

PREACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Two major problems confront us in approach-
ing this subject: the vast amount of written
material on the matter, and the wide range
of words used in the New Testament for the
communication of the gospel. The literature
on the subject of preaching is most useful.

Much of it tends, however, quite naturally to deal with the practi-
calities of preaching, while passing over the Biblical warrant for
it quite cursorily. In this sense, it is not entirely relevant to
our present purpose. Of those works which were found most helpful,
mention might be made of the following: Charles Bridges: 'The
Christian Ministry' provides valuable background Biblical proofs
for the ministry of the Word, as also do Spurgeon's 'Lectures' and
R.L.Dabney 'On Preaching'. More recently, J.S.Stewart's 'Heralds
of God', and D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones 'Preaching and Preachers' serve
the same purpose. However, on the particular aspect in view, C.H.
Dodd 'The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments', R.H.Mounce 'The
Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching', and E.P.Clowney
'Preaching and Biblical Theology' are even more relevant. The best
and most stimulating introduction was J.R.W.Stott 'The Preacher's
Portrait'. In this, a number of Biblical metaphors for the preacher
are examined viz., the preacher as steward, herald, witness, father
and servant, with John Stott's usual precision, insight and
meaningful application. One of the most recent comments on the sub-
ject is by Dr James Daane in a booklet (1980) entitled, 'Preaching
with Confidence - a theological essay on the power of the pulpit'.
Dr Daane majors on the theme of the "Word of God" in both Old and
New Testaments, defends preaching as a viable modern means of gospel
communication and offers some helpful suggestions about sermon
construction.

The wide range of words used in the New Testament for the communi-
cation of the gospel also confronts us. These include words like teach
(DIDASKO and KATECHEO for the communication of material to be
learned, and PARADIDOMI for the passing on of tradition), GNORIZO
to make known, HOMOLOGEO to confess, MARTYREO to witness, the prin-
cipal words for preaching - ANGELLO. KERUSSO and their derivatives

to speak. The additional fact that the New Testament usage of these terms is so fluid as to prevent their being regarded as technical terms further adds to difficulties of being definitive. However, indeed, possibly because of this, it is better if we limit our examination to what might be regarded as the central expression of New Testament doctrine in respect of preaching. We would propose to approach this under the following aspects: 1. The Importance of Preaching in the New Testament. 2. The Characteristics of Preaching in the New Testament. 3. The Relevance of Preaching in the New Testament for us today.

The Importance of Preaching in the New Testament

The centrality of preaching in N.T. thought needs little emphasis. It is evident on two scores at the very least. The verbal incidence of the concept is obvious. In Young's Analytical Concordance there are over 130 references under 'Preach', 'Preacher' and 'Preaching'. In addition to their mere occurrence, secondly, these constitute a major theme in N.T. truth: John the Baptist expressed his prophetic ministry in preaching. The primary emphasis of Jesus' work is represented in the same light, and He urged His disciples to do this also. Much of the activity of the early church as represented in the Acts was directed toward preaching, and that as a priority. The self-confessed passion of the apostle Paul's life and his own understanding of his apostolic office was conceived of primarily in terms of preaching. The Biblical record of his activities confirms this, as does his advice to others who were leaders in the Church. Preaching was central to the whole regimen of New Testament thought and activity. It ought still to be central with us.

The Characteristics of Preaching in the New Testament

The characteristics of preaching in the New Testament can best be understood by keeping in mind both the office of the preacher and the message he proclaimed. In this light, a number of emphases emerge:

1. Preaching in the New Testament is basically proclamation, heralding.

Of the variety of words used in the New Testament for communicating the gospel, those which occur most frequently, and are thus central

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to the idea, are two groupings: ANGELLO and its derivatives and KERUSSO.

ANGELLO means to announce and in its derivatives also bears the sense, to proclaim. It has quite a number of varying forms in the New Testament, most of which are recognisable from the addition of a prefix e.g. ANANGELLO; APANGELLO; DIANGELLO and KATANGELLO. There may be slight differences in nuances of meaning, but these are by and large negligible. Usually the words in this group mean in the New Testament proclamation in the sense of making known God's activity, his will to save. Most important of all these derivatives, however, is the form EUANGELIZOMAI which is found both transitively and intransitively and which compounds the two Greek words EUS meaning good and the verb ANGELLO, to proclaim. EUANGELIZOMAI is used over 50 times in the New Testament and emphasises the quality of the message itself. In general, ANGELLO and its derivatives constitute the offer of information or encouragement in terms of its proclamation.

