THE SABBATH SERMON AND EARLY ADOLESCENT YOUTH OF THE ERINA SEVENTH - DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

THE SABBATH SERMON AND EARLY ADOLESCENT YOUTH OF THE ERINA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Report

Andrews University

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Avondale Campus

Title: THE SABBATH SERMON AND EARLY ADOLESCENT YOUTH OF THE ERINA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

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Problem

The negative attitude of early adolescents to the sermon is of grave concern to those who are aware of the critical nature of their stage of intellectual, moral, and faith development. The purpose of this research is to assess the attitude of a small sample of Australian Seventh-day Adventist early adolescents to the sermon and to achieve a positive modification of that attitude.

Method

A study was conducted of the New Testament preaching model and contemporary communication theory. Further study considered the findings of recent developmental psychology research in the area of

identity formation, and the stages of intellectual, moral, and faith development of the early adolescent.

A subject group of thirteen early adolescents was tested to determine their general attitude to sermons. Following two educational modules they were asked to express their attitude to a series of three sermons that were prepared and presented in accordance with principles derived from the above study. Any shift in their attitude to a particular sermon compared to the first assessment was noted. They were finally re-tested to determine whether or not a permanent shift in attitude had been achieved.

Results

A favourable shift in attitudes was achieved in key areas, although the shift in the area of need-fulfillment was less favourable than that for other areas. There was marginal improvement in their general attitude five weeks after the conclusion of the ministry modules. Significant factors for the improvement of their attitude to the sermon were isolated, most of them to do with the form or content of the sermon.

Conclusions

A negative attitude to the sermon was observed in the subject group and the larger comparison group of Australian Seventh-day Adventist adolescents. This was favourably modified by preparing and presenting sermons consistent with the New Testament preaching model. The involvement of adolescents in the education module may have assisted in this positive shift in attitude.

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A Project Report

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Religion

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION 1

II. A THEOLOGY OF THE SERMON 6

Introduction 6
New Testament Sermon Model 7
Nature of New Testament Preaching 8
The Preaching of Jesus 12
Ellen G. White and the Sermon 19
Contemporary Religious Literature on the Sermon 21
Conclusion 23

III. ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PREACHING

Introduction 25
Adolescent Developmental Tasks 27
Adolescent Cognitive Development 30
Formal-operational Thought 30
Some Implications of Cognitive Development Theory for Preaching 35
Adolescent Moral Development 36
Some Implications of Moral Development Theory for Preaching 40
Adolescent Faith Development 42
Some Implications of Faith Development Theory for Preaching 47
Adolescent Needs 51
Conclusion 53

IV. MINISTRY DESIGN: ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TO THE SERMON

Introduction 57
Education Module 58
Education Module Part 1 58
Education Module Part 2 58
Ministry Module 59
Sermon 1 59
Sermon 2 60
Sermon 3 60

V. IMPLEMENTATION AND DESIGN

Introduction 62
Description and Implementation 63
Development and Implementation of Church Youth Attitude Test 63
Adolescent Component of Erina Seventh-day Adventist Church 66
Avondale High School Comparison Group 66
Initial Administration of Attitude Test to Subject Group 67
Education Module 67
Development of Sermon Evaluation Tests 67
Implementation of Demonstration Module and Administration of Sermon Evaluation Tests 68
Re-administration of Attitude Test 69
Reaction and Evaluation 69
Education Module Discussion Sheet 69
Attitude Test Results 73
Sermon Evaluation Tests 82
The Final Test 87

VI. Conclusion

General 89
Recommendations 91

APPENDICES 92

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 132

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Christian worship is the most momentous, the most urgent, the most glorious action that can take place in human life"--so said Karl Barth.[1] It is perhaps this notion, more than anything else, that motivates those who are looking for a renewal of worship in the church of our day. It is a sad fact that for a significant number of Christians who sit in the pew, worship in the corporate sense is much less than the exhilaration that Barth declared it to be.

In 1978, Roger L. Dudley published the findings of a survey on alienation from religion among Seventh-day Adventist adolescents. In the survey, four hundred students from Adventist academies across the United States were asked to react to twenty-seven statements. The statement which met with the strongest response was: "Most sabbath sermons are interesting." The response, tragically, was a negative one; most sabbath sermons, they felt, were not interesting.[2]

The question that this project seeks to answer is, "Do

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[1]Karl Barth, cited by Ralph P. Martin, The Worship of God (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 1.

[2]Roger L. Dudley, Why Teenagers Reject Religion (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1978), pp. 22-23.

Australian adolescents react similarly; and if they do what can be done about it?" The writer has been involved in youth ministry in Australia during the last ten years and observation suggests that the reaction to sermons here is also generally negative. As an example, note the following case. In 1983 a group of twenty-two year nine students in a baptismal class at the Adelaide Adventist High School were asked by the writer to list some things that they didn't like about the Adventist Church. Contributions to the list were halted when thirteen things had been mentioned. Nine of the items on the list had to do with the sabbath, and five of those were to do with the worship service, particularly the sermon.

One may, of course, add to this the evidence available to even the most casual observer. Except in unusual circumstances, a significant number of adolescents regularly talk or read during the sermon, or are otherwise inattentive.

It appears that there is a marked contrast between Barth's concept of worship and the way in which many Adventist adolescents experience it. Along with the many other Christian churches, it appears that we find it difficult to match the magnificent concepts of worship with the interests and needs of adolescents. It is this problem that this research project seeks to address.

It will immediately be evident that to consider the entire spectrum of the worship service is well beyond the scope of a project such as this. The sermon, as one element within the worship service, has therefore been selected for the following reasons: (1) it is generally considered to be the core of the worship service; and (2) as Dudley's research and personal observation has shown, the

strongest negative comments by adolescents about the church and worship have to do with the sermon.

Before the methods and procedures of the research are outlined one possible objection to the value of such a study will be considered. Some may argue that the sermon is designed largely for the adult congregation. The needs of youth are met in programmes designed especially for them. And therefore one need not be concerned about the reaction revealed by Dudley's survey.

