinnacle goal of the 'young lover of wisdom' may seem poetic, but actually argues at least two assumptions; 1: Any seeker of wisdom is recommended to inquire at postmodernism's feet, and 2: If a seeker of wisdom does not partake of postmodernism's offerings, then that seeker is intellectually wanting. Like postmodernism itself, Brann's poetry is elevated, but it

¹⁶ G. Aylesworth. "Postmodernism" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010). <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/postmodernism/> (10-04-2011).

¹⁷ G. Aylesworth. "Postmodernism" (10-04-2011).

¹⁸ T. C. Oden. "The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality" in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 25.

¹⁹ M. Moynagh. *Changing World Changing Church*, p. 29.

²⁰ D. A. Carson. *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging Church*, p. 87.

²¹ E. T. H. Brann. "What is Postmodernism?" in *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* (Spring 1992). <http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hrp/issues/1992/Braun.pdf>, p. 7 (10-04-2011).

²² E. Hulse. "What is Postmodernism?" in www.reformation-today.org (____). <http://www.reformation-today.org/papers/ibc.pdf>, p. 1 (10-04-2011).

also carries its own demands. J. D. Arthurs suggests that ‘...postmodernism is simply an extension of modernism.’²³ While postmodernism may be what Oden has claimed as being ‘what comes next after modernity’, Arthurs’ simplistic definition is at best naive, for to claim that postmodernism is a new era, distinct from modernism, as Oden alludes to, is making a distinction between the two eras, which must be made. However, Arthurs does not make that distinction, which could be translated as postmodernism simply being a more modern-modernism. A clear definition of the movement is not easy to solidify and nail down, and whereas a dictionary definition of postmodernism retains its propositions within the world of aesthetics²⁴, perhaps the most workable understanding of the term is by the largely-agreed originator of the term²⁵, Jean-Francois Lyotard, stating, ‘Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards metanarrative.’²⁶ Whereas it may be difficult to define the movement, postmodernism holds to its own distinctives, which makes it radically different to the values and ideas of the modern era.

One of the more prominent views of postmodernism is that objective truth is unattainable. In fact it is viewed as a pursuit which is neither praiseworthy nor noble. Postmodern thinking is ‘uneasy about claims that anything is absolute truth.’²⁷ The reason postmodernism has this uneasiness of course is that talk of universal or objective truth falls within the parameters of the metanarrative, and specifically, when discussing truth, the metanarrative of the story of God. Postmodernism’s argument is that we are to ‘pay attention to different stories and not to smother them with claims of universal truth.’²⁸ Therefore, according to the postmodern exaltation of the different, little stories, the grand metanarrative is not a liberating reality but a smothering, dominating force to be ignored. Moynagh suggests that when the metanarrative of universal truth is held on to, then it is impossible to hear dissenting views, in that postmodernism views this process as actually *stifling* dissenting views.²⁹ Postmodern philosophy therefore aims to avoid argument, holding to the mindset, ‘What each human being reports as a personal conviction is always to be

²³ J. D. Arthurs. “The Postmodern Mind and Preaching”, p. 178.

²⁴ C. Soames (Ed.). *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 582.

²⁵ E. Hulse. “What is Postmodernism?” p. 1 (10-04-2011).

²⁶ E. T. H. Brann. “What is Postmodernism?” p. 5 (10-04-2011).

²⁷ J. Finney. *Recovering the Past: Celtic and Roman Mission*, p. 42.

²⁸ M. Moynagh. *Changing World Changing Church*, p. 29.

²⁹ M. Moynagh. *Changing World Changing Church*, p. 29.

taken seriously.³⁰ Or, as S. Grenz describes this aspect of postmodern thinking, this movement ‘aims at continuing a conversation rather than at discovering truth.’³¹ This of course has its consequences in the world of morality. Because the biblical metanarrative clings to not only the idea of truth but to the idea of a truth that is lived out in community with a high moral code (the call of a holy God according to Scripture), its followers adhere to a life of morality as an acceptable worldview. The Christian theo-praxis is (among other things) a moral life. When postmodernism rejects this worldview, the question of morality becomes nonsensical. Therefore, if morality is not a viable discussion, then neither is immorality, for surely immorality in itself (just as morality in itself) cannot exist. Dockery highlights the cause-effect nature of this postmodern mindset, revealing, ‘Two hallmarks characterize this age: a disbelief in objective truth and a deep sense that morality is relative.’³² In other words, when I disregard the possibility of a stand-alone (outside of subjectivity, ideals or experience) prevailing truth, then what follows is an allowance of an entirely relative morality. The difficulty with this stance is that it not only affects the individual, but it will also most likely affect the group, the community and ultimately the culture. For instance, if I believe that violence is an acceptable means of response within conflict, then my postmodern acceptance of this viewpoint allows me to vent this form of anger on anyone I may disagree with. This naturally affects the group I belong to. It also affects the community in which I live, as violent behaviour adds fear and possible aggressive response to the context of community. If I have children, then I bring my children into the world with the postmodern slant that my behaviour is acceptable, due to my refusal of the concept of moral adherence. Culturally, then, a part of a rising generation becomes morally bankrupt when it comes to violent behaviour. Culturally this is arguably already the case, as Dockery informs, ‘Throughout education and culture, the very existence of objective truth is being challenged.’³³ If that is the case, then morally speaking, postmodernism has the potential to erode the very fabric of culture, which in the modern era held on to at least a generic sense of morality, perhaps labelling it the ‘justice system’ or ‘family

³⁰ E. T. H. Brann. “What is Postmodernism?” p. 7 (10-04-2011).

³¹ S. Grenz. “Star Trek and the Next Generation: Postmodernism and the Future of Evangelical Theology” in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.). *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 79.

³² D. Dockery. “The Challenge of Postmodernism” in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 12.

³³ D. Dockery. “The Challenge of Postmodernism” in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 11.

values'. Postmodernism seeks to undermine this view of the existence of morality, because morality is inextricably linked with the notion of truth.

Another distinctive of postmodernism is the grand subjectivity of 'I'. Carson comments, 'Postmoderns, no less than moderns, begin with the finite "I", but the inferences they draw are quite different. Each "I" is different from every other "I", so the point of view expressed is bound to be different.³⁴ The modern 'I' was bound to the three main modern views of individualism, rationalism and factualism.³⁵ Within postmodernism, however, the 'I' is totally subjective, as the deconstructionism involved in postmodernism (largely fuelled by Jacques Derrida's deconstructionism of removing assertion or meaning from a text³⁶) gives licence for the 'I' to be completely removed from modernism's view of rationalism and factualism. In this context, 'I', free from boundaries such as history, meaning or objective interpretation, can fly on the wings of subjective liberty, and not only that, but be as valid as any critical appraisal of the same text might be. In fact, perhaps more so in a postmodern context, as critical appraisal could be construed as an irrelevancy by its very self-definition. For example, when Brann looks into the definition of postmodernism, part of the defining process is under the caveat that 'when we are asked about postmodernism, we are asked not about an object of thought, but about what a number of people are thinking.'³⁷ Therefore, if a number of people are thinking diametrically opposing thoughts about what postmodernism even consists of, then all thoughts could not – surely should not – discuss with the possibility of a concrete conclusion, but every viewpoint is equally valid. Discrepancies and disagreements in this case are not points for debate, but theories for acceptance. This is the subjective, postmodern 'I' in operation. Hulse relays an interesting analogy by Soren Kierkegaard in this respect, writing,

The intense subjectivity of existentialism can be illustrated by Kierkegaard's description of two men who pray. The one is in a Lutheran church and he entertains a true conception of God; but because he prays in a false spirit, he is in truth praying to an idol. The other man is praying in a heathen temple and is praying to idols; but since he is praying with an infinite passion, he is in truth praying to God. For truth lies in the inward How, not in the external What.³⁸

Although existentialism takes pre-eminence in this analogy, Kierkegaard (who is experiencing a posthumous revival among postmoderns), because of the subjectivity

³⁴ D. A. Carson. *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging Church*, p. 95.

³⁵ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*, p. 18.

³⁶ G. Aylesworth. "Postmodernism" (10-04-2011).

³⁷ E. T. H. Brann. "What is Postmodernism?" p. 4 (10-04-2011).

³⁸ E. Hulse. "What is Postmodernism?" p. 8 (10-04-2011).

of his biblical philosophy, revolving around the now-valid, subjective 'How' rather than the external, objective 'What', namely God, removes the *object* of prayer from the equation, and instead places the *process* as the important factor. In this regard, he was ahead of his time. Christian postmodern scholar P. Rollins has taken Kierkegaard's philosophies to an emerging generation, continuing the idea that it is the process of knowledge rather than either the object of knowledge or finality of conclusion which is the all-important part of a faith journey (a non-Christian might simply replace 'faith' here with either 'wisdom' or 'knowledge'). Rollins clings to what he calls 'pyro-theology', in other words, the burning of what now presently is, in order to leave what is, in essence 'unburnable'. The difficulty with Rollins' pyro-theology, though, is that it seems like he does not expect anything to remain. He writes, 'This work of pyro-theology will involve outlining the present understanding of God, exploring the way Crucifixion and Resurrection open up a different reality, and charting what might arise should we be courageous enough to step into this reality.'³⁹ Although here, it seems that Rollins may have a concrete expectation at the end of his pyro-theology, his deconstructive mindset comes through in continuing, 'we must not be afraid to burn our sacred temples in order to discover what, if anything, remains.'⁴⁰ Taking on Kierkegaard's high regard for *process*, Rollins carries on, 'Indeed, it is not what remains after the fire has died that is true, but rather the fire itself. If so, then we need to take the words of Spanish anarchist Buenaventura Durruti seriously when he boldly declares: *The only church that illuminates is a burning one.*'⁴¹ Biblically there is, of course, a precedent for pyro-theology, with the fires of testing in 1 Peter 1:6-7. The difference between Peter's pyro-theology and Rollins' pyro-theology is that Peter has an expected conclusion to the burning of what should not remain and what should – a faith that is more precious than gold – a faith in the revealed word of God. Rollins' pyro-theology seems content to deconstruct all contemporary expressions of the Christian Church if necessary, without a tangible expectation of any kind of biblical outcome. In true postmodern fashion, Rollins is highlighting his own subjective 'I' at the expense of in some cases centuries-old communities, and suggesting that his own understanding of pyro-theology (which could simply be another name for postmodern hermeneutics) is more important than any objective stance on biblical hermeneutics, which does have, in the shadow of

³⁹ P. Rollins. *Insurrection*. New York: Howard Books, 2011, p. 15.