KERUSSO has a slightly different emphasis. It means to announce, to make known, to proclaim (aloud). As a verb, it occurs relatively frequently, some 61 times. It derives from KERUX, herald, an office with varying vicissitudes in Greek history, whom Grimm-Thayer describes as "a herald, a messenger vested with public authority who conveyed the official messages of kings, magistrates, princes, military commanders, or who gave public summons or demand".¹ KERUSSO, thus tends to indicate a public and authoritative announcement which demands compliance.

Usage of these two forms may also be significant. While it is possible to over-stress the difference, the common feature behind both these forms, and indeed all the words used for communicating the gospel is that of authority, and this is so even in the case of ANGELLO and its derivatives. In that particular group, the authority of the proclamation arises from its ultimate source and enters deeply into the life of the messenger making total demands on him. Nor does this aspect of authority rest upon the derived background, as in the case of KERUX, the herald. Rather, it rests upon New Testament usage. The significant thing about both ANGELLO and KERUSSO is that they are predominantly found in the verbal form in the New Testament and relatively sparsely as nouns. This stresses the activity and the content of the proclamation rather than the

person of the herald. New Testament preaching, then, from an etymological point of view, is a heralding or proclaiming. It is an authoritative announcement or informing of certain facts, which are encouraged on the hearers in such a way as to require their compliance. It is a trumpet-call, affirming news of a salutary nature, directed with solemn authority at the hearer.

2. Preaching in the New Testament is ambassadorial heralding.

Those who preach in the New Testament exhibit a predominant sense of commission, which evidences itself in an inner compulsion to preach. Pressure of the many sick folk who needed his healing did not divert our Lord from the primacy of his task: "Let us go somewhere else - to the nearby villages - so that I can preach there also. That is why I have come." (Mark 1:38). Even before the Sanhedrin, Peter and John cannot but speak the things which they had heard and seen (Acts 4:20). Paul graphically describes the constraint he experiences to preach in his letter to the Corinthians: "Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel." (1 Cor.9:16). These proclaim as those under pressure, because they are conscious of the One who commissions them, whose message they bring.

Preachers in the New Testament also evince an awareness of their representative capacity. This derives from their self-consciousness as heralds, as we have already seen. Even in proclaiming the message in terms of ANGELLO, this is apparent: "And this is the message (ANGELIA) which we have heard from Him and proclaim (ANANGELLOMEN) to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5). But this consciousness is above all prominent in that revealing remark of Paul to the church at Corinth, as he discloses the deepest emotions of the preacher's heart: "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors as though God were making His appeal through us - we implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." (2 Cor.5:20). It is not without significance that the word here translated "are ambassadors" is the verbal form PRESBUOMEN, which may well have important implications for the relationship between preaching and the office of teaching-elder. For us, however, the point is clear, there is ample evidence to show how loftily the New Testament preacher regarded his task.

John Stott trenchantly remarks, that this is one of the distinctions

between the preacher as steward, and the preacher as herald. For, while the steward is represented as conducting the affairs of the household even when the householder is a great distance away, the herald seems consciously to be proclaiming a word from a master near at hand. The preacher as ambassador, then, is aware not only of his exalted position as one specifically designated to represent his superior in declaring his message, he does this as one coming direct from that superior's presence. He represents only his superior's views, not his own. He is not at liberty to concoct his own terms of reference. His whole attitude to his task is motivated by an overriding desire to represent his master. It is this that begets in him the inner compulsion to proclaim. The implications of all this for our task of preaching are instructive, dynamic and fearful. But it does inspire us in the right direction. It reminds us that we are men under authority, and at liberty to proclaim only that, which we have been given.