In 1976, however, a report was published in North America that speaks directly to this point and has far-reaching implications for youth ministry in general. Entitled A Vision of Youth Ministry, it was the product of fifteen months of development and consultation with youth leaders across the country. It defined youth ministry as the "response of the Christian community to the needs of young people and the sharing of the unique gifts of youth with the larger community." Youth ministry, it discovered, was not effective when it was a programme or society set apart from the mainstream of church life.[1]

This conclusion dovetails very neatly with one of the fundamental principles of the burgeoning church growth movement: namely, that the worth of each individual within the church community is to be appreciated, and his spiritual gift is to be recognized and utilized. The youth, as a part of the church community, must be

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[1]United States Catholic Conference (USCC), Department of Education, A Vision of Youth Ministry (Washington, D.C.: USCC, Department of Education, 1976), cited by Wayne Rice, John Roberto, Mike Yaconelli, eds., Creative Projects and Worship Experiences (Winona, Minnesota: Saint Mary's Press, 1981), p. i.

seen therefore to have equal rights and responsibilities with adults. They, too, may rightfully expect that the worship service will speak to their needs and so be meaningful, helpful, and interesting to them.

Having thus established the significance and validity of the study, the design of the project report will now be presented in brief outline. It will include the following:

Chapter II. The development of a theology of the sermon. That is, the theological basis for a contemporary sermon model will be suggested. It will include a study of New Testament preaching and teaching, particularly that of Jesus; a study of relevant material in the writings of Ellen G. White; and the findings of contemporary authorities in the field of communication. It will be shown that this model is particularly suited to the learning skills of early to mid-teen youth.

Chapter III. A study of recent research in psychology of the developmental stages of adolescents (mental, moral, and spiritual). A brief study will also be made of the needs of early adolescent youth. The implications of these findings for the content, purpose, and form of sermons preached to adolescents will be noted.

Chapter IV. An outline of the basic design of the two-part strategy that will be implemented with the subject group at the Erina Seventh-day Adventist church. The strategy will attempt to modify their concept and appreciation of the sermon. The first part will be an educational module, the second, a demonstration module. The demonstration module will attempt to utilize the principles of the New Testament preaching model in a series of sermons. The

response to these sermons will be compared with the subject group's response to sermons in general both before and after the ministry modules.

Chapter V. A description of the implementation of the project, and an evaluation of the results obtained together with pertinent observations derived from these statistics.

Chapter VI. A brief summary of the purpose and findings of this research with recommendations that could aid further study in this field.

Material that is not essential to the paper but which supports the research and may be of interest to the reader is included in the appendices.

CHAPTER II

A THEOLOGY OF THE SERMON

Introduction

Klaas Runia in his book The Sermon Under Attack, cites numerous criticisms of the sermon by sociologists, communication and media experts, preachers themselves, and of course the listeners. The criticisms appear realistic and constructive, and generally have to do with the form and content of preaching. They may be summarized in this one question: "Is preaching relevant in our modern western culture?"[1]

Ralph P. Martin suggests it generally is not, for the greatest influence on the form of worship within non-established churches today has been sixteenth-century Puritanism. It has "effectively blocked any notion of creative spontaneity." It fostered the concept of the "gathered community," and "the preaching of one man in a raised pulpit took pride of place." This "reduced the worshippers to the level of an inert body of passive auditors." Martin also claims that the social forces of the nineteenth century (the press and radio), gave greater impetus to the power of human words. These two influences, together with universally available

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[1]Klaas Runia, The Sermon Under Attack (Exeter: Paternoster, 1983), pp. 1-17.

education, led to a "heavily intellectualized and notional" approach to worship with a heavy emphasis on preaching. He rightly concludes that "the time is ripe for a fresh evaluation of what we intend to do when we participate in corporate worship,"[1] and one might add, particularly as it relates to the sermon.

This chapter will attempt to provide some insights on this crucial issue. First, there will be an examination of New Testament preaching through a word study, then through a survey of the purposes and methods of Jesus' preaching. On this basis a preaching or sermon model will be outlined that is appropriate for use when preaching to adolescents of our time and culture. While the New Testament does not refer specifically to adolescents, principles will be discovered that would, if applied, ensure that contemporary preaching is relevant to their needs and interests.

Secondly, relevant comments of Ellen G. White will be discussed, noting her thoughts on sermons preached to congregations in which there are young people.

Finally, there will be a brief review of contemporary literature on the sermon. In particular, contemporary communication theory and its implications for preaching to adolescents will be noted.

New Testament Sermon Model

It has been said that "the act of preaching reached its highest point when 'Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of

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[1]Martin, p. 10.

the kingdom of God' (Mark 1:14)."[1] During the lifetime of the apostles it became so important,[2] that it has been declared of the early church: "In the beginning was the sermon."[3]

Nature of New Testament Preaching

Gerhard Friedrich in his article on kērusso in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, notes that over thirty verbs for preaching are used throughout the Gospels and Epistles,[4] which perhaps underscores the point made above. A study of some of these words will provide helpful insights into the nature and purpose of New Testament preaching.

The word kērussein according to Friedrich occupies a dominant position among the thirty-three verbs. Outside of the New Testament it applied to the proclamation of a herald. Friedrich suggests that it has a double meaning. The proclamation is not just an announcement of an event, but with the announcement the event becomes a reality.[5] In the preaching context, through the

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[1]Harold T. Bryson and James C. Taylor, Building Sermons to Meet People's Needs (Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman, 1982), p. 38. All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

[2]E.g., Matt 10:7; Luke 9:2; Acts 8:40; Rom 15:19; Col 4:16.

[3]E. Fascher, Die formgeschichtliche Methode (1924), p. 54, cited by Runia, p. 21. The validity of this comment still stands even though Runia's citation is not strictly in accordance with the form-critical meaning intended by the original author.

[4]Gerhard Friedrich, "kērusso," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-76), 3:703 (hereafter cited as TDNT).