⁴⁰ P. Rollins. *Insurrection*, p. 15.

⁴¹ P. Rollins. *Insurrection*, p. 15.

Peter, an expected outcome (biblically) even after ‘burning’. Rollins’ play on Durruti’s words are unfortunate, as Rollins’ take on Durruti’s quotation is undoubtedly different to what Durruti intended to mean (hopefully). As a postmodernist though, this view would be of little importance to Rollins, as he would read his own interpretation into Durruti’s anarchistic flippancy.

Another distinctive of postmodernism is in its communication. Modernity (until at least the period of very late modernity) largely relied on the written or spoken word in conveying messages, or as Webber puts it, ‘In the modern world, communication occurred primarily through conceptual knowledge.’⁴² Unfortunately, according to Webber’s observations at least, the Church in general has held on to modernity’s methods of communication, writing, ‘In modernity, evangelical Christians have been committed to the use of verbal and analytical forms of communication to reach their generation.’⁴³ Postmodernism is not limited to words, either written or spoken. As if to signal the arrival of postmodernism’s disdain of words, Arthurs highlights the fact that ‘The year 1985 was the first year that more videos were checked out of public libraries than books.’⁴⁴ The rising postmodern generation was very practically saying that visual story is more important, or at least more appealing, than written or spoken facts. An advanced media in the postmodern era has played into postmodernism’s ideals, as Hulse admits, ‘The effect of a welter of images and impressions which lack moral and intellectual cohesion is to fragment the mind. This accords with the postmodern mentality, which abandons a unified disciplined cosmos.’⁴⁵ The issue of mind-fragmentation not only has a psychological effect in our present context, but arguably a moral one also. W. E. Brown argues that too much video-image communication actually desensitises this present culture by emotionally distancing itself – so much so that in one minute of television advertising, both ‘fashion and famine’ can be displayed with little or no moral reaction by the viewer.⁴⁶ Perhaps, as Brown argues, *too much* video-image communication could be culturally damaging, but there are, within the moral (Church) community, those who espouse a balanced use of media in communication within a religious context. M. Stibbe has suggested that if Christianity cannot be ‘inculturated successfully within the post-modern

⁴² R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 24.

⁴³ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 24.

⁴⁴ J. D. Arthurs. “The Postmodern Mind and Preaching” in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.). *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 179. This statistic was recorded in the U.S.

⁴⁵ E. Hulse. “What is Postmodernism?” p. 9 (10-04-2011).

⁴⁶ W. E. Brown. “Theology in a Postmodern Culture: Implications of a Video-Dependent Society” in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.). *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 163.

context, there will be no western Church.⁴⁷ His belief stretches his argument to proposing that ‘faith and film’ gives the Church a great opportunity to ‘speak with our post-modern generation’, for ‘never before has there been a time when faith and film have become so closely together.’⁴⁸ His arguments for this belief are that movies are ‘one of society’s most popular art forms...conducting conversations about God...preoccupied with tales of redemption.’⁴⁹ Contained within his argument for this postmodern approach in order to reach a contemporary culture is that movies at their best offer moments of transcendence, and he asks the question, ‘Do our churches?’⁵⁰

However, there is debate within the Church as to how far communication should go (if at all) towards postmodernism’s image-based methods. A. McCourt would concur with Stibbe’s flexibility in the use of movies to communicate a moral, biblical perspective, saying, ‘With an age that is riding the tsunami of technology it should be evident to even the most rural of western churches that our modes of communication cannot be limited to a monologue from a solo preacher.’⁵¹ Hulse, though, sees this stance as not simply accommodating a postmodern culture, but perhaps yielding to postmodernism’s demands, proposing, ‘The TV mentality comes through in church when people call for entertainment rather than preaching, or at least they expect preaching to be entertaining, full of anecdotes, stories and images to which they have been accustomed to on TV.’⁵² This stance, of course, throws up a debate, and that is – is the use of media, stories and anecdotes giving in to, or ‘entertaining’ a captive audience, or is it using postmodern methods within a postmodern context in the hope of, not entertaining, but engaging with a captive audience? M. Ramsden sees what he feels is a greater ‘visual’ communication to a postmodern generation and that is the authenticity of a visible, in-community, transparent godly life which in itself stands out as counter-cultural, arguing, ‘How we live our lives before a postmodern generation is absolutely vital.’⁵³ Ramsden’s ultimate test of authenticity, which he feels does have the visual and experiential elements of the postmodern hermeneutic to it, comes down to these two very practical/spiritual questions, ‘What does my life

⁴⁷ M. Stibbe. “Using Movies in Preaching” in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 507.

⁴⁸ M. Stibbe. “Using Movies in Preaching” in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 507.

⁴⁹ M. Stibbe. “Using Movies in Preaching” in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, pp. 508-511.

⁵⁰ M. Stibbe. “Using Movies in Preaching” in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 509.

⁵¹ A. McCourt. *Interview with William Wade* (06-22-2010).

⁵² E. Hulse. “What is Postmodernism?” p. 10 (10-04-2011).

⁵³ M. Ramsden. “Engaging With the Post-Modern Generation” in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 525.

look like? How does it read?’⁵⁴ His basic argument is that as postmoderns are open to story and experience, then a life lived within the morality of a biblical metanarrative has the potential to at least grab the disjointed attention of a postmodern generation in order to reveal a consistency of life which should hopefully translate into a confirmation of the lifestyle/belief cycle. To use biblical language – to be a ‘witness’ (Acts 1:8), which actually works within a postmodern culture, perhaps more so than simply being a ‘voice’. Ramsden’s view is echoed in the intimations of Webber, who concludes, ‘The shift of postmodern communications to the power of symbolic communication is a call to the classical period when the Church was an embodied experience of God expressed in life-changing rituals of immersed participation.’⁵⁵ Webber’s observation concurs with the growing number of scholars calling for a return to classic (sometimes labelled ‘Celtic’) forms of worship, which seem, via symbolism, community experience and story, to sit well within a postmodern context.⁵⁶

With the growing ‘tsunami of technology’, is biblical preaching nearing its end as a relevant mode of communication? J. Stott perceived the dangers as the Church moved into the new millennium, observing, ‘The contemporary world is decidedly unfriendly towards preaching. Words have been largely eclipsed by images, and the book by the screen. So preaching is regarded as an outmoded form of communication...people are drugged by television...and suspicious of words.’⁵⁷ Perhaps the difficulty in this area is where today’s preachers are taught – are they taught to engage postmodernally, or are they still under the influence of modern communication, under that great banner of the ‘expository sermon’? A. and F. Orr-Ewing sense that modern approaches are still having sway in the training grounds and faculties of today’s preachers, ‘Equally damaging is the widespread approach to training which teaches that the only way to preach...is to follow a narrow, stylised model of exposition. The great Evangelical preachers of the past...actually worked in a far more dynamic, intuitive and prophetic way.’⁵⁸ The great and glaring challenge then is how to reach a postmodern generation with a relevant message concerning the Christian faith. Is preaching to be postmodern, or a revised form of modern

⁵⁴ M. Ramsden. “Engaging With the Postmodern Generation” in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 525.

⁵⁵ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 24.

⁵⁶ See J. Finney. *Recovering the Past: Celtic and Roman Mission*. London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1996 and M. Mitton. *Restoring the Woven Cord*. London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1995, for example.

⁵⁷ J. Stott. *The Living Church*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2007, p. 103.

⁵⁸ A. & F. Orr-Ewing. *Deep*. Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2008, p. 40.

approaches? Is it to be seeker-sensitive, aggressive, or somewhere in-between? Is it to be vocal, visual or symbolic? Is it to tell or to engage? These questions arise out of an imminent *need* to reach a twenty-first century anti-biblical Western culture. Therefore, from a Christian perspective, the tension must be bridged by holding a measure of the apostolic/biblical message and yet also recognising the context in which we find ourselves. The first argument I would make is that the definition and application of 'apostolic preaching' must be recovered if the Church is to make a viable contribution to this postmodern context, which has largely made the transition from formal correspondence to internet usage of networks such as facebook, twitter, bebo and youtube.⁵⁹ The internet has literally given almost everyone a 'pulpit'.

A Definition and Application of the Term 'Apostolic Preaching'

Perhaps before entering into the discussion on what a definition of the term 'apostolic preaching' may be, an understanding of the term 'preaching' is initially necessary, in order to place it into the context of how the apostles actually carried out the practice of preaching. The practice of preaching in the New Testament is largely captured by two Greek words; *euangelizo* and *kerysso*. *Kerysso* is translated as, '...to preach, proclaim, tell, often urging acceptance of the message, with warnings of consequences for not doing so.'⁶⁰ *Euangelizo* is given a fuller translation, including, '...to preach (bring) the good news (gospel), often with a focus on the content of the message which is brought. In the NT it always refers to the death, burial, resurrection, and witness about Jesus Christ, including its implications for humankind's relationship to God.'⁶¹ Both of these descriptions tend to highlight the basic *function* of preaching as opposed to the *form* of preaching.

P. Greenslade describes preaching as priestly, noting, 'Biblical preaching, empowered by the Spirit, is *performative* speech. It is speech that prolongs the gospel, prophetically envisions, confronts enemy powers and does so in priestly service of the God we worship.'⁶² Undoubtedly, as Greenslade observes, there is a world of activity which concurrently expresses itself in the actual act of preaching. Greenslade rightly understands that when the mystery of the gospel is delivered, there is a measure of performance (even unintentionally) involved, that God works

⁵⁹ See www.facebook.com, www.twitter.com, www.bebo.com and www.youtube.com.

⁶⁰ E. W. Goodrick & J. R. Kohlenberger III (Eds.) *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999, p. 1564.

⁶¹ E. W. Goodrick & J. R. Kohlenberger III (Eds.) *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999, p. 1554.