3. Preaching in the New Testament is the proclamation of facts.

This, to a large degree, arises from the nature of preaching as proclamation or heralding. But it is also substantiated on other independent grounds, among which the following seem important:

a) The objective side of the proclamation. Even a cursory glance at references to New Testament preaching clarifies this. Both John the Baptist and Jesus are depicted as proclaiming the Kingdom of God. This continues to be the objective description of preaching during Jesus' ministry. As we come to the Acts and the epistles, a different range of references is used. Often it is "Christ crucified" (1 Cor.1:23); "Christ raised" (1 Cor.15:12 RSV); "the Son of God Jesus Christ" (2 Cor.1:19); or "Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor.4:5). Sometimes it is "the gospel", or in the intransitive EUANGELIZOMAI, "the Word", "the faith" or even "repentance".

This transition seems quite natural, since the kingdom was Christ and his rule. But is there any significance in the progression or development of these terms? Indeed, is there any development in them? It is usual to affirm that expressions such as "the faith" or "the Word" are later forms, as Christian teaching solidified. This may indeed be the case. However, that process may have been earlier than many suppose, since these expressions are also found in earlier portions of the New Testament, and the traditions (TAS

PARADOSEIS) occurs in an early letter like 2 Thessalonians. In these expressions, however, we find the objective substance of the proclamation. They emphasise and help clarify what was preached.

b) The KERUGMA. KERUGMA is the noun from the verb KERUSSO. It designates the thing preached, the preaching. It occurs twice in the Synoptics, six times in Paul. As a term it derives more importance, perhaps, from New Testament research in the last fifty years than from its New Testament setting. This work has been of valuable importance. In his book, 'The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments' 1936, C.H.Dodd examined the sermons in the Acts and the early credal statements in the Pauline epistles with a view to defining more precisely the substance of the apostolic KERUGMA. The result was that he outlined a sermonic frame-work including the following elements: the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in the coming of Jesus of Nazareth; the death, resurrection and subsequent exaltation of Jesus as Saviour and Lord and a call to mankind to repent and be forgiven. This has been admirably summarised by R.H.Mounce as "a proclamation of the death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus, that led to an evaluation of his person as both Lord and Christ, confronted man with the necessity of repentance, and promised forgiveness of sins."²

This work of C.H.Dodd was an excellent summary of the Biblical material involved. It succinctly points up the assertion that the apostolic preaching was indeed a proclamation of facts. They were really announcing or relating news. Events were at the core of what they said, and the personal relevance and purport of these events were forcibly presented to the hearers. By this means they were rehearsing before the people the recent historic events which constituted the good news, were clearly portraying before their eyes the crucified Jesus and the implications of that event for their lives. The preaching was factual and related to historic events. In its process it may have included explanation and reasoning, but it was not basically this. Preaching is not presenting philosophical concepts, lecturing on a subject or reasoning for a particular thesis. It may include and use these processes. But it is essentially proclaiming historical events and affirming their personal implication upon the hearer. It is heralding Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is ultimately founded not upon ideas but upon historic facts.

Now preaching if it follows in the New Testament tradition must

surely have this emphasis. It must herald the events of the death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ as central and present this saving message to the world. But there were some aspects of Professor Dodd's work, or implications drawn by others from them, which unfortunately cloud and confuse the issue.

In the first place, there was said to be an emphasis on the resurrection rather than on the death of Christ in the Acts' sermons. This of course was true, but the emphasis was never intended to do detriment to the significance of the death of Christ, but rather, on the contrary, to confirm the divine pleasure in that death, as in the remainder of the New Testament. For the same reason, the exaltation was stressed to show the efficacy of the death, and to underscore the Lordship of the person of this Jesus. To argue that the apostolic preaching majored solely on the resurrection and exaltation is to misread the significance of these facets in the Acts' sermons, and to ignore the centrality of such statements in the Pauline letters as: "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor.1:23).