[5]Idem., "kērux," TDNT, 3:687-91.

proclamation, the salvation which is available in Christ, becomes a reality for the listener who accepts it by faith.[1]

The second most significant word, euaggelizesthai, is virtually synonymous with kērussein.[2] It however carries the connotation of proclaiming 'good news' (euaggelion). In the New Testament it refers to the coming of the Kingdom of God in Jesus.[3]

Marturein originates in the courtroom and denotes the testimony of a witness. The emphasis is on facts. In the writings of Luke and John its meaning is further clarified, for it becomes evident that "witness cannot be borne to these facts unless their significance is also indicated and an emphatic appeal is made for their recognition in faith."[4]

The fourth significant verb, didaskein meaning "to teach," is often used in conjunction with kērussein. The content appears to be the same and the two words are used interchangeably.[5] This is contrary to the view of C. H. Dodd found in his book The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments[6]. His view has had considerable influence (cf. the articles on kērussein and didaskein in Kittel), but recent criticism of it suggests that the distinction is in the

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[1]Klaas Runia, "What is Preaching According to the New Testament?" Tyndale Bulletin 29 (1978):9.

[2]Friedrich, "euaggelizomai," TDNT, 2:718.

[3]Matt 10:7; Luke 9:2; Acts 8:40; Rom 15:19; 2 Tim 4:2.

[4]H. Strahmann, "martus," TDNT, 4:489-96.

[5]Matt 4:23; 9:35; 11:1; Luke 20:1; Acts 4:1-2; 5:42; 15:35; 28:30-31; cf. Mark 1:39; Luke 4:44.

[6]C. H. Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1980), p. 7.

form of the proclamation, rather than its content as he claims. At times there may be a different emphasis; kerygma may be more prominent in kērussein, and instruction more prominent in didaskein, but both will be present in Christian preaching.[1]

The last two words that are of significance here, are prophēteuein, "to prophesy," and parakalein, "to comfort," or "to admonish." Friedrich says that in the New Testament, the prophet is "essentially a proclaimer of the Word of God."[2] The word marturein above and to a lesser degree the word prophēteuein, apply in a limited sense in the present-day. The former requires that one be an eye-witness, and the latter is a gift of the Spirit.[3] Schmitz suggests that parakalein has a threefold meaning. In the context of preaching, the paraklēsis is a call for fruit, not of human works, but of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). It is an exhortation to the believers.[4] It is not abstract preaching of the gospel message, but a concrete application of the gospel to the situation of the hearer.

The implications of this word study, particularly for the content of contemporary Christian preaching, are significant.

In summary, preaching is a proclamation and teaching of the Word that carries with it a certain efficacy because it is the Word

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[1]Craig Skinner, The Teaching Ministry of the Pulpit (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1973), pp. 83-89; J. Daniel Baumann, An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching (Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker, 1972), pp. 211-12; Ralph P. Martin, Worship in the Early Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964), pp. 73-75; and Runia, "What is Preaching?" pp. 14-15.

[2]Friedrich, "prophētēs," TDNT, 6:829.

[3]Runia, "What is Preaching?" pp. 11, 17.

[4]O. Schmitz, "parakaleo," TDNT, 5:794-95.

from God.[1] Because of this it becomes a reality in the life of the one who hears and believes.

Secondly, and implicit in the above, preaching is the Word of God. Paul does not appear to consider his preaching any different from that of his "non-apostolic" associates.[2] If therefore the modern preacher preaches the same message as Paul, we may say that God speaks through him. So preaching is not just a word from man, but the New Testament suggests it is the Word of God himself. This high view of preaching was held by the Reformers[3] and, with some modification, by Karl Barth.

A third implication of the word study however, adds an important dimension to this position, for the situation of the listener must be considered. Preaching, therefore, is more than the bold proclamation of the Word of God, it is an encounter between that Word and the people in their concrete historical situation. It is relevant only when the interrelation between these two foci is steadfastly maintained and the Word is preached with the individual's needs in view.

Finally, preaching is exhortation and encouragement. As Runia

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[1] I.e.,It is the Word of God--a subjective genitive.

[2] 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 5:18-21; 1 Thess 3:2,3; 2 Tim 4:2.

[3] John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. John T. McNeil, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, Library of Christian Classics (London: SCM, 1960), 21:1213; and A. Skevington Wood, Captive to the Word--Martin Luther: Doctor of Sacred Scripture (Exeter: Paternoster, 1969), p. 89.

notes, "Christian preaching . . . has a critical, a consoling and a guiding function."[1]

In the context of this paper then, one may say that the sermon model for preaching to contemporary adolescents based on the New Testament concept of preaching would be one in which the Word of God is applied to their particular needs. It will particularly bear in mind their age, mental ability, spiritual aptitudes, moral sensitivity, and the sociological issues that are of particular significance to them right now.

In the section that follows it will be seen how the this approach to preaching as outlined in the word study above, was that used by Jesus, the Master Preacher.

The Preaching of Jesus

While recognizing that contemporary society is vastly different from that of New Testament times, the Gospel and the deep personal needs of humanity remain unchanged. Therefore, it is suggested that it is a valid exercise for the contemporary preacher to consider the principles of preaching employed by Jesus, when establishing a model for contemporary preaching. It is suggested furthermore, that such preaching will be found to be relevant to both adults and adolescents.

This study will only briefly survey the content of Jesus' sermons, since the word study provided an insight into that area. Here more attention will be given to examining the purpose and form of His preaching and teaching.

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[1]Runia, "What is Preaching?" p. 20.

Content and purpose of Jesus' preaching

Below is a partial list of subjects on which Jesus spoke.

> Adultery, anger, anxiety, avarice, death, debts, doubts, eternity, fasting, fault-finding, giving, greed, honesty, hypocrisy, joy, kindness, knowledge, law, legalism, life, lust, marriage, money, oaths, parenthood, prayer, pretense, respect, responsibility, reward, rulers, sex, slander, speech, stewardship, taxes, trust, unkindness, virtue, wisdom, zeal.[1]

To this list should be added a wide spectrum of doctrinal and theological subjects. The preaching of Jesus was in touch with life. He was sensitive to human feelings and relationships. A study of His preaching reveals a fourfold purpose, each closely related to the needs of His listeners.[2]

The evangelistic purpose. As noted in the word study above, the proclamation of the kingdom was always paramount and with it came the call for repentance and faith. This purpose was of course reflected in the preaching of the apostles; and it should be a part of contemporary preaching for it undergirds every other purpose.

The growth purpose. Much of Jesus' preaching was addressed to his disciples (the twelve and others), who needed nurture to aid their Christian growth. This purpose is readily recognized in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:1-7:27).[3] In the

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[1]Ralph L. Lewis and Gregg Lewis, Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen (Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1983), p. 68.