⁶² P. Greenslade. "The Sacrament of the Word" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 114.

prophetically as preaching is carried out and that 'enemy powers' are fought against in the process. This is at least scratching the surface of the power, importance, struggle and complexity of what preaching is and what preaching can do. From an overtly reformed (and perhaps clinically descriptive) stance, G. Taylor's definition is an ordered one, 'Preaching is the activity of a redeemed man, standing in Christ's stead, by His (Christ's) authority and in obedience to His command, proclaiming, explaining, illustrating, and strongly urging the word of God...in such a manner...to understand it and accept it unto life or reject it unto death.'⁶³ Taylor's definition is certainly not an exhaustive one, but it would largely sum up evangelicalism's view on what preaching is, and to an extent, what it does. His definition is limited to a 'men-only' context of preaching, and he suggests that the function of preaching is merely three-fold, namely, to bring people to Christ, to cause Christians to grow spiritually and to keep Christians 'saved'.⁶⁴ It is necessary at this point to disagree with Taylor's men-only stance on preaching, as the book of Acts certainly condones women preaching.⁶⁵ To suggest that the purpose of preaching is three-fold does not give justice to the impact which preaching can have. For instance, in addition to the definition given by Taylor, M. Eaton affirms that preaching must also have the elements of 'involvement...authority...freedom...rapport...and power.'⁶⁶ What Eaton is alluding to in these five words is the *impact* of preaching, for surely impact must be included in any definition of what preaching is (and ought to be). It is not mere oratory⁶⁷ but it is transcendent, other-worldly, divine. G. Haslam sees this as a basic ingredient for true biblical preaching, arguing that it is, '...unpredictable and it is amazing. It is, in fact, a dance with divinity, because when it is done properly, it carries the very authority of God Himself into that living situation.'⁶⁸ The element of divine presence in preaching is what ultimately sets it apart from all other forms of informative communication. It is this element, which, if removed, relegates preaching to becoming a poor substitute for the professional presentations of the contemporary world. However, if the element of divine presence is evident in preaching, then the communication is lifted above the merely didactic or even inspirational, into the realm

⁶³ G. Taylor. "What is Preaching?" in www.expositorysermonoutlines.com (2011).

<http://www.expositorysermonoutlines.com/articles/good-preaching.html> (10-11-2011).

⁶⁴ G. Taylor. "What is Preaching?" (10-11-2011).

⁶⁵ J. Hayford. *Hayford's Bible Handbook*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995, pp. 792-796.

⁶⁶ M. Eaton. "God-Centred Preaching" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, pp. 103-106.

⁶⁷ M. Eaton. "God-Centred Preaching" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 102.

⁶⁸ G. Haslam. "Essential Ingredients of Popular Preaching" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 159.

of eternally life-changing. Becoming even more descriptive, R. L. Dresselhaus lists the distinctive of Pentecostal preaching (which he perceives as apostolic in nature, based on the biblical sermon accounts) as spontaneous, dynamic, prophetic, supernatural, captivating, relevant and contemporary, authoritative, adaptive to personality (of the preacher), always in the vernacular and declarative (as opposed to apologetic).⁶⁹ The act of preaching is, as these descriptives suggest, more than simply lecturing or giving a speech or address. It is all of the above, and more.

A recent shift towards preaching to a postmodern culture has been the labelling of 'incarnational preaching', which D. P. Teague describes as, 'preaching out of the encounter with God that we live out in our lives.'⁷⁰ A fuller consideration of this kind of preaching will be discussed further under the proposition for Postmodern Apostolic Preaching. For now, as a concise, workable definition, preaching as a divine art is succinctly and I would argue accurately described by S. M. Gibson, as he observes, 'Preachers are called to proclaim the powerful, authoritative word in the midst of a culture that is looking for a voice in the wilderness.'⁷¹ Therefore preaching, in this definition, carries a measure of power (impact), authority (divine presence), God's word (divine reference), cultural awareness (postmodernally sensitive) and missional ('looking for a voice in the wilderness.'). Perhaps to rephrase Gibson's definition, it is possible to define preaching as, '*The powerful proclamation of the authoritative word of God in the midst of a postmodern culture.*'

Moving on to a definition and application of the term 'apostolic preaching', it is again possible to have a lengthy list of what apostolic preaching truly is and what it effectively does. T. Virgo, in his understanding of apostolic preaching, lists the lordship of Christ, the enthronement of the Messiah, the obedience of faith, the indwelling Christ, the community of believers and the metanarrative of the 'big story', in that 'world history is in the hands of the people of God.'⁷² His description clearly covers what he feels is the 'apostolic' aspect of preaching, based on his interpretation of the book of Acts and the New Testament letters. L. Morris, in his work on 'The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross' promises much in the realm of understanding what apostolic preaching was, and infers that this kind of preaching

⁶⁹ R. L. Dresselhaus. "What is Pentecostal Preaching?" in *Enrichment Journal* (Sept. 2007). http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/Tools_of_the_Trade/20070914_03_What_Is_Pent_Preach.cfm (10-11-2011).

⁷⁰ D. P. Teague. "Incarnational Preaching" in www.postmodernpreaching.net (2011). <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/incarnational.htm> (11-10-2011).

⁷¹ S. M. Gibson. "Biblical Preaching in an Anti-authority Age" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 226.

⁷² T. Virgo. "Apostolic Preaching" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, pp. 207-217.

had at its very core the central theme of the cross. What Morris goes on to unfold though is a rendering of what he feels are significant salvific New Testament words which he felt, in 1955 at least, were losing meaning. Morris centres around the words 'Redemption', 'Covenant', 'Blood', 'Propitiation', 'Reconciliation' and 'Justification'.⁷³ Morris' argument for taking this approach is that, '...these studies are...to appreciate some of the metaphors which the men of New Testament days found helpful when they wished to draw attention to one aspect or another of divine action they found it impossible to describe fully.'⁷⁴ Morris' approach is clearly to argue the message of salvation from a completely word-based study, which is prolific for the modern mindset. In Morris' understanding, if readers or listeners can grasp the author's intent in using such rich salvific words, then they might come to the same revelation which the author either had, or intended the reader/listener to have. The difficulty with this approach in a postmodern context of course is multi-layered. On one level, the postmodern does not wish to know the author's intent. On another, words alone are not as interactive as storylines. On yet another, and this is perhaps the real distinctive when it comes to *apostolic* preaching rather than just preaching, there is the lack of dynamics, or in other words, the soul's engagement with a message of life-changing truth. Morris' argument seems lost in the twenty-first century. The issue which needs to be understood today is not necessarily content alone (although that is infinitely important), but communication – or better still – translation of content.

Writing ahead of his time, J. S. Stewart, again in 1955, explained his own take on what true apostolic preaching was, stating, 'Apostolic preaching...set forth the facts of the Cross and the Resurrection in their organic relationship to the Kingdom of God.'⁷⁵ Beginning with a seemingly modern approach, Stewart lays out the 'facts' of the Cross and the Resurrection. However, he understands the translation of these 'facts' as needing to be contemporarily contextual. His own context was modern, but when biblical issues are to be communicated in, as Stewart proposes, 'their organic relationship to the Kingdom of God', this very phrase is one which could be read in any Christian proposal for engaging with a postmodern world. It propagates the great postmodern need for incarnation, or at a lower level, experience. His understanding of apostolic preaching goes on to cover the need to 'package' a New Testament message in illustrations which places the listener/reader as the focal aim of

⁷³ L. Morris. *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. London: The Tyndale Press, 1955, p. 5.

⁷⁴ L. Morris. *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p. 275.

⁷⁵ J. S. Stewart. *Preaching*. London: English Universities Press, 1955, p. 84.

communication, rather than having merely a declarative approach to preaching. In a plea for engaging the 'audience', he illustrates,

I would recall to your minds the famous passage in Robert Woodrow's *Anlecta*, where an English merchant of three hundred years ago describes to his friends in London certain preachers he had heard during a business visit to Scotland. At St. Andrews he had listened to Robert Blair. "That man," he said, "showed me the majesty of God." Afterwards he had heard "a little fair man" preach – this was Samuel Rutherford: "and that man showed me the loveliness of Christ." Then at Irvine he had heard a discourse by "a well-favoured, proper old man" – David Dickson: "and that man showed me all my heart." These, surely, are the supreme functions of preaching in any age.⁷⁶

Stewart is sensitive on two levels in his plea for the use of apostolic preaching – (1) He is passionate concerning what he sees as the crux of the apostolic message (the cross and resurrection), and (2) He is passionate that this message is to be contextualised in order to have impact on listeners/readers. Postmodernally, this is important, for the heart, as Stewart argues, is (initially at least) more important than the mind in the reception of information. Undoubtedly, if you have the heart, the mind will follow. Modernally, this would have been the exact opposite (perhaps this is why Stewart places the heart illustration after the information sentences). Stewart's argument then is that apostolic preaching is the message of the cross and the resurrection, translated into a contemporary context via information and revelatory reception (spiritual experience).

There is a strong argument that the distinction between preaching and apostolic preaching is an issue of doctrine or theology. It is not merely a case of contextually communicating the message of the New Testament gospel, but it is also a matter of communicating it the way the first century apostles (and those who immediately followed them) did. In this regard, Morris would agree that the terminology and its explanation is of ultimate importance. G. W. Grogan assumes that theology is of prime importance in preaching, states, 'The New Testament contains different types of literature. What is it that unites them all...It is both Christian experience and Christian theology. Remember though that the experience itself is based on the theology, because the Christians had all responded to the preaching of the theological message.'⁷⁷ Grogan's exalted view of theology is not the immediate issue. The real balance to be seen from Grogan's viewpoint is over his sequence of experience. The thought that experience follows theology may well have worked in a

⁷⁶ J. S. Stewart. *Preaching*, p. 65.

⁷⁷ G. W. Grogan. "The Church and Theology" in Grogan, G. (Ed.) *Shaping Tomorrow Starting Today*. Fearn: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1992, p. 80.

bygone era (certainly a modern one), but in a postmodern context, the exact opposite is true – often it is only after an initial ‘experience’ that theology can then make an in-road to the heart and mind. Grogan does warn that, ‘Without theology, Christianity would dissolve into relativism and individualism.’⁷⁸ This observation may be true, but at what stage should a person be exposed to theology? A postmodern would arguably not respond until at least an experience in which he/she can engage with the messenger, be that a human, a technological device or the written page. In trying to tie his viewpoint with Scripture, Grogan continues, ‘...the first Christian converts, brought to Christ through Peter’s preaching, were taught apostolic doctrine (Acts 2:42).’⁷⁹ This of course is the biblical account. Grogan seems to be a touch contradictory in his observation, though, as the Acts 2 account is overtly experiential in nature (flames of fire, infilling of the Holy Spirit, strange tongues, crowd amazement, preaching which ‘cut to the heart’ and not initially the mind, mass conversion), and then, as Grogan agrees, came the theology with apostolic doctrine. There is, therefore, even a biblical precedent, contrary to Grogan’s appeal, which suggests that experience could precede theology in a postmodern world. It seems a growing number of people are more interested in experience first and theology second. As much as evangelical Christianity might lament over this trend, it must also be prepared to have a measure of adaptive change if it seeks to impact a postmodern culture with theology at all.