Secondly, Professor Dodd stressed greatly the distinction between "preaching" (KERUGMA) and "teaching" (DIDACHE). Pushed to its logical or illogical conclusion, this portrayed preaching as the church presenting the gospel to the world, while in teaching we have the church instructing the converted. While there is a degree of truth in this, this absolutizes the situation too much: Both activities are based on the same facts. The terms are used interchangeably in the Gospels, for example, in Mt.4:23 (teaching) = Mk.1:39 and Lk.4:44 (preaching); and Mk.1:21,22,27 (teaching) = 1:38 (preaching). They also overlap in Acts. There are clearly instances where proclaiming the gospel involved expository instruction, so that we can speak of "didactic kerugma". As Dr Mounce says: "teaching is the expounding detail of what is proclaimed"³ or again "Kerugma is foundation and didache is superstructure; but no building is complete without both".⁴

This is practically most important. We must affirm that preaching in the New Testament is indeed a proclamation of gospel facts, but this must not be construed as "a once-for-all-cry which might be compared to sticking up a poster." For Paul, it involved a whole process of kindred activities of a complementary nature. These included such endeavours as reasoning, exhorting, warning,

encouraging , pleading, caring, labouring day and night and from house to house to supplement the proclamation. This means that Biblical exposition is a proper form of preaching, providing the heraldic element is normative and that "dialogue" is only properly Biblical, when it observes a proclamatory stance, averring that it has within its possession truths, with which the hearer must comply. It was surely thus that Paul reasoned within both synagogue and market-place? Maintaining that preaching in the New Testament is the proclamation of facts should not drive us to exclude these other kinds of activity supplementary to the process. It should rather fix them in their proper subordinate and complementary position. But we should remember that in preaching we are basically committed to presenting Christ and His salvation for our hearers' compliance, and that anything which detracts from such a presentation is detrimental to the whole process.

c) The lucid nature of New Testament preaching. This is the third aspect which seems to underline New Testament preaching as proclamation of facts. By it, we mean the Pauline assertion that it is vitally important that preaching and its issues are not obscured with eloquent wisdom and lofty words (1 Cor.1:17, 2:1-4) and Paul's refusal to practise cunning or tamper with God's word, but rather his attempt to commend himself to each person's conscience by the open statement of the truth (2 Cor.4:2). It is almost as though the plainness of the fact and implications of the crucified Christ could be obscured in the manner of presentation. And since that saving Christ must be seen in all his glorious clarity, the preacher must be at great pains to portray this honestly, simply and lucidly. The motivation for this comes from the principle that the preaching is the proclamation of facts, facts concerning the death, resurrection, exaltation and person of Christ and his saving significance for men.

New Testament preaching then, is a proclamation of facts. These facts are basically the saving events of Christ's life, death, resurrection and exaltation, but must not be so rigidly interpreted as to exclude other ancilliary activities to bring the facts home, nor to reject other explanatory and additional material, which was gradually, even in the New Testament period becoming subsumed under the concepts of "the Word" or "the faith". The normative thing should be the clear portrayal of facts relevant to salvation. This portrayal was central, fundamental and factual. Christo-centricity is never at variance with "the full counsel of the Word of God".

They are supplementary and complementary, not antithetical themes.

4. Preaching in the New Testament is a proclamation requiring a response.

This arises basically from the kerygmatic nature of the proclamation, viz., that it is a proclamation of facts whose relevance for the hearer is fundamental. Consistently, this is in evidence in preaching in the New Testament. Both John the Baptist and Jesus heralded the Kingdom, and there were those who actively responded to their message. Subsequent to Jesus' proclamation of truth, John's gospel indicates a schism among the people. Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost produced the claimant confession: "What shall we do?", while his later witness before the Sanhedrin resulted in the opposite effect, for they were angrily cut to the heart on that occasion. Stephen was martyred as a conclusion to his gospel affirmations. Paul knew varied reactions to his preaching from the Jews at Antioch and from the Greeks at Athens. Generally in Acts we find such statements subsequent to gospel proclamation as that some believed, were obedient to the faith, or that the preaching won a large number of disciples. Where the same process is in evidence in the epistles, we find the same kind of result. Thessalonians turn from idols to serve the living God. Romans experience saving power as they believe this good news. Those, to whom Peter writes, discover in the fulfilment of prophecies subject to age-old scrutiny, personal awareness of electing grace, cleansing forgiveness, sanctifying righteousness, spiritual birth and persevering power. Hebrew Christians, compared to others, heard with profit gospel tidings, for it met with the personal appropriation of faith in them. Preaching both required and gained results.

Preaching then, is preaching for decision in the best sense of the term, for by its New Testament nature it demands a response. The presentation of Jesus as Lord and Saviour is bound to make overwhelming demands. The goodness of the good news is the dynamic focus of the relevance of these facts to my life.