[2]Bryson and Taylor, pp. 71-73.

[3]For a discussion of the source and literary critical views of the Sermon on the Mount, see W. D. Davies, The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); for a discussion of the differences between the two versions of the sermon (from Matthew and Luke), see T. H. Wright, The Sermon on the Mount for To-Day (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1927), pp. 23-30.

proclamation of the apostles, there was also a call for growth. Contemporary preaching may also expect that growth will occur when doctrine is taught and understood, and related to life.

The relational purpose. Jesus preached to mend and build the relationships of his listeners with each other, with the world, and with God.[1] The significance of this purpose should not be diminished.[2] Preaching is validated when broken relationships are healed. Life is fulfilled when relationships are enriched and complete. Contemporary society encourages isolation. Though the desire to have relationships is strong, people often find it difficult to establish deep and permanent ones. If the Gospel and other doctrine is couched in relational terms, it will answer a need, and will be more easily understood and applied by the hearer.

The therapeutic purpose. This is somewhat connected with the relational purpose since much hurt is caused by broken relationships. But at times the preaching of Jesus was more specifically directed at the hurt. This was evident even in His first sermon (Luke 4:16-21). Howard J Clinebell, Jr., recognized the need for therapeutic preaching today when he said that the pastor is a "people-helper" in every aspect of his work including preaching and teaching.[3]

It is not difficult to see the close connection between the concepts found in the word study above, and the purposes of Jesus'

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[1]E.g., Matt 6:27-38; Luke 10:25-37; 14:15-23.

[2]Salvation is relational (note the covenant relationship); faith, justification, and reconciliation are relational; the church is relational (note the marriage and body analogies).

[3]Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon, 1966), pp. 44-45.

preaching as outlined here. The Word of God and people in their concrete, historical situation were always interrelated and will always be interrelated in successful preaching. The Word adds meaning to existence, and people's needs are met by its efficacy.

Ralph and Gregg Lewis call this type of preaching, "inductive." In their fascinating book they develop the thesis that abstract concepts are best conveyed by using familiar concrete terms. The ingredients of inductive preaching they suggest are "narrative, parables, analogy, dialogue, questions, and reference to common experience." Each of these they note, is found in the preaching of Jesus.[1] The model of Jesus, therefore, seems to be a perfect guide for the establishment of the purposes and content of contemporary preaching and, as will be shown,[2] is particularly suited to communicating with modern adolescents.

Form of Jesus' preaching

As the Master Preacher, Jesus employed every form (i.e. style) of preaching possible. In His wisdom, He no doubt chose the form to suit the message and the people for whom it was intended.

Expository preaching. His first sermon was an exposition of Scripture (Luke 4:16-21). Through the influence of Puritanism, expository preaching became firmly established in Protestantism, and it has often been regarded as the highest form of preaching. Karl Barth has more recently publicized and reinforced this idea:

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[1]Lewis and Lewis, p. 69.

[2]See page 21.

> Preaching should be an exposition of Scripture; the preacher does not have to speak 'on' but 'from' (ex), drawing from the Scriptures whatever he says. . . . The preacher must accept the necessity of expounding the Book and nothing else."[1]

While this basic concept is sound, it must be remembered that, though truth is timeless, the form in which it is presented need not be. Jesus Himself recognized this when He spoke about new and old 'wineskins'. Expository preaching, the verse by verse explanation of a passage of the Bible, in the contemporary setting has its critics. One writer suggests it is too often "expository boredom." He continues by saying, "I have greatly valued . . . exposition at the feet of the master expositors, but I know of only about eight or ten with such gifts in Britain today. . . ."[2]

True expository preaching in the hands of a master, and in special situations, may be the ideal. But Saward's comments, are the voice of experience.

Dialectic preaching. On several occasions Jesus also preached in a dialectic style,[3] meeting the Pharisees on their own ground by using their own method of teaching. In a sense it was effective--at least it silenced them--but it may be significant that the majority still rejected his teachings.

Narrative preaching. The predominant form employed by Jesus was narrative, sometimes referred to as pictorial, or story

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[1]Karl Barth, Prayer and Preaching, pp. 69, 89, cited by Runia, Sermon Under Attack, p. 78. All emphasis in quotations is that of the original author except where otherwise noted.

[2]Michael Saward, All Change (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1983), p. 121.

[3]Mark 12:13-17; John 7:16-24; 8:3-11.

preaching. Ian Macpherson notes, that up to 75 percent of the recorded teaching of Jesus is in parable.[1] Significantly, the stories that he told were most often not just to illustrate a point in a longer discourse or to gain attention. They actually carried much of the weight of His message.

Richard A. Jensen, in a constructive criticism of contemporary exegetical preaching, suggests that too often the Biblical story is analyzed by the preacher to determine the point of the story which he then preaches about. Of this approach he says:

> When we extract points and meaning from the biblical stories we are doing violence to the marriage of literary form and content that is the total configuration of the biblical text. . . . Why should we de-story the story? . . .
> . . . Our style of exegesis for preaching may have to undergo some radical shifts. Exegesis has been directed primarily at the question of content. A holistic exegesis must be directed at both form and content.[2]

His point is well made and worth noting.

There are two other key reasons for the use of story preaching: distance and open-endedness. The hearer can listen from a safe distance because the story is about someone else. Consequently defensive barriers are lowered.[3] The open-ended nature of story preaching, particularly evident in parables, adds to its effectiveness because it provides an empty space that enables the listener to become part of the story. Together, these two factors

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[1]Ian Macpherson, The Art of Illustrating Sermons (New York: Abingdon, 1964), pp. 40-42. See Matt 13:3-9, 24-30, 31-34; etc.

[2]Richard A. Jensen, Telling the Story (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980), pp. 128-29.

[3]Richard J. Coleman, Gospel Telling: The Art and Theology of Children's Sermons (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 35-36.

produce interest and involvement which ultimately ensure personal application, motivation, and action.

A third reason for using the story form is that often listeners already know about Biblical truth but have never applied it fully. What is required is a change in attitude. This is not easily done by a direct didactic communicating medium. However, the story form, which only obliquely or indirectly imparts information, does stimulate the imagination, and is often able to motivate a change in attitude.