In a 1990 analysis of what attracted young people to church, five elements (out of seven) were overtly experiential (participatory worship, contemporary music, every member involvement, home bible study groups and practical (in other words – ‘What can I *do* with this?’), relevant sermons.⁸⁰ Again there may well be a need today for theology to have an impression on a human heart and mind. M. Henry appears to link the apostolic twin-message of experience and theology in recounting Peter’s apostolic message on the Day of Pentecost as being initially experience-based, which allowed for an explanation of theology. Henry writes, ‘His account of the miraculous effusion of the Spirit, which is designed to awaken them all to embrace the faith of Christ.’⁸¹ Henry’s assertion that this Pentecostal experience gripped the

⁷⁸ G. W. Grogan. “The Church and Theology” in Grogan, G. (Ed.) *Shaping Tomorrow Starting Today*, p. 84.

⁷⁹ G. W. Grogan. “The Church and Theology” in Grogan, G. (Ed.) *Shaping Tomorrow Starting Today*, p. 87.

⁸⁰ G. Barna. “What attracts young people to church today?” in *Church Growth Today*, 5:5 (1990), p.2

⁸¹ M. Henry in Winter, D. (Ed.) *Matthew Henry’s Commentary: Acts to Revelation*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975, p. 9.

listeners' attention is one which could be applied today. This is not merely speaking of attention-seeking which has no relevance to the kingdom of God, but an experience (of story, of visual media, of dramatic expression, for example) can likewise today be a precedent used in the hope that others can 'embrace the faith of Christ', as Henry comments. Also, J. Stott, in declaring that theory (information outside of a practical context) is not enough. He writes, '...preaching and teaching on such topics as prayer and evangelism...is not enough. We can learn to pray only by praying...and we can learn to evangelise only by going out with a more experienced Christian either to witness on the street corner or visit some homes.'⁸² Stott may not be suggesting here that theology only comes alive by experience first, but that together they mutually ignite a spiritual reality of truth and experience meeting within a context of engagement. In other words, in a postmodern world, truth without experience is an opinion, and experience without truth is eventually meaningless. It is also worth noting here that the experiential affirmation of the apostolic message was many times in the book of Acts revealed through tangible miracles. Again, the dynamic of word and experience impacting communities should not be overlooked in this regard.

Arguing then that apostolic preaching is not merely doctrine-based, but dynamic-based, what could be a workable definition of apostolic preaching? Stott, as Morris alluded to, believes it to be an exposition, or more, a declaration, of the cross, 'Of this we are clear: man's salvation rests on the fact of the cross, and neither on the preacher's interpretation of it, nor on the hearer's understanding of it. Our desire is that men should accept that fact, not accept our explanations.'⁸³ Although today, the important issue of the 'hearer's understanding' should not be overlooked, as Stott does here, his understanding of the apostolic theme is centred in the cross of Jesus Christ. Virgo's definition was certainly wide-ranging, whereas Morris and Stott rely largely on the content of the message being centred on the supremacy of the cross. Tenney broadens the theme in stating that early apostolic preaching was not simply explanation of the cross, but that it was, '...centred in the life and person of Christ.'⁸⁴ He goes on to detail what apostolic preaching was like, 'Unlike modern preaching, which is usually either the logical development of some topic or the elaboration of a single text, the apostolic preaching was a narration of the life and work of Jesus, with

⁸² J. Stott. *Authentic Christianity*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1995, p. 268.

⁸³ J. Stott. *Authentic Christianity*, p. 335.

⁸⁴ M. C. Tenney. *New Testament Survey*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2003, p. 240.

a defence of his resurrection, and was followed by a call to repentance and faith.⁸⁵ But is this not merely what is today called ‘evangelistic preaching’? Tenney goes on to differentiate between apostolic and evangelistic preaching, noting that apostolic preaching also challenged for national repentance and pleaded for the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). The real difference though is that it was ‘accompanied by instruction, so that as the number of the believers increased, they were bound together in common knowledge and common action (Acts 2:42).’⁸⁶ Here is where apostolic preaching was different than mere gospel preaching – in the power to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit (the signs-preaching method of the early church) and the apostolic teaching to follow the in-gathering of church members. Perhaps then gleaned wisdom from Tenney’s observant view of apostolic preaching, alongside particularly Virgo, Morris, Stewart, Grogan and Stott, a workable definition of apostolic preaching could be: *‘The dynamic, authoritative preaching of the life and work of Jesus Christ which calls for repentance, with an expectation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and of a life of obedience to the word of God.’*

However, considering this definition, which has its basis in various commentators’ viewpoints on the subject, is this the biblical portrayal of what apostolic preaching was? Looking at two case studies of apostolic preaching in the book of Acts, I would argue that there is a vital element missing in a definition of the main thrust of what apostolic preaching truly was, and therefore, is.

Case Study 1: Peter’s Speech on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14-39).

The sermon of Peter on the Day of Pentecost was a pivotal moment in the history of the Church, for from this sermon, it is possible to assess the basis of the ‘theological teaching of Acts.’⁸⁷ The context is a religious one, and spiritual fervour would have been at a high level in Jerusalem. Judaism was going through some changes in the city, as Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified and claims were being made that he had been seen after his death, apparently alive and well. Aside from this, a new ‘sect’ of Jesus’ followers had been formed, although it could be argued that their impact pre-Pentecost was minimal. However, all that changed with the coming of the Holy Spirit to fill those early believers and the event literally spilled out on to the street. J. N. D. Kelly argues that the ‘world in which the Church made triumphant, if sometimes

⁸⁵ M. C. Tenney. *New Testament Survey*, pp. 240-241.

⁸⁶ M. C. Tenney. *New Testament Survey*, p. 241.

⁸⁷ J. B. Polhill. “Preaching from the Acts of the Apostles” in *Faith and Mission*, 12:1 (Fall 1994). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/8087> (10-18-2011).

painful, headway was hungry for religion.⁸⁸ He is speaking here of the Roman occupation of Israel, however, the one religion that Jerusalem may have been hungry for was the pure taste of Judaism, and certainly not another divisive sect. Therefore, when Peter stood up to speak to the multitude of Jews present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, he was not necessarily speaking to a captive audience or an accommodating crowd. He was standing up to exalt this Jesus of Nazareth over and above the rule of the Mosaic Law in Judaism. He was therefore standing up to preach a 'Christian' message to Jews.

There is a debate centred around the issue of whether Peter's sermon on that day was 'scripted' or inspired ad hoc.⁸⁹ Lloyd-Jones maintains that there was some measure of order in Peter's speech, commenting, 'I would say that in the report of Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, as found in Acts 2, that there is distinct form, that he did not get up and make a series of isolated remarks, but that there was a definite form in his sermon or speech.'⁹⁰ The question must be asked in response to Lloyd-Jones' observation – was this speech previously scripted? There may be form, but that form is in a logical presentation of Jewish history, leading up to a pinnacle, piercing point. It could be argued that Peter's speech was apologetic in nature, due to the logical outline, although the argument of declarative speech (particularly considering its pointed ending), seems more accurate. In appreciating the event of the upper-room experience, Cruz makes a strong argument that Peter's speech is overtly inspired, as he notes, '...the reception of the Spirit of prophecy brings inspiration for the proclamation of the crucified Christ.'⁹¹ Peter would have had enough knowledge of the message and purpose of Jesus to, at any given moment, and certainly one inspired by the Spirit of God, to give an impassioned plea as to the identity and redemptive work of Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus the Christ.

Linking the fact that Peter has just been filled with the Holy Spirit (inducing a touch of boldness as well as theological clarity) and has understood in recent days more of the necessity of a crucified and resurrected Saviour, and in this context, what he stands up to convey to this crowd in Acts 2 is of vital importance. Cruz makes the point that this was the stamp of the Church in its earliest days as to what she stood for, stating, 'Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-40 is important in knowing the fundamental

⁸⁸ J. N. D. Kelly. *Early Christian Doctrines*. London: Continuum, 2004, p. 11.

⁸⁹ R. G. D. Cruz. "Luke's Application of Joel 2:28-32 in Peter's Sermon in Acts 2" in *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal-Charismatic Research* (____). <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj4/cruz.html> (10-18-2011).

⁹⁰ M. Lloyd-Jones. *Preaching and Preachers*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971, p. 74.

⁹¹ R. D. G. Cruz. "Luke's Application of Joel 2:28-32 in Peter's Sermon in Acts 2" (10-18-2011).

message of the early church' and continues, 'The analysis of the content of Peter's sermon in Acts 2 will give a knowledge of the development of early Christian preaching and theology.'⁹² The content of Peter's sermon is very much Scripture-based. Drawing on the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 and quoting Psalm 16:8-11 and also Psalm 110:1, Peter is using these passages to explain the Pentecostal experience of declaring the praises of God in multi-lingual fashion and also to proclaim the historical and prophetic basis for an argument as to the identity of Jesus of Nazareth. His boldness is clear to be seen in v. 14 in addressing the crowd, and he begins with Joel's prophecy concerning the coming in power of the Holy Spirit (vv. 17-21). He then moves on to chronicle the authority, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus (vv. 22-24). Next comes Peter's use of Psalm 16:8-11, revealing the prophetic nature of David's psalm as speaking of the coming Messiah (vv. 25-28). Peter then explains the identity of this 'Holy One' in vv. 29-33. In vv. 34-35, Peter's Psalm 110:1 point is a confirmatory one, linked with Psalm 16:8-11, and the conclusion to this logical and passionate defence is v. 36, 'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' (NKJV). Blatantly scriptural and forcefully pointed, the glorious crux of Peter's message comes at the end of his speech with the revelation of the fact that the long-awaited Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God, is Jesus of Nazareth. It is the moment of the grand reveal – no longer a parabolic story or question and answer situation. This is Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in declarative delivery fulfilling the great commission and preaching the gospel by revealing the identity of Jesus against the gruesome backdrop of the cross. A. D. Palma concurs that inspiration was the driving force behind Peter's unforgettably moving speech, 'Peter's address was more than a sermon. It was a Spirit-inspired utterance that was comparable to prophetic messages often delivered by God's servants in Old Testament times as they were moved on by the Holy Spirit.'⁹³ The response of the listening crowd was astonishing. It is clear that the Holy Spirit was not only at work in the upper room, but also in the hearts and minds of those who heard Peter's speech. The final hammer blow of Peter's revelation that the crucified and resurrected Jesus was actually the Christ of God was what made the speech so dramatic, for they must have realised that they

⁹² R. D. G. Cruz. "Luke's Application of Joel 2:28-32 in Peter's Sermon in Acts 2" (10-18-2011).