These last two aspects of New Testament preaching, viz., its nature as proclamation of facts and facts requiring a response belong, as John Stott emphasises, together. They are necessarily coupled in the New Testament picture of preaching. The one without the other is defective. Preaching that is simply proclamation without appeal

denigrates the significance and relevance of the facts proclaimed. Preaching that is appeal without proclamation lacks a motivated response, and is no good news at all. Both were involved in New Testament preaching, and should be so today. New Testament preaching then is heraldic proclamation by an ambassador of kerygmatic facts, proclaimed in such a way as to constrain a response.

The relevance of preaching in the New Testament for today

In attempting to apply these Biblical principles today, four major questions will direct our presentation: Who should preach? What should he preach? How should he preach? and Why should he preach?

Who should preach?

It seems to have been normative in the New Testament that those who preached were called of God to the task. This, of course, is regarding preaching in the narrower New Testament usage of heralding, as compared with the activity of the people of God described by some in Acts as gossiping the good news. Out of this divine commission arose the inner compulsion to preach. The situation is somewhat different today. In a sense, it was simpler in New Testament times, for then there were apostles, prophets and evangelists, part of whose function was obviously preaching. All of these offices, even including the evangelist, have been regarded generally by reformed theology as 'extraordinary' and in some sense restricted to that particular era, as compared with the 'ordinary' office of bishop-elder, both in its teaching and ruling capacity, continuing from New Testament times and with us today. Certainly, the call in respect of preaching, regarding the apostle and prophet seems reasonably clear. The apostolic commission appears to have been in many respects unique, and its heraldic witness a development of personal relationship with the human Jesus. The prophet spoke as the recipient of a direct word from the Lord. The situation is obviously different today with no personal commission from the human or visionary-appearing risen Jesus, and with no direct prophetic revelation.

It might be thought, perhaps, that the evangelist is the nearest New Testament equivalent of the gospel-preacher today, and so ought naturally to correspond to the same. However, the New Testament 'office' of evangelist is difficult of precise definition, mainly

because of paucity of biblical evidence. There are only three references to the noun in the New Testament: Evangelists seemed to assist the apostles in their work. The office is distinguished from that of apostle and prophet and, in New Testament lists, comes after these two and before the pastor-teacher. Timothy was urged to do the work of an evangelist. Evangelist is, thus, related to apostolic work, but also to ministry in terms of teaching and pastoring. In balance, it seems to rank as an office as extraordinary in terms of being an extension of the apostolic function, but its activity is more stressed than the office. It bears little continuity resemblance to that of the office of bishop-elder, while the scarcity of biblical evidence allows us to say little more, nor to suggest a clearly warranted correspondence today.

Since there is nothing in the nature of a distinct New Testament office of preacher, surely the answer to the question: Who should preach today?, the only satisfactory explanation of the twentieth century call to preach, must be related to the ordinary office of bishop-elder in his teaching capacity? From the New Testament evidence for this particular office, it would seem that the call of God to preach must not only be a subjective consciousness evident in a proper desire after the office, but also a correlative confirmation by the Church, both in looking out among her sons men suitable by biblical definition for the task, recognising in them this gift and setting them aside for this great work. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his book, and Pastor Al Martin on tape are quite lucid and emphatic in stressing the same.

What should he preach?

The New Testament preacher proclaimed what he had already been given. Substantially, this involved, as we have seen, the heralding of historical facts not simply ideas, and the communication of the relevance of these facts. The coming, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah as Saviour and Lord was the nub of this message. The New Testament also describes preaching the Word in contexts where it seems to mean asserting these gospel facts and their implications, as in Acts for example, but also in situations where more may have been included viz., the PARADOSIS or formal handing on of Christian teaching as well. So that ultimately, the pastor-teacher in the Pastorals is responsible for guarding the deposit of the faith and seeing that it is passed

on in purity and integrity. It is also obvious from earlier preaching as in Acts, that it includes exposition of Old Testament prophecy as indicating Jesus as Messiah.