The narrative form of preaching will later be shown to be particularly appropriate for communicating with the present generation of adolescents.

Dialogue preaching. Another form of preaching used by Jesus is dialogue. This naturally implies that two or more people are conversing or reasoning together in mutual discourse, and naturally, is the opposite to monologue. Lewis and Lewis note that the Gospels record around 125 incidents in which Jesus communicated with others. About 54 percent of those were initiated by His hearers. It is surely significant that even He allowed His listeners to set the agenda more than half the time.[1]

In the contemporary preaching setting, dialogue may occur between the preacher and congregation during the sermon, or before, or after it. It may not be actual dialogue, however, but attitudinal dialogue in which the preacher asks and answers hypothetical questions. It is interesting that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus

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[1]Lewis and Lewis, p. 72; cf. Paul in Rom 3-5; passim.

asked nineteen questions, each of which He proceeded to answer Himself.

In summary then it may be said, that throughout His ministry, Jesus was particularly concerned with meeting the needs of the individual. The content, purpose, and form of His preaching varied therefore to suit their needs and interests and the intellectual level of the individuals concerned. He did, however, most often present truth in a narrative form. It appears that he considered this to be the form that was suited to the majority of his listeners and enabled them, whatever their age, to apply abstract truth to their lives.

Thus, there is a strong Biblical basis for using narrative as a communication medium. This is particularly significant, for, as has been suggested, and as will be shown shortly, it is particularly suited to communicating with today's adolescents.

Ellen G. White and the Sermon

Ellen White has contributed significantly to the preaching tradition of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her counsel on its content suggests it is to be an exposition of Biblical doctrine that enables practical application to be made in the believer's life.[1] She vigorously upholds the preaching of the cross:

> I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption--the Son of God uplifted

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[1]For a full discussion of Ellen White's views on preaching, see R. Edward Turner, Proclaiming The Word: The Concept of Preaching in the Thought of Ellen G. White (Berrien Springs, Michigan: Andrews University Press, 1980).

> on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers.[1]

Preaching, she said, is more than conveying information and convincing the intellect. "The minister's utterances, to be effectual, must reach the hearts of his hearers."[2]

In matters of form she advises preachers to follow the example of Jesus and specifically mentions His use of parables and symbols to simplify His discourses.[3] She cautions against "storytelling" and the use of "cheap, trifling words";[4] but strongly counsels against preaching long sermons, particularly if there are young people in the congregation. Significantly, she also says that "in our work for the youth, we must meet them where they are, if we would help them."[5]

Turner suggests that:

> . . . Ellen White's concern for the functional elements in preaching were similar to the developments within the mainstream of American homiletical theory--the only exceptions being her disdain for humour, sensationalism and the use of notes in delivery. These she held in common with her Methodist heritage.[6]

Thus, it can be said that the basic principles of Ellen White's counsel on preaching align with the New Testament pattern in

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[1]Ellen G. White, Gospel Workers, rev. and enl. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1948), p. 315.

[2]Ibid., p. 152.

[3]Idem, Evangelism (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1946), p. 203.

[4]Ibid., p. 210.

[5]White, Gospel Workers, pp. 209-10.

[6]Turner, p. 98.

matters of content. However, in matters of form she appears to reflect the trends of contemporary preaching as tempered by the influence of her conservative Methodist roots.

Contemporary Religious Literature on the Sermon

A significant number of authors of recently published books on preaching have drawn upon the insights of contemporary social science. A great number of them have formed similar conclusions. Some of these are reflected in the ideas already presented; but more should be said here on the impact of current communication techniques on the modern mind, particularly of adolescents.

Studies have revealed that the media has had a significant impact on the learning processes of contemporary youth, who are the second generation of the television age. A leader in research in this area is Marshall McLuhan. Perhaps the most significant expression of his ideas is found in his book The Gutenberg Galaxy. Put very simply, he identifies several ages of man on the basis of the senses that predominate in life and learning. Before Gutenberg and the mass availability of printed material, culture was dominated by hearing. This period was the time-frame of the Bible stories.

Then came the period in which the Greek phonetic alphabet became predominant and prepared the way for the printing press around two thousand years later. With the printing press came the visual age, characterized among other things, by a linear progression of thought.[1]

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[1]Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy (New York: Signet, 1969).

In his next book, The Medium is the Massage, McLuhan suggests that we now live in an electric world that "massages" all of our senses.[1] In trying to explain how this effects us he uses the terms "hot" and "cool." If few of our senses are actively involved it is a hot medium, but if more are involved it is cool. Preaching which relies almost solely upon the ears is therefore hot, but television, which McLuhan claims communicates through the entire body, is cool.

The implications for contemporary worship and preaching are obvious--a "cooled off" generation has difficulty with hot skills. Under the influence of Puritanism the widespread pattern of worship and the content and form of many sermons is largely didactic and linear. The medium is therefore hot, and hot skills are required to decipher the sermon and enter fully into the spirit of the worship service.

There ought to be no surprises when adolescents, such as those surveyed by Dudley, who have not grown up in a linear, didactic society, say that most sermons are uninteresting and boring. However, what they are saying, unless they are unspiritual, is that they are more dissatisfied with the medium (the massage), than with the message.[2]

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[1]Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, The Medium is the Massage (New York: Bantam, 1967).

[2]For a more complete discussion of the impact of the media, and its implications for the preacher, see Merrill R. Abbey, Communication in Pulpit and in Parish (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1973); Jensen, pp. 11-43; Lewis and Lewis, pp. 9-11; Baumann, pp. 19-57; and Runia, "Sermon Under Attack," pp. 7-11.

Conclusion

Preaching, as the ministry of the Word, is solidly supported by Scripture. In this age though, it is often criticized for it appears to have minimal influence in a society that is bombarded with glossy and entertaining media imagery. Never is this more evident than when one considers its failure to draw a positive response from contemporary adolescent Christians.

However, in the preaching of the New Testament, particularly that of Jesus, there are certain principles that if applied to contemporary preaching, could well help to restore it to the position of power and influence that it should have.