⁹³ A. D. Palma. "Spirit-Inspired Utterance" in *Enrichment Journal* (___).

http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/Tools_of_the_Trade/index_CAM.cfm (10-18-2011).

had 'killed' the Son of God. Desperate, their cry was one of salvation, to which Peter responded with the great doctrine of repentance (v. 39).

This is one of the most dramatic chapters in the New Testament. Peter's bravery and speech leads to at least three thousand new converts and the Church is born and booming. Contextually, the drama began in the upper room, moving out to where the crowds were, and they experienced an engagement of sorts with what was unfolding. Therefore, I would disagree with the perception of S. J. Lawson, who writes, concerning apostolic preaching and teaching, 'It is no accident that teaching came first. In the Christian life, precept comes before practice, doctrine before duty, and exposition before experience.'⁹⁴ My argument is that experience (what was unfolding at the time) gripped the crowd's attention, paving the way for exposition (or arguably, inspiration), leading to another, more personal and life-changing spiritual experience. This sequence, of course, could play into a postmodern context favourably as much as it did in the apostolic age. Concerning the issue of apostolic preaching though, some points must be made in light of Peter's address:

- (1) Peter's preaching was not what is now referred to as a 'sermon'. It was inspired, free-flowing speech.
- (2) Peter's preaching was declarative – even confrontational – in nature.
- (3) The aim of Peter's speech was revealing the divine nature of Jesus of Nazareth within the context of crucifixion.
- (4) The expected response of Peter's speech was repentance.

Case Study 2: Paul's Address at Athens (Acts 17:22-31).

By the time Paul had arrived in Athens, philosophy in the city had become the 'deeper religion of most intelligent people.'⁹⁵ Philo's influence during the time of Paul's missionary journeys was gaining far-reaching momentum⁹⁶ and Athens seemed to be the accommodating city for new ideas and philosophies. The difficulty which Paul would have come across would have been the severe cultural differences between the Judaism of Jerusalem and the pluralism of Athens. Of course, Antioch would have been a stepping stone into a multi-religious context, but in analysing Paul's address at Athens, one is immediately struck by his almost side-step approach.

⁹⁴ S. J. Lawson. "The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47" in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 158:630 (Apr. 2001). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/5708> (10-18-2011).

⁹⁵ J. N. D. Kelly. *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 14.

⁹⁶ J. N. D. Kelly. *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 9.

Acts 17 sees Paul continuing on his missionary journey, and his strategy for Thessalonica, Berea and now Athens was simple – find the synagogue, reason with the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles there, in the hope of seeing some converted to following Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, the Christ of God. In Thessalonica, Paul's reasoning in the synagogue had resulted in some Jews inciting a riot and after Jason was arrested under false charges, Paul and Silas were sent away to Berea (Acts 17:1-10a). As soon as they arrived in Berea, again, Paul sought out the synagogue there and began to reason as he did in Thessalonica that 'This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ' (Acts 17:3). Paul's efforts in Berea were afforded a greater sense of understanding, and the Bereans examined Paul's claims against the Scriptures and many of them believed (Acts 17:12), as did a number of prominent Greek women and men. Unfortunately for Paul, news of his missionary endeavours in Berea reached the Jewish community in Thessalonica and a number of them travelled to Berea and stirred the crowds there to disparage and dispel Paul's thoughts and if possible, Paul himself. The Berean brothers decided to send Paul to the coast, and leaving Silas and Timothy in Berea, Paul was escorted to Athens. As the scene plays out in Athens, Paul immediately comes under a sense of distress (Acts 17:16) at the amount of idols in the city, and begins his tried and tested approach, while waiting for Silas and Timothy, of reasoning with the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles in the synagogue. This time though, he also begins to reason in the market-place as well.

In what can be described as a divine opportunity, a group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers come within earshot of Paul's arguments and perhaps bizarrely took him to the Areopagus, presumably to either grant him a greater hearing, or to open the debate a little wider. The Scriptural viewpoint is that the Athenian public square was a lot more open to various opinions concerning philosophical or religious worldviews than the Jewish diaspora was. Sounding remarkably similar to Peter's context in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 17:22 sets the scene with Paul standing up to boldly speak in the Areopagus. Paul's similarity with Peter at this stage makes a firm departure, for what follows becomes what could arguably be a model for evangelical engagement with a pluralistic, postmodern culture.

It was either divine providence or astute campaigning which led Paul to the market-place in Athens, for out of this experience came the captive, philosophical audience of the Areopagus. The market-place was certainly the place of attention-grabbing (as opposed to attention-seeking) which led to the greater forum of an attentive

gathering. Once Paul has his 'crowd', he begins by engaging with their perceptions on religion, calling them a religious culture (Acts 17:22). His preaching then moves into the blatantly opportunistic, and how fortunate that he found the altar to the 'Unknown God' (Acts 17:23). His speech from v. 24 is declarative in nature, but unlike Peter, he is speaking to a largely Gentile crowd, and his argument from vv. 24-29 mainly highlights the innate human desire for communion – interaction – with the Creator. Paul briefly mentions the Adamic heritage of humanity, but centres on the issue of humanity as a created race which should naturally be drawn to its Creator. Where Paul's address does coincide with Peter's speech is in vv. 30-31. Here he pleads on God's behalf for repentance and gives the grand reveal, if only initially, of the 'appointed' man through whom judgement will one day come. In other words, his aim, his concluding rallying point is the identity of the man, and in a sense, Paul would have been teasing a questioning philosophical crowd by not coming 'right out with it', and his almost careless (although no doubt calculated) final comment concerning resurrection. Paul left them hanging, an inquisitive crowd with just enough information necessary to crave more. His mission in the Areopagus was complete – the crowd wanted to hear him again (Acts 17:32).

L. Dahle describes Paul's Areopagus address as '...consisting of key Judaeo-Christian convictions about who God is and how he has revealed himself.'⁹⁷ Dahle regards this statement as 'normative content of Paul's truth'.⁹⁸ This is somewhat misleading though, as Paul's approach in addressing the Areopagus is not based upon purely theological themes, explained in didactic or absolutely apologetic manner. His angle is arguably ideological/philosophical. In other words, Paul is deeply sensitive about his audience. Dahle suggests that Luke's account describes Paul's proactive approach in Athens as a 'recommended apologetic in biblically illiterate and pluralistic *agora* contexts.'⁹⁹ Paul's approach in Athens was certainly a proactive one as Dahle points out, however his argument that this approach is a recommended apologetic may be a misuse of terminology. Paul may have gone on to apologetically argue and persuade what Dahle calls Paul's Judaeo-Christian convictions, but here in the Areopagus, his address is largely an engagement with their philosophy, poetry and worldview.

⁹⁷ L. Dahle. "Acts 17:16-34: An Apologetic Model Then and Now?" in *Tyndale Bulletin*, 53:2 (NA2002). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/13970>, p. 314 (10-21-2011).

⁹⁸ L. Dahle. "Acts 17:16-34: An Apologetic Model Then and Now?" p. 314 (10-21-2011).

⁹⁹ L. Dahle. "Acts 17:16-34: An Apologetic Model Then and Now?" p. 314 (10-21-2011).

I would argue that Paul's address is a model, but placed within our current context, it is a model of evangelical engagement with postmodern culture. N. L. Geisler describes Paul's approach as 'pre-evangelism', suggesting, 'How did Paul do it? He did it by first of all pre-evangelising them in theism. Verses 24-29 constitute his cosmological argument.'¹⁰⁰ Considering his context, had Paul gone straight into pure evangelistic, apologetic mode, he may have run the risk of losing his hearers altogether (he lost some even at the hint of resurrection in Acts 17:32). His strategy, from observing the context as soon as he arrived in the city, to reasoning in the market-place as well as the synagogue, to engaging with the philosophers at the Areopagus, all seemed to be a part of his *process*, rather than his simply arriving and evangelising the city. Geisler argues that we stand in Paul's shoes today, and that we must pre-evangelise a postmodern world before evangelising it.¹⁰¹

Again, concerning apostolic preaching, some points must be made in light of Paul's address:

- (1) Paul was culturally sensitive to the context in which he found himself.
- (2) Paul's approach (contrary to Peter's approach) was not primarily historically based, but ideologically/philosophically based.
- (3) Paul's content (contrary to Peter's content) was not explicitly but implicitly Scriptural.
- (4) Paul's conclusion (similar to Peter's conclusion) was to point to God's 'man' and to call for repentance as a response.

In both of these case studies, there are similarities and differences. Both audiences are different (Jewish/religious and Gentile/philosophical), and each approach was different. The similarities revolved around the crux of the identity and salvific work of Jesus Christ and an expected response in repentance. Each case study does prove though that apostolic preaching also allows for contextual appreciation and adaptation. Taking both of these case studies alongside the previous definition of apostolic preaching, a revised definition could now be: *'The contextually-aware dynamic and authoritative preaching of the life and work of Jesus Christ, culminating in his identity and salvific purpose, with an expected response of repentance and consequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, leading to a life of righteous obedience.'*

¹⁰⁰ N. L. Geisler. "Evangelism in a Postmodern World" in *Faith and Mission*, 21:2 (Spring 2004). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/8261>, p. 62 (10-21-2011).

¹⁰¹ N. L. Geisler. "Evangelism in a Postmodern World", p. 69 (10-21-2011).

If this is the basis of true apostolic preaching, then is this the practice of contemporary Western preaching?

In exploring the contemporary world of preaching, one form of preaching is generally heralded above all other forms of preaching, and that form is expository preaching, and in particular, the expository sermon. A cursory study of the benefits of the expository sermon and of expository preaching in general reveal many advocates of this form of preaching today. D. Prime writes, 'Expository preaching is one of the key secrets of a ministry of lasting usefulness.'¹⁰² J. Horner comments that the expository sermon is, in his view, 'Bible-based preaching' and goes on to suggest that this method of preaching is important because, '...people need it...people welcome and respond to it...and because God blesses it.'¹⁰³ These are powerfully persuasive words, which almost argue that expository preaching is the *God-ordained* method of preaching. Lloyd-Jones does actually argue this point, claiming, 'I therefore lay down this proposition that a sermon should always be expository.'¹⁰⁴ To confirm this mindset, G. Batson reveals what he believes is the result of expository preaching, concluding that, 'Expository preaching is best known for the results it produces. When the preacher feeds his flock on a diet of expository preaching, the sheep tend to be healthy and well-developed. In fact, spiritual nourishment is the trademark of expository preaching.'¹⁰⁵ Expository preaching certainly has its followers, particularly in the western evangelical world. But where did this phenomenon of the expository sermon actually come from, and more importantly, what is it?