The inference of all this for the preacher today seems reasonably clear. He is to preach what he has been given. He is not at liberty to proclaim his own ideas. The parameters of his message are clearly defined. They are defined in the revelation given to him, which is neither personal as in the case of the apostle nor direct as in the case of the prophet but mediately in Word-revelation. The only satisfactory explanation of this concept seems to be in the scriptural revelation, of which the New Testament, containing KERYGMA, DIDACHE and PARADOSIS, is the completion. The canonical development of Old Testament inscripturation presupposes the same of the New Testament, and that particularly so, in the light of Jesus' own assertions in the fourth gospel about His own words, and the possibility that Peter regarded Paul's letters as GRAPHE or scripture. The twentieth century preacher preaches a given revelation, the Scriptures, the Bible, as the symposium or deposit of kerygmatic substance. The use which the New Testament preacher made of the Old Testament and of the developing paradosis would appear to confirm this contention. Today's preacher preaches a given revelation - the Bible.

How should he preach?

It is clear from our investigation that the key feature about preaching should be heralding gospel facts in such a way as to constrain a response. Immediately, this brings us to the question as to how this relates to the reformed concept and practice of expository preaching, that is, the systematic explanation of biblical text. At first thought it might be supposed that an expository form hardly suits a heraldic presentation. A number of considerations, however, tend to suggest otherwise:

Firstly, it seems axiomatic that preaching must be of those things which are already given viz., of a fixed revelation. If this is the case, then, in a sense, as Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones maintains, all preaching must be expository. In expounding the Bible, we are not only explaining the kerygma, but also engaging in a preaching of the Word, in a guarding of the deposit, basic to the whole New Testament concept of heraldic communication as evident both in the

Pastorals and in earlier New Testament writings.

Secondly, a considerable amount of the preaching in the New Testament was of an expository nature. That is, it took as authoritative Old Testament scriptures and sought to use these and reason from them to explain and affirm the kerygma.

Thirdly, heraldic proclamation may be thought of as pertaining as much to the manner of presentation as to the content proclaimed. In this sense, there is no necessary dichotomy between exposition and heralding as far as the method of preaching is concerned. Providing our exposition of Biblical matter is an authoritative declaration requiring a response on the part of the hearer, the methods are complementary rather than antithetical. In this context also, we relate to exposition a whole host of New Testament concepts most helpful in communicating the gospel viz., convincing, warning, encouraging.

Fourthly, even in actual terms of the content of the proclamation, heralding and exposition are synthetic rather than disparate activities. We should be able to herald the gospel as effectually and effectively, whether we are expounding Deuteronomic law-codes, indicating the intent of Jesus' instruction in the Sermon on the Mount or declaring Pauline Haustafel. The regulative factor is simply that we relate this matter to the kerygma, and so show the preparation of a "Puritan law-preaching", for example, or the elucidation of Pharisaic self-righteousness or the implications to a domestic life-style as the effects of the death and resurrection of Christ by our exposition. The relevance of all these to a kerygmatic-gospel seems reasonably lucid. We will, thus, in our preaching avoid shunning the whole counsel of God, while positively, we will be proclaiming the good news fully and be guarding the deposit as well. Indeed, from this it might be suggested that the only true way to herald these facts is to do it in an expository fashion, for exposition is basically an explanation of the given facts and their relevance.

Why should he preach?

At least three motives stimulated the New Testament preachers to their work, and these three principles are still operative today.

a. A divine call producing an inner constraint.

A divine call to preach is evident in the life of our Lord, who proclaimed in the synagogue that he, with Isaiah, had been anointed to preach, and constantly asserts, in John's gospel, that he taught words given to him by his Father, God. Paul is similarly clear regarding the divine primacy of this task, both in remarking to the Corinthians that Christ had sent him not to baptise but to preach the gospel, and in claiming to Timothy on two occasions that he had been appointed a preacher. The disciples, of course, derived a direct commission from the Lord to preach, and the apostle in turn obliges his younger colleague and teaching-elder to continue in this by preaching the Word - a true apostolic succession.

It was out of this divine call that the inner constraint arose. This is clear in the life of our Lord, who maintained that he must go to other villages to preach, for that was the reason for his coming, and with Paul, who vowed deep personal distress if he did not preach the good-news.