Media studies have revealed that the modern mind is not as linear in its thinking and learning as in the formative period of Protestant preaching. Contemporary thinking is in fact nearer that of the millennia prior to the Renaissance which, of course, includes the New Testament era. The narrative preaching methods of Jesus may therefore be more applicable in our age than at any time in the last five centuries, particularly in preaching to adolescents whose learning processes have been shaped by the electronic media.

The New Testament model demonstrates that effective preaching is presented in a context and form that enables the hearer to see its relevance. Ghandi once said that even God does not dare appear before a starving man unless He has some food. Just so, the preaching of the Word without relating it to the needs of the individual is futile and damaging.

All preaching, including that which is to adolescents, will only be relevant as it is directed towards their needs, and

addresses issues in which they are interested and involved.

Having established this, our attention will now turn to a survey of current research on the developmental stages, needs and interests of adolescents.

CHAPTER III

ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PREACHING

Introduction

Adolescence is by definition the period between childhood and adulthood.[1] It is a period of intense personal growth and as such occupies a place of significance within the field of developmental psychology.

To speak of the "age of adolescence" is a comparatively recent trend. Until the eighteenth-century it was merged with childhood and only in the first two decades of the twentieth century did it acquire the status of a separate developmental era. It is also considered to be a Western phenomenon and due largely to the extended period involved in preparation for adulthood in Western society.[2]

The commencement of adolescence is more or less physically defined by the onset of puberty,[3] but the end which is marked by the transition to adulthood is less easy to determine. Sociologically it may be defined as the time when one assumes adult roles, such as

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[1]J. Roy Hopkins, Adolescence: the Transitional Years (New York: Academic Press, 1983), p. 2.

[2]Ibid., pp. 3, 7.

[3]Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Adolescent Development (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 2.

the role of spouse, or an occupational role that ensures or allows economic independence. It has also been observed that "patterns of education and marriage have helped to postpone the end of adolescence for many people. . . . [thus] adolescence is now a longer developmental epoch than it was in earlier generations."[1]

In terms of years of age, only broad classification is reasonable. Hurlock notes that for girls, adolescence extends from approximately thirteen to twenty-one years of age, and for boys, from fourteen to twenty-one years of age. There are marked behavioural differences between younger and older adolescents and so the above periods are often divided into early and late adolescence with the transition point at about age seventeen.[2]

The intent in this chapter is to review the basic human developmental stages established by a study of human psychology. It will be shown that they are of significance in determining the content and form of preaching that will best meet the needs of early adolescents. It is suggested that an awareness of these stages will allow the preacher to conform more closely to the New Testament preaching model by more ably relating the Word of God to the life situation and needs of the listener.

Thus, we will first note the developmental tasks of early adolescents; then we will observe their levels of cognitive, moral, and faith development; in each case the implications for preaching will be noted. Finally we will observe the specific needs of adolescents.

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[1]Hopkins, pp. 4-5. [2]Hurlock, p. 2.

Adolescent Developmental Tasks

Societal expectations of adolescents are termed "developmental tasks." Psychologists' definitions of these tasks vary widely although there is agreement at the basic level. Erik Erikson, for instance, groups all developmental tasks under that of identity formation.[1] Hopkins expands this to three tasks which he terms themes: (1) searching for an identity; (2) establishing autonomy; and (3) decision-making about life goals.[2] R. J. Havighurst elaborates on them even further and lists ten. They are as follows:

1. Achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes
2. Achieving a masculine or feminine social role
3. Accepting one's physique and using the body effectively
4. Achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults
5. Achieving assurance of economic independence
6. Selecting and preparing for an occupation
7. Preparing for marriage and family life
8. Developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence
9. Desiring and achieving socially responsible behaviour
10. Acquiring a set of values and an ethical system as a guide to behaviour[3]

Erikson's influential role as practitioner, theorist, and

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[1]Erik Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

[2]Hopkins, pp. 10-16.

[3]R. J. Havighurst, Human Development and Education (New York: Longmans, 1953), cited by Hurlock, p. 7.

educator in the field of developmental psychology is well recognised.[1]

There is little doubt concerning the validity of Erikson's conclusion that identity formation is the central task of adolescence. However, other authorities such as Hopkins and Havighurst are also correct, for what they offer is an expansion and not a contradiction of Erikson's position. Havighurst's ten points are best seen as subsets of the task of identity formation. Hopkins readily acknowledges the crucial nature of the identity task and the inter-relation of each developmental task.

> The various tasks of adolescence are highly related. Searching for an identity is perhaps the most global task, for it certainly includes occupational choice, autonomy from parents, and patterns of sexual behaviour. Developing a system of values--synonyms are moral behaviour, and ideology--bears a strong relationship to identity. In Erikson's terms, ideology is the "guardian of identity."[2]

It is worth noting that here, on the issue of identity, psychology and religion meet. As Erikson suggests "ideology is the guardian of identity." Ideological values are implicit in the Christian religion and the importance of a commitment to an ideology is critical in the establishment of identity. In another place Erikson says "without some ideological commitment, however implicit in a 'way of life,' youth suffers a confusion of values."[3]

V. Baillie Gillespie cites numerous authorities who recognize that the incidence of conversion is highest in

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[1]Hopkins, p. 75. For a summary of the first six of Erikson's "Eight Stages of Human Development," see appendix 1.

[2]Hopkins, p. 13. [3]Erikson, p. 188.

adolescence.[1] In his book Religious Conversion and Personal Identity he deals at length with the close relationship between conversion and identity formation. In fact, he perceives a close relationship between identity and religion in general.

> Religion tells man who he is--a child of God; what he is--one in need of saving; where he belongs--in the family of God; how to belong to God--through commitment to God; how to relate to others--in loving, caring responses; and what man's future is--identity with God.[2]

The broad framework in which a young Christian adolescent develops an identity is dominated by the role of the adolescent's parents. The school, whether religious or non-religious, also plays an important role. The church is, of course, significant too. The sermon--that part of church life with which this paper is predominantly concerned--is arguably the most important church event in which the Biblical message is communicated in an attempt to shape the development of identity in the listeners. The sermon that is heard by adolescents must therefore squarely address the issues of identity that they face. In the thought form of Hopkins, it should relate to matters that effect choice of occupation, relationships to parents and significant others, and the development of an ideology or set of values.[3] It is imperative that at this time answers are provided to "existential questions, the real questions that plague the time of adolescence."[4]

Having said this it is now opportune to consider the cognitive, moral, and faith development of the early adolescent.