The expository sermon is detailed by Batson as including a subject, theme, introduction (including a lead sentence, sermonic explanation and a proposition), a transitional sentence, main points (normally alliterated), with sub-points coming from the main points, and a conclusion including an objective statement and a powerful last sentence.¹⁰⁶ Although it is possible to streamline this description of expository preaching, Batson's rendering describes the generic expository sermon outline.

In understanding the beginnings of this type of preaching, R. Stedman (who once stated concerning expository preaching that it was the greatest contribution that the

¹⁰² D. Prime. "The Church and the Ministry" in Grogan, G. (Ed.) *Shaping Tomorrow Starting Today*, p. 105.

¹⁰³ J. Horner. *Ministry in the Local Church*. London: The Epworth Press, 1986, p. 54.

¹⁰⁴ M. Lloyd-Jones. *Preaching and Preachers*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁵ G. Batson. *Expository Preaching*. Springfield, MO: Global University, 1988, p. 34.

¹⁰⁶ G. Batson. *Expository Preaching*, p. 159.

Church could make to society today¹⁰⁷) lists his greatest expositors as being exclusively post twentieth century (G. Campbell-Morgan, H. Ironside, M. Lloyd-Jones, J. Vernon McGee, R. Halverson, S. Olford, J. R. W. Stott, F. Schaeffer and J. I. Packer).¹⁰⁸ There may be an argument that glimpses of the expository sermon are found in the nineteenth century (C. H. Spurgeon and R. M. M'Cheyne, for example), but although both made points within their sermons, they did not follow what would now be called the 'form' of the expository sermon. If anything, their sermons were more in the realm of impassioned speeches than what is deemed certainly by Batson as an expository sermon. Therefore, the origins of the expository sermon as it is now classified are largely a post twentieth century phenomenon, and the form of the expository sermon is still being heralded today as being the primary model of biblical preaching. Of course the glaring reality of the matter is that the New Testament does not contain one even barely close resemblance to an expository sermon. In fact, taking Paul's challenge from 1 Cor. 1:17, there is a distinct contradiction between the biblical methods of preaching and the current exaltation of the expository sermon. This reasoning unfortunately exalts professional form over anointed dynamics, and falls into what G. Cooke and G. Goodell term the 'Olympics of Oratory'.¹⁰⁹ Expository preaching – the preferred method of the Western evangelical Church – may be heralded as the saving structure for reaching a postmodern world, but it is sub-biblical in nature and arguably sub-biblical in contextual awareness. This does then leave the question – 'How then are we to preach within a postmodern context?' A new approach is needed, and that approach is what I would term 'Postmodern Apostolic Preaching'.

Postmodern Apostolic Preaching

Two extremes seem to have prevailed in contemporary preaching. One extreme is the stubborn grip of preachers who refuse to let go of the modern methods of the expository sermon. The other extreme is the growing number of preachers who are deciding that it is time to adapt culturally with postmodernism's demands and to preach postmodernally. Webber observes, 'Some leaders will insist on preserving the Christian faith in its modern form; others will run headlong into the sweeping changes

¹⁰⁷ R. Stedman. "On Expository Preaching" in www.raystedman.org (____).<http://www.raystedman.org/thematic-studies/leadership/on-expository-preaching> (10-25-2011).

¹⁰⁸ R. Stedman. "On Expository Preaching" (10-25-2011).

¹⁰⁹ G. Cooke & G. Goodell. *Permission Granted to do Church Differently in the 21st Century*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishing Inc., 2006, p. 221.

that accommodate Christianity to postmodern forms.¹¹⁰ His conclusion to finding a middle ground between these two camps is to ‘carefully and cautiously seek to interface historic Christian truths into the dawning of a new era.’¹¹¹ There is therefore an undoubted possibility (and need) to maintain the balance in preaching between the apostolic message and our postmodern context.

D. Hansen observes that, ‘Biblical preaching can be intellectual, practical or emotional, but if it does not lead ultimately to the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is not biblical and it is not relevant.’¹¹² There must be a sense of awareness today though that preachers preach in a largely biblically illiterate world¹¹³. Therefore, in attempting to reach a postmodern, biblically illiterate world with the gospel, learning from the apostolic preaching of the first century Church has the potential to specifically bridge the illiteracy gap. In the book of Acts, apostolic preaching laid the foundation of the true *identity* of Jesus of Nazareth as the springboard in introducing the salvific *work* which he accomplished. This practice must be recovered within a postmodern, anti-biblical Western world.

Establishing the foundation of the true identity of Jesus Christ is simply marrying the historical fact of Jesus of Nazareth with the biblical proposition that he was and is the Son of God, the Messiah, the Christ. When preachers today launch into either a proclamation or an apologetic of the cross, a biblically illiterate Western world may not necessarily link the work of the cross with the biblical proposition that it was God on the cross. P. Adam’s challenge in this regard suggests that only a discipline of biblical theology can save preachers from misusing the Bible¹¹⁴. If that is the case, then a biblical theology which highlights the apostolic aim in preaching is necessary. In other words, what message were they trying to put across?

In looking into the book of Acts, one four-word phrase (and consequent spin-offs of this phrase) reoccurs again and again, the phrase; ‘Jesus is the Christ’. It is either overtly stated or covertly alluded to in the following verses; Acts 2:36, 3:6, 18-20, 4:10, 5:30-31, 42, 7:52, 59, 8:5, 12, 35, 9:5, 20, 22, 34, 10:36, 38, 42-43, 48, 13:27, 33-41, 16:31, 17:3, 18, 31, 18:5, 19:17, 20:21, 22:8, 26:23, 28:23, 30. The body of

¹¹⁰ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 14.

¹¹¹ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 14.

¹¹² D. Hansen. “Who’s Listening Out There?” in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 135.

¹¹³ D. Hansen. “Who’s Listening Out There?” in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 129.

¹¹⁴ P. Adam. “Preaching and Biblical Theology: The Relationship of Biblical Theology and Preaching” in Alexander, T. D. & Rosner, B. S. (Eds.) *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2000, pp. 104-122. <http://beginningwithmoses.org/bt-articles/212/preaching-and-biblical-theology-the-relationship-of-biblical-theology-and-preaching> (11-07-2011).

evidence is biblically overwhelming that apostolic preaching argued first for the *identity* of Jesus as the Christ of God, before moving on to the necessary *declaration* and *explanation* of his redemptive purpose. If that is the apostolic method of preaching, then the earlier definition of apostolic preaching, based on scholarly conclusions, needs to be redefined. Perhaps then a better definition in light of the Lukan account of preaching within the book of Acts, would be, *'The contextually-aware, dynamic, authoritative preaching of the identity and subsequent salvific purpose of Jesus Christ with an expected response of repentance and an indwelling, Holy Spirit-enabling life of righteous obedience.'*

If this is a better definition of apostolic preaching, then might it be a simple exercise in translating this kind of preaching to a postmodern world? This could be a naive reaction and application though, for two important issues to consider are, firstly, that the actual phrase 'Jesus is the Christ' needs to be reworded, and secondly, a measure of postmodern communication needs to be discussed and embraced.

If a preacher was to stand in a church or in the market place today and proclaim that Jesus was the Christ, then I would argue that he or she would not have the same response as Paul or Peter did when they took on the phrase and impacted entire regions with it. There are at least two reasons for this; 1: The phrase is lost on a biblically illiterate Western world, and 2: The phrase needs to be revealed as being the basis of the divine story of redemption – the identity of Jesus of Nazareth being the Son of God.

In light of a biblically-illiterate Western world, there may be no doubt that the fundamental message of Scripture is 'Christ died for our sins' and at the heart of the apostolic message was the redemptive deed on Calvary.¹¹⁵ However, in a twenty-first century, anti-biblical Western world, an expected response to such a message could likely be, 'So what?', or 'What does that have to do with me?' Evangelical theology may be correct, but the use of concise and assumptive language is presently not. This of course raises the question, 'What response should preachers make to a biblically illiterate Western world?' By changing one word of the 'Jesus is the Christ' phrase, the biblical illiteracy could be overcome.

The word 'Christ' to a Jewish (and to some extent Gentiles in the vicinity of Jewish settlements) would have been a potently loaded word. As Kelly reveals, 'Judaism was the cradle in which Christianity was nurtured, the source to which it was uniquely indebted. It left a deep imprint...on the Church's liturgy and ministry, and an even

¹¹⁵ J. S. Stewart. *Preaching*, p. 56.

deeper one on its teaching.¹¹⁶ Therefore, those early years of first century preaching could have embraced an audience with the words 'Jesus is the Christ' with confidence that not too much meaning would be lost in translation. Today's context is a completely different one of course, one which would not readily understand, let alone accept, the view of 'Jesus is the Christ'.

It is a very subjective exercise in trying to arrive at a conclusion as to what the word 'Christ' should become, in order to reach a postmodern generation. The choice must not be attention-seeking driven, or compromise driven. There is the potential to fall into the trap which Mohler highlights in suggesting, 'Some evangelicals have been too hasty in embracing what are presented as postmodern alternatives to prevailing options.'¹¹⁷ Yet, a change of wording is absolutely necessary, for the purpose of accommodating an anti-biblical generation to at least understand the biblical redemptive message. That word 'Christ' then would need to change to a more understandable word in completing the phrase, and yet retain a measure of its meaning. I would propose changing the word 'Christ' with 'Answer'. Therefore, the new phrase used to convey apostolic truth to a postmodern audience would be, 'Jesus is the Answer'.

The phrase is unquestionably a simple one – perhaps even crude – but placed within the context of postmodernism, it is an incendiary one. This approach endorses Chapell's view that, 'This generation of preachers will face no greater challenge than confronting a cultural acceptance of religious pluralism with an uncompromising commitment to the uniqueness of Christian faith as God's way of salvation from the human predicament.'¹¹⁸ It is this sense of 'human predicament' which a phrase such as 'Jesus is the answer' would cut into, with the exclusivity it deserves in a context where it is at least understandable. This is renewing the old within the generation of the present. If we are to preach apostolically, then any message which does not convey the repeated elevation of Jesus as the 'Christ', or Jesus as the 'answer', falls, '...woefully short of apostolic standards.'¹¹⁹ Postmodernism has spawned and encouraged the idea of religious pluralism. Brown views western culture as becoming

¹¹⁶ J. N. D. Kelly. *Early Christian Doctrines*, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ R. A. Mohler. "The Integrity of the Evangelical Tradition and the Challenge of the Postmodern Paradigm" in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 70.