A preacher must preach, motivated above all by the divine will, evident in a divine call to him to preach. This, arising in his subjective consciousness, is confirmed to him by the Church both choosing him and setting him apart for the task. He is, thus, urged legitimately to stir up the gift given to him.

b. The subject matter of the message.

This seems evident in a most natural way in the real fervour, excitement and anticipation which attended the preaching of the early Church. Significantly, it reached a white-hot pitch of intensity immediately after persecution. So, it was recorded of the apostles that they ceased not to preach and teach, notably after the healing of the lame man and the subsequent attempt of the Sanhedrin to suppress their witness. The persecution of the Jerusalem Church is directly related in the Acts' history to the statement that the people afterwards went everywhere "gossiping" (EUANGELIZOMAI) the gospel and Philip went to Samaria and heralded (KERUSSO) Christ. The import and effect of Christ preached was obviously stimulating them, even in the fires of persecution, indeed, more so then.

Paul perhaps defines the power of the message yet more precisely for us when he says to the Roman believers that he is ready to proclaim the gospel there also, for it is the power of God to salvation

to those who believe. The "foolishness of preaching", the way in which he alludes to the subject writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor.1: 21), has respect, perhaps, more to the folly of the content of this humanly-speaking ludicrous message than to the actual act of preaching. But this very folly which was so successful was a stimulus. The power of the kerygma and its affect must constantly inspire us to proclaim it. Each time we prepare the Word, we should be gripped freshly by this consciousness and experience.

c. Preaching is God's method.

This appears in the practical cause and effect, which Paul's preaching produced. While the preaching of the Cross was folly to those who perished, to believers at Corinth it was the power of God. The crucified Christ preached was an offence to Jews, nonsense to Greeks but to believers it was the wisdom and power of God. Paul preached and so the Corinthians believed. He can write to Titus that God's Word has been manifested (PHANEROO) to them through preaching (KERYGMA).

It seems also clear in the inevitable process, which Paul describes as the way to faith: Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. This practically means that a man who calls on God in belief must have heard the message preached by one so commissioned: "How then, can they call on one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.'" (Rom.10:14,15 NIV). There is a disarming simplicity and shattering necessity about this logic, which defines so clearly this divinely appointed instrument of gospel communication. It brings us back to where we began, to the call of God. It is as we recognise preaching as God's method that a further incentive to proclaim moves us to herald.

So, today, the divine call, the subject matter of the message and the fact that it is a God-ordained method drives us to proclaim with insistent fervour the good-news, just as it impelled the New Testament preachers to their task. What higher vocation or more exciting or exacting work can we be called upon to fulfil? For those called to it, this must be our primary passion, our life's work, our latest breath: We are heralds of God.

- (1) THAYER J.H.(GRIMM) 'A Greek/English Lexicon of the New Testament' Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1896 sub. KERUX, p346
 - (2) MOUNCE R.H. 'The Essential Nature of New Testament Preaching', Eerdmans, 1960 p84
 - (3) MOUNCE R.H. Op. cit. p42
 - (4) MOUNCE R.H. Op. cit. pp42,43
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**SHOULD A CHRISTIAN MARRY A NON-CHRISTIAN -
AND SHOULD THE CEREMONY TAKE PLACE IN
AN EVANGELICAL CHURCH?**

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The aim of this article is to SUGGEST a biblical approach to a common, pastoral problem. Mr Jones thanks those who have discussed the subject with him and encouraged him to publish his thoughts. Readers' comments are invited but they will be published only if they contribute to a careful, biblical evaluation of the argument in this article.

The writer, of course, is an Associate Editor of this journal and Pastor of Borras Park Evangelical Church, Wrexham in Clwyd, N.E. Wales.

This problem is an intensely personal one for all concerned. Obviously it has an acute effect on the engaged couple, the parents of the believer who is engaged, the non-believer and his or her parents. It has, however, a wider effect. It bears upon the minister and officers of the church where it is requested that the wedding should take place, and where, perhaps, the believer may be a member of long standing and usefulness, and also upon the members and adherents of the church, particularly upon those who are as yet unmarried. Clearly, it is a matter fraught with the keenest emotions and therefore with the most far-reaching repercussions.

In our unprincipled and undisciplined age, problems like this are