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[1]V. Ballie Gillespie, Religious Conversion and Personal Identity: How and Why People Change (Birmingham, Alabama: Religious Education Press, 1979), pp. 76-78.

[2]Ibid., p. 156.

[3]Hopkins, p. 13.

[4]Ibid., p. 187.

Adolescent Cognitive Development

An understanding of adolescent cognitive development will enable the preacher to understand the intellectual capacity of early adolescents. If the content of the sermon is planned accordingly, there is obviously more likelihood that they will grasp the meaning of that sermon.

The foremost authority in the study of cognitive development has been Jean Piaget. He describes cognitive development in terms of four successive stages.[1]

Piagetian theory suggests that at adolescence the cognitive process changes from concrete to formal or abstract operations. The mechanism of this transition is significant in the context of this paper. It is important to know some details of the movement from one stage to the next, and whether or not those adolescents who have reached the next stage show consistency in their applications of the thought patterns of that stage.

Formal-Operational Thought

The thinking of later childhood is characterized by logical reasoning that involves concrete observable objects. In Piaget's words, "Concrete thinking is the representation of possible action."[2] With the emergence of formal-operational or propositional

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[1]For detailed description of Piaget's four stages see appendix 2.

[2]Jean Piaget, "Adolescence: Thought and Its Operation; The Affectivity of the Personality in the Social World of Adults," trans. Anita Tenzer and David Elkind, in Adolescence: Studies in Development, ed. Zita M. Cantwell and Pergrouhi N. Svajian (Itasca, Illinois: Peacock, 1974), p. 46.

thinking the adolescent is able to think about thinking. Again in Piaget's words: "Formal thinking is the representation of the representation of a possible action."[1] Thought can now be abstract. Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan note that Piaget's formal-operational thinker can

> create thought systems or "hypothetico-deductive" theories. This involves the logical construction of all possibilities--that is, the awareness of the observed as only a subset of what may be logically possible. In related fashion, it implies the hypothetico-deductive attitude, the notion that a belief or proposition is not an immediate truth but a hypothesis whose truth value consists in the truth of the concrete propositions derivable from it."[2]

In other words this transition implies that the formal-operational thinker is capable of abstract, propositional, reflective thinking. Kohlberg and Gilligan note, however, that this transition is not an "all or none phenomenon" and that it proceeds in several stages.[3]

Research has shown that among middle-class Americans who attain formal-operational thought, substage one is reached between ages ten and thirteen and the third stage is reached at around fifteen or sixteen years of age.[4] However, in other research involving 265 subjects, clear formal-operational reasoning was found in only 45 per cent of those aged ten to fifteen; in 53 per cent of those aged sixteen to twenty; in 65 per cent of those aged twenty-one

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, "The Adolescent as Philosopher," in Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence, ed. Jerome Kagan and Robert Coles (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 156.

[3]See appendix 2 for a detailed description of these stages.

[4]Ibid., p. 155.

to thirty; and in 57 per cent of those aged forty five to fifty. Thus, there is considerable doubt concerning the universality of this transition. It would seem that almost 50 per cent of American adults never reach adolescence in the cognitive sense.[1]

According to Piaget, the transition from one stage to another results from cognitive disequilibrium, and the overall stage movement is the restoration of equilibrium. Each equilibriated stage in his theory supposedly represents a "structured whole." Therefore an individual who has attained the formal-operational level, for instance, will apply that mode of thinking in all situations at all times.

However, numerous studies have also cast doubt on the validity of the "structured whole" concept. D. P. Keating has shown that among the most advanced seventh-graders, fewer than two-thirds used formal thought consistently. Average seventh-graders performed consistently at that level only one-quarter of the time.[2]

K. A. Lovell concluded that only thirty-one of his fifty-two older subjects, including college and non-college adults used formal thought.[3] E. Dulit found a minority of older adolescents and adults were fully formal-operational in their thinking. He summarized his findings thus: "Fully developed formal-stage thinking seems to be

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[1]Ibid, p. 158.

[2]D. P. Keating, "Precocious Cognitive Development at the Level of Formal Operations," Child Development 46 (1975): 276-80.

[1]K. A. Lovell, "A Follow-Up Study of Inhelder and Piaget's The Growth of Logical Thinking," British Journal of Psychology 52 (1961): 143-53.

far from common-place or routine among normal adolescents and adults."[1] It is perhaps better therefore to say that stage thinking represents the dominance of a particular manner of thinking at a given stage of development.

It appears, in fact, that Piaget did not intend to indicate that "the typical adolescent of the formal stage always employs operations of the kind described [for that stage]. Various factors may prevent the use of such operations. Under conditions of fatigue or boredom, for instance, the adolescent may not fully display the thought of which he is capable."[2]

Piaget has also said, in response to criticism of his concept of the "structured whole," that although all adolescents are capable of formal thought, it may occur only in their own special area of aptitude.[3]

It is perhaps of significance for this study, that the tasks used by Piaget to develop the cognitive stage theory were of a mathematical or physical nature.[4] Since little of this nature is traditionally used to teach religious truth, research that focuses

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[1]E. Dulit, "Adolescent Thinking a la Piaget: The Formal Stage," in Studies in Adolescence, ed. R. E. Grinder (New York: MacMillan, 1975), p. 551.

[2]Herbert Ginsburg and Sylvia Opper, Piaget's Theory of Intellectual Development: An Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, [ca. 1969]), p. 202.

[3]Piaget, cited by Hopkins, p. 159.

[4]For a succint summary of the Sixteen Binary Operations and the INCR group, the two logical models used by Piaget to describe the formal operations, see Ginsburg and Opper, pp. 182-202.

on verbal comprehension should be considered in conjunction with Piaget's findings. From research directly related to understanding religious stories, Ronald Goldman concluded that in religious thinking, children appear to pass through stages that closely correspond to Piaget's cognitive stages, but at a later age.