¹¹⁸ B. Chapell. "The Necessity of Preaching Christ in a World Hostile to Him" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 61.

¹¹⁹ S. J. Lawson. "The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47" (10-18-2011).

'more like Athens than Jerusalem'.¹²⁰ Perhaps we are already there. The one thing which broke into the religiously and philosophically pluralistic world of Athenian debate was an apostle who reasoned both in the synagogue and in the market place and preached in the Areopagus of a Jesus who was the answer to any philosophy or predicament. If we are living in pluralistic 'Athens' in the west today, then apostolic preaching must be seriously considered as a means to reaching this Athenian mindset. In preaching a 'Jesus is the answer' message, not only is apostolic history being revisited, but postmodernism is also being considered and addressed.

Rewording the phrase 'Jesus is the Christ' to 'Jesus is the answer' may deal with the basic content in initially addressing apostolic preaching within a postmodern context, however, the issue of how to communicate this message is vitally important. The blatant cry of present-day preachers should therefore be, 'We want to know how to preach the apostolic faith more effectively to postmodern people.'¹²¹ If preaching should be evangelical in nature, then assent with G. Taylor's assumptions concerning clarity of speech, sincerity of presentation, suitability of material, simplicity of lesson and brevity of sermon are all important disciplines.¹²² Unfortunately many like Taylor concentrate on content, style and length of sermon rather than methodology in presentation. E. Hulse argues against moving towards postmodern communication techniques in stating, 'The entertaining industry spreads postmodernist philosophy into every home through TV.'¹²³ His argument is a valid one, as television (and perhaps to a greater or lesser degree the internet) is a vehicle for predominantly postmodern thought. His argument continues in observing that this vehicle of communication helps to fragment the mind, but the argument takes a strongly conservative turn when he suggests, 'The TV mentality comes through in church when people call for entertainment rather than preaching, or at least they expect preaching to be entertaining, full of anecdotes, stories and images to which they have been accustomed to on TV.'¹²⁴ Perhaps a more conservative approach would agree with Hulse's observations that it would be best to steer clear of postmodern techniques of visual stimulus to promote the redemptive story. However, Arthurs, in viewing the present preaching landscape, concludes, 'Cultures shift, and the art of

¹²⁰ W. E. Brown. "Theology in a Postmodern Culture: Implications of a Video-Dependent Society" in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 165.

¹²¹ D. P. Teague. "Welcome to the Postmodern World" in www.postmodernpreaching.net (____). <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/> (10-21-2011).

¹²² G. Taylor. "What is Preaching?" (10-11-2011).

¹²³ E. Hulse. "What is Postmodernism?" p. 8 (10-18-2011).

¹²⁴ E. Hulse. "What is Postmodernism?" p. 10 (10-18-2011).

preaching, like the art of rhetoric, demands that we adjust ideas to people, so that we can adjust people to ideas.¹²⁵ Arthurs' driving motivation is not contextual conformity, but acceptable communication.

How far, though, should the preacher shift in order to communicate biblical truth, and is there ever a danger in shifting too far? M. Stibbe views film as crucially integral to the practice of preaching in a postmodern context, suggesting that Paul would do so if he were preaching today.¹²⁶ Biblically, he argues that as Paul was willing to become like his audience in 1 Cor. 9:20, so should we be, and so his affirmation of using movies in preaching is engaging with an audience who prefers media to monologue.¹²⁷ A current difficulty Stibbe may face though is one of age. Movie presentation (with clips and sermon teaching / application) would appeal to a largely younger audience, at least presently. A response could be that using media to reach people with the message of Jesus could in itself be carving out a culture of media-led Christian communication. But is the issue really one of media versus lack of media use? I would argue that postmodernism offers greater opportunities of communicative possibilities.

If postmodernism hails the use of story over cold, hard facts, and exalts a person's experience over scientific evidence, then surely this postmodern need would allow for the Christian use of testimony as preaching. Arthurs affirms that the 'liberal use of testimony should be part of postmodern services'¹²⁸ for this very reason. The apostle Paul was keen to use testimony in his preaching, and our present postmodern context would undoubtedly find agreement with at least the story element of it.

The same principle applies with story as illustration in preaching. Not necessarily stories which are apologetic or scientific in nature, but applicable stories which illuminate a theological truth. Even W. E. Sangster, writing in the modern era, argued that, 'Preaching is meant to do something – the most tremendous and important of all things, and, because illustrations can help preaching to do it, no more need be said to illustrate this.'¹²⁹ Sangster, in his classic, suggests that illustration – story to apply truth – helps to make the message clear. If preachers have such an endorsement of

¹²⁵ J. D. Arthurs. "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 179.

¹²⁶ M. Stibbe. "Using Movies in Preaching" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 508.

¹²⁷ M. J. Glodo. "The Bible in Stereo: New Opportunities for Biblical Interpretation in an A-Rational Age" in Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, pp. 106-126.

¹²⁸ J. D. Arthurs. "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 197.

¹²⁹ W. E. Sangster. *The Craft of the Sermon*. London: The Epworth Press, 1954, p. 212.

illustrative story in preaching, and if we live within a society which warms to story, then postmodernism could be open for apostolic truth, via the help of story.

Another communicative opportunity within postmodernism is the dynamic of dialogue. Arthurs comments that preachers should learn from the 'coffee house and the museum'¹³⁰ concerning interaction. Webber describes this kind of learning as being an 'embodied experience of God expressed in life-changing rituals of immersed participation.'¹³¹ This kind of immersed participation is revealed in the success of courses such as the Alpha Course and Christianity Explored, as the gospel is shared in an experiential, participatory often home-based discussion. Interestingly, first century apostolic reasoning often resonated within the home-based, discussion, question and answer type of setting (Acts 5:42, for example). In the Denver-based *Adullam* fellowship, teaching and preaching is within a cafe setting, with a biblical presentation given, and then at each table, the presentation is discussed over food, with a definitive biblical conclusion to the gathering. This is carried on into midweek home settings.¹³² Biblical truth is covered in this setting within a 'how to', questioning approach concerning life application of biblical truth, and yet it is carried out within a relaxed, story and dialogue-filled inclusive experience. In short, within a truly postmodern context.

This kind of participatory experience is proving to be a growing phenomenon in the Christian Church, with the use of participation either by discussion, experience, symbolism, or as some communities refer to their worship, 'prophetic acts'.¹³³ Postmodernally, the Iona Community would be a desirable context in which to discover biblical truth, as it places a high level of importance on symbol. As much as this may be a moving towards postmodern engagement, the ever-present danger is always in the question, 'How much importance should symbol have in discovering truth?', as emphatic symbolism can have the potential to elevate the power of symbol over the power of Scripture.

In reviewing the idea of what I have termed postmodern apostolic preaching, the balance should always maintain the clear biblical message of the gospel, but in a tangible and accessible way. One vivid illustration of this is suggested by Teague, who presents a postmodern way of illustrating the biblical truth of atonement, via

¹³⁰ J. D. Arthurs. "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching" in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 194.

¹³¹ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 24.

¹³² See www.adullamdenver.com (12-05-2011).

¹³³ For instance, the Iona Community, www.iona.org.uk/iona_worship.php, and also books such as M. Mitton. *Restoring the Woven Cord*. London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1995.

story. He suggests that the story of Maximilian Kolbe, the Priest who volunteered to die in place of another prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp in World War 2 would arouse the ears of a postmodern listener. Tagged on to this remarkable story is the response of the 'freed' prisoner, Franciszek Gajawniczek, who stated in front of 150,000 Auschwitz pilgrims in 1972, that as long as he lived, he would consider it his duty to tell people about the heroic act of love by Maximilian Kolbe as long as he had breath. Teague concludes that 'When we preach, we want our listeners to feel like Franciszek Gajawniczek.'¹³⁴ Falling under a story of the 'heroic act of love' as Teague words it, provides a storyline alongside the biblical storyline of redemption. This is balancing the message with a postmodern method, apostolic preaching with postmodern preaching.

Like most dangers in preaching, methods have the potential to carry over into the area of message. P. Reid suggests that preachers should always carry out the 'painstaking work of establishing a changed worldview' when it comes to preaching in a postmodern context, otherwise, 'commitment to Christianity will only be as deep a commitment as to any other 'helpful' product.'¹³⁵ His argument is that current preaching can become pragmatic in order to engage with the audience, but that pragmatism can fall into postmodernism, by suggesting that redemption will 'work' for the listener. The basic premise in this kind of preaching, Reid proposes, actually sends out a message that if it works for the listener, then it is true. Whereas, the biblical gospel as preached by both Peter and Paul is that Jesus is Lord, regardless of whether that is lived out in order to prove its truth. Therefore, with this kind of engagement, as Reid suggests, 'we unwittingly confirm the basic postmodern view that truth is whatever works.'¹³⁶ His conclusion on apostolic preaching is that particularly Paul 'tells it like it is, no subterfuge, not restricted to the inner circle who have heard the special revelation, but to every man's conscience.'¹³⁷ In other words, his view on apostolic preaching is that it is declarative in nature, more so than apologetic in nature, and my reading of apostolic preaching in the book of Acts would arrive at the same conclusion.

Conclusion

¹³⁴ D. P. Teague. "Preaching the Atonement" in www.postmodernpreaching.net (____). <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/atonement.htm> (11-15-2011).

¹³⁵ P. Reid. *Interview with W. Wade* (10-30-2011).

¹³⁶ P. Reid. *Interview with W. Wade* (10-30-2011).

¹³⁷ P. Reid. *Interview with W. Wade* (10-30-2011).