In 1961 E. A. Peel tested subjects aged nine to fifteen to assess their level of understanding of two prose passages. He found that the boundary between concrete and formal or propositional thinking appeared to be between thirteen years and five months, and fourteen years and two months.[1] This is much later than the onset of formal thinking observed by Piaget. This could substantiate the position proposed by Goldman, that religious thinking is dependant not only upon cognitive development but upon the "enriching of general experience, before religious language is understood."[2]

An interesting factor was observed in research conducted by F. W. Danner and M. C. Day. Although only about 50 per cent of adolescent subjects aged thirteen to seventeen years spontaneously thought abstractly, this increased to 75 per cent for thirteen-year-olds and to 100 per cent for seventeen-year-olds after they had received two prompts.[3]

A number of tests have also been conducted to assess the

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[1]E. A. Peel, "The Growth of Pupil's Judgments--Thinking Comprehension," unpublished account of research at Princeton, New Jersey, cited by Ronald Goldman, Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 63.

[2]Goldman, p. 63.

[3]F. W. Danner and M. C. Day, "Eliciting Formal Operations," Child Development 48 (1977): 1600-1606.

relationship between IQ and progression through the Piagetian stages. Hopkins summarizes the findings as follows:

> Above-average IQ facilitates progress through Piaget's stages for some children and adolescents. This does not mean that everyone who has a high IQ shows precocious stage movement, however; we have seen that formal thought is not consistently used even by highly-intelligent college students. There appears to be little relationship between IQ and Piagetian intelligence among adolescents whose IQ's are average or moderately low.[1]

Some Implications of Cognitive Development Theory for Preaching

This brief survey of cognitive theory would suggest that in considering the content of preaching for the early adolescent, one should be cautious in assuming that they have entered the stage of true formal or abstract thinking. The application of this mode of thinking in relation to religious matters appears to occur later than for some other fields of learning. This is accentuated if the adolescent does not have an aptitude for religious issues. Factors such as fatigue and boredom will also effect the consistent application of this mode of thinking. However, some research has shown that if prompted, even early adolescents are able to operate at the formal-operational level.

Ruth M. Beard, observes that "too often children begin from the wrong end in learning. They are provided with quantities of information but too little time is employed in discussing its relation to their problems, in eliciting what they have partly realized, or in helping them to understand concepts and principles . . . ."[2]

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[1]Hopkins, p. 165.

[2]Ruth M. Beard, An Outline of Piaget's Developmental Psychology for Students and Teachers (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 115.

As was shown in the previous chapter much contemporary preaching is abstract and propositional and thus would come under Beard's criticism. Too often the relationship of the sermon subject to the interests or problems of early adolescent listeners is not made clear. The relevance or meaning of such sermons is therefore not perceived by the majority of them. There should be a more concerted effort by the preacher to relate Biblical truth to the concrete historical situation in which the adolescent exists. As was shown earlier, the strength of narrative preaching is that it enables the listeners to more readily apply abstract truth to their lives. There should of course be variety in the form and content of preaching so that boredom and fatigue will not frustrate its purpose. Dialogue preaching may provide the necessary opportunity for the preacher to give prompts and for the listeners to respond.

Adolescent Moral Development

In this section there will be a brief survey of adolescent moral development theory. The implications for the form and content of sermons of this research and its relationship to other developmental theories will be noted.

Moral development itself is significant for it is a primary focus of religious education and preaching. It is perhaps best defined as the development of moral values and judgement. Kohlberg's influential work in this field grew out of Piaget's

cognitive development theory. Kohlberg's assessment of moral development utilized a clinical test in which responses were obtained to nine standard moral dilemmas (e.g. commitment to promises, mercy killing, the value of human life, etc.,). He described his findings as follows:

> In our research we have found six definite and universal stages of development in moral thought. . . . [which] are divided into three major levels, the pre-conventional, the conventional, and the post-conventional or autonomous. . . .[1]

With respect to the moral development of early adolescents he said:

> The postconventional level is first evident in adolescence and is characterized by a major thrust toward autonomous moral principles which have a validity and application apart from the authority of the group or persons that hold them and apart from the individual's identification with those persons or groups.[2]

Within the postconventional level there are two discernible stages, the first of which may apply to early adolescents.

> At the postconventional level we have Stage 5A: A social-contract orientation . . . . Right action tends to be defined in terms of general rights and in terms of standards which have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society.[3]

Kohlberg considers each stage of the development to be a better cognitive organization than the one before it. This is not to say that moral judgement stages are cognitive, but the existence of moral stages implies that normal development has a basic cognitive-structural component. One may say "that cognitive maturity is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for moral judgement maturity."[4]

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[1]Kohlberg and Gilligan, pp. 159-61. See appendix 4 for a more complete description of these stages.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., pp. 163-64.

Kohlberg's age correlations would appear to be suspect in view of what has been said earlier. However, if one recognizes that most early adolescents are still within the conventional stage, it is evident that they are not able to exercise mature moral judgement or develop mature moral values because they have not as yet attained full formal cognitive capacity.

Another significant correlation has been found to occur between Erikson's identity-formation schema and the cognitive and moral stage developments outlined by Piaget and Kohlberg.[1] M. H. Podd assessed an ego-identity interview with each of his subjects (134 male college juniors and seniors) which covered occupational choice, religious beliefs, and political ideology. They were assessed as being in either a state of "crisis" or "commitment." An individual who has examined alternative goals and values is said to have experienced a "crisis." "Commitment" is the degree to which an individual has invested himself in his choices. There are four levels of identity status: (1) identity achievement--has gone through a crisis and is committed; (2) moratorium--is in a crisis with vague commitments; (3) foreclosure--has experienced no crisis but is committed to goals and values of parents and significant others; and (4) identity diffusion--has no commitment regardless of crisis.[2]

Subjects in Podd's study could be grouped into three major categories, the conventional (Stages 3 and 4), the principled

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[1]See appendix 5.

[2]Kohlberg and Gilligan, p. 170.

(Stages 5 and 6), and the transitional. His statistics revealed the following:

> Two-thirds of the principled subjects had an "identity achievement" status. So too did about 40 per cent of the conventional subjects, the remainder being mainly in "identity foreclosure" (a status missing among the principled). None of the morally transitional subjects had an identity achievement status, and very few had foreclosed identity questioning.[1]

This study shows that morally transitional subjects are generally in a transitional state with regard to identity issues and that morally conventional adolescents are less likely to have an identity crisis