Teague argues that the ‘special challenge we face as preachers in a postmodern world is to earn the right to be heard.’¹³⁸ This is an unfortunately pessimistic view of our present context. Perhaps a more observant view is that of Webber, who writes, ‘My suggestion that we re-present classical Christianity to the postmodern culture is not a call for a mere historical restitutionism, but a serious application of classical thought to a postmodern worldview.’¹³⁹ Webber’s argument for message placed into context is the plea of this essay, by rediscovering the biblical account of apostolic preaching and rewording a first century apostolic mantra for a twenty-first century anti-biblical world. In light of the onset of a greater push towards global postmodern philosophy, Mohler may not be overly dramatic concerning the Church’s preaching, when he states, ‘Nothing less than the integrity of evangelical Christianity is at stake.’¹⁴⁰ With the growing popularity of writers such as B. McLaren and P. Rollins, and their Christian postmodern philosophy, perhaps as an evangelical response, a fresh appreciation of the first century message of Jesus as the Christ, the answer to the human and now the postmodern dilemma, is a necessary call. The dynamism of true apostolic preaching should therefore be the new paradigm of Christian advance, putting to rest at last the modern approach of the expository sermon. K. Willhite seems to concur on at least the weariness of this modern approach, lamenting, ‘Unfortunately much of expository preaching is merely pedantic explanation, almost to the extreme of being an oral commentary.’¹⁴¹ A postmodern world simply closes its ears to such attempts of communication. Gibson could well be correct in assessing that, ‘During the apostolic days the reception to the preached word clearly demonstrates resistance from a hostile culture.’¹⁴² Yet, he goes on to plead for the continuance of preaching, writing, ‘Preachers are called to proclaim the powerful, authoritative word in the midst of a culture that is looking for a voice in the wilderness.’¹⁴³

¹³⁸ D. P. Teague. “Welcome to the Postmodern World” in www.postmodernpreaching.net (____). <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/> (10-21-2011).

¹³⁹ R. E. Webber. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*, p. 12.

¹⁴⁰ R. A. Mohler. “The Integrity of the Evangelical Tradition and the Challenge of the Postmodern Paradigm.” In Dockery, D. S. (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*, p. 53.

¹⁴¹ K. Willhite. “Connecting With Your Congregation” in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 96.

¹⁴² S. M. Gibson. “Biblical Preaching in an Anti-authority Age” in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 216.

¹⁴³ S. M. Gibson. “Biblical Preaching in an Anti-authority Age” in Gibson, S. M. (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*, p. 226.

Postmodernism, due to its questioning nature without the search for definitive answers, remains bankrupt within its own philosophy. Preaching which is able to cut across its questions wisely, by communicating in a way which postmodernists can accept, has the potential to raise the apostolic mantra which has been in effect since the beginning of the Church with the authoritative words, 'Jesus is the answer'. In the end, the crux of the communication of the Church is that it can use postmodern methods to engage with postmodern culture, but ultimately, preaching is God's preferred method, and as P. Reid conclusively states, 'Use all the methods you can, but they cannot possibly communicate the gospel as plainly and as unambiguously as preaching.'¹⁴⁴

This generation (like any other) seeks authenticity in a preacher, and in preaching. If that touch of the authentic is found, or if, as M. Ramsden argues, the Church once again becomes salt and light in the community¹⁴⁵, and if preachers can recapture the apostolic message, reconfigured for an anti-biblical Western world, mixed with a measure of integrity, transparency and wisdom in the use of postmodern communication, then the grim warning of a Church without relevancy will itself become merely a clanging cymbal.

However, if preachers do not, then a continual adherence to the modern preaching of the last century has the very real potential to make the Church an irrelevant institution. What has taken place in history can always have the audacity to resurface. Apostolic preaching in a postmodern context, I believe, could be another audacious chapter in the future history of the Church.

¹⁴⁴ P. Reid. *Interview with W. Wade* (10-30-2011).

¹⁴⁵ M. Ramsden. "Engaging With the Postmodern Generation" in Haslam, G. (Ed.) *Preach the Word*, p. 525.

References

- Adam, P.** "Preaching and Biblical Theology: The Relationship of Biblical Theology and Preaching" in **Alexander, T. D. & Rosner, B. S.** (Eds.) *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2000, pp. 104-122. <http://www.beginningwithmoses.org/bt-articles/212/preaching-and-biblical-theology-the-relationship-of-biblical-theology-and-preaching>
- Arthurs, J. D.** "The Postmodern Mind and Preaching" in **Gibson, S. M.** (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.
- Aylesworth, G.** "Postmodernism" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2010). <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/postmodernism/>
- Barna, G.** "What attracts young people to church today?" in *Church Growth Today*, 5:5 (1990).
- Batson, G.** *Expository Preaching*. Springfield, MO: Global University, 1988.
- Brann, E. T. H.** "What is Postmodernism?" in *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* (Spring 1992). <http://hcs.harvard.edu/~hrp/issues/1992/Brann.pdf>
- Brown, W. E.** "Theology in a Postmodern Culture: Implications of a Video-Dependent Society" in **Dockery, D. S.** (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Carson, D. A.** *Becoming Conversant With the Emerging Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.
- Chapell, B.** "The Necessity of Preaching Christ in a World Hostile to Him" in **Gibson, S. M.** (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.
- Cooke, G. & Goodell, G.** *Permission Granted to do Church Differently in the 21st Century*. Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishing, Inc., 2006.
- Cruz, R. G. D.** "Luke's Application of Joel 2:28-32 in Peter's Sermon in Acts 2" in *Cyberjournal for Pentecostal –Charismatic Research* (___). <http://www.pctii.org/cyberj/cyberj4/cruz.html>
- Dahle, L.** "Acts 17:16-34: An Apologetic Model Then and Now?" in *Tyndale Bulletin*, 53:2 (NA2002). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/13970>
- Dockery, D. S.** "The Challenge of Postmodernism" in **Dockery, D. S.** (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Dresselhaus, R. L.** "What is Pentecostal Preaching?" in *Enrichment Journal* (Sept. 2007).

http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/Tools_of_the_Trade/20070914_03_What_Is_Pent_Pr_each.cfm

Eaton, M. "God-Centred Preaching" in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Finney, J. *Recovering the Past: Celtic and Roman Mission*. London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1996.

Geisler, N. L. "Evangelism in a Postmodern World" in *Faith and Mission*, 21:2 (Spring 2002). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/8261>

Gibson, S. M. "Biblical Preaching in an Anti-authority Age" in **Gibson, S. M.** (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.

Glodo, M. J. "The Bible in Stereo: New Opportunities for Biblical Interpretation in an A-Rational Age" in **Dockery, D. S.** (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Goodrick, E. W. & Kohlenberger, J. R. III (Eds.) *The Strongest NIV Exhaustive Concordance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999.

Greenslade, P. "Preaching the Big Story" in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World, Ltd., 2006.

Greenslade, P. "The Sacrament of the Word" in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Grenz, S. J. "Star Trek and the Next Generation: Postmodernism and the Future of Evangelical Theology" in **Dockery, D. S.** (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Grogan, G. "The Church and Theology" in **Grogan, G.** (Ed.) *Shaping Tomorrow, Starting Today*. Fearn: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1992.

Hansen, D. "Who's Listening Out There?" in **Gibson, S. M.** (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.

Haslam, G. "Essential Ingredients of Popular Preaching" in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Hayford, J. *Hayford's Bible Handbook*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1995.

Horner, J. *Ministry in the Local Church*. London: The Epworth Press, 1986.

Hulse, E. "What is Postmodernism?" in www.reformation-today.org (____). <http://www.reformation-today.org/papers/ibc.pdf>

Keel, T. "A Reader's Guide for a New Kind of Christian" in **McLaren, B. D.** *A New Kind of Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. London: Continuum, 2004.

Lawson, S. J. “The Priority of Biblical Preaching: An Expository Study of Acts 2:42-47” in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 158:630 (Apr. 2001). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/5708>

Lloyd-Jones, M. *Preaching and Preachers*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1971.

McCourt, A. *Interview with W. Wade*, 2010.

McLaren, B. D. *A New Kind of Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

McLaren, B. D. *The Secret Message of Jesus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006.

Mitton, M. *Restoring the Woven Cord*. London: Dartman, Longman & Todd, 1995.

Morris, L. *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. London: The Tyndale Press, 1955.

Mohler, R. A. “The Integrity of the Evangelical Tradition and the Challenge of the Postmodern Paradigm” in **Dockery, D. S.** (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Moynagh, M. *Changing World Changing Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch Books, 2001.

Oden, T. C. “The Death of Modernity and Postmodern Evangelical Spirituality” in **Dockery, D. S.** (Ed.) *The Challenge of Postmodernism: An Evangelical Engagement*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Orr-Ewing, F. & A. *Deep*. Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2008.

Palma, A. D. “Spirit-Inspired Utterance” in *Enrichment Journal* (___). http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/Tools_of_the_Trade/index_CAM.cfm

Polhill, J. B. “Preaching from the Acts of the Apostles” in *Faith and Mission*, 12:1 (Fall 1994). <http://www.galaxie.com/article/8087>

Prime, D. “The Church and the Ministry” in **Grogan, G.** (Ed.) *Shaping Tomorrow, Starting Today*. Fearn: Christian Focus Publications Ltd., 1992.

Ramsden, M. “Engaging with the Postmodern Generation” in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Reid, P. *Interview with W. Wade*, 2011.

Reid, S. “Connecting with the Real World” in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Rollins, P. *Insurrection*. New York: Howard Books, 2011.

Sangster, W. E. *The Craft of the Sermon*. London: The Epworth Press, 1954.

Soames, C. (Ed.) *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Stedman, R. “On Expository Preaching” in www.raystedman.org (___). <http://www.raystedman.org/thematic-studies/leadership/on-expository-preaching>

Stewart, J. S. *Preaching*. London: English Universities Press Ltd., 1955.

Stibbe, M. “Using Movies in Preaching” in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Stott, J. *The Living Church*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2007.

Taylor, G. “What is Preaching?” in www.expositorysermonoutlines.com (2011).
<http://expositorysermonoutlines.com/articles/good-preaching.html>

Teague, D. P. “Welcome to the Postmodern World” in www.postmodernpreaching.net (____). <http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/>

Teague, D. P. “Preaching the Atonement” in www.postmodernpreaching.net (____).
<http://www.postmodernpreaching.net/atonement>

Tenney, M. C. *New Testament Survey*. Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 2003.

Thwaites, J. *The Church Beyond the Congregation*. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1999.

Virgo, T. “Apostolic Preaching” in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.

Webber, R. E. *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism in a Postmodern World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999.

Willhite, K. “Connecting With Your Congregation” in **Gibson, S. M.** (Ed.) *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004.

Winter, D. (Ed.) *Matthew Henry’s Commentary: Acts to Revelation*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1975.

Wright, C. “Preaching from Narrative” in **Haslam, G.** (Ed.) *Preach the Word*. Lancaster: Sovereign World Ltd., 2006.
www.denveradullam.com
www.iona.org.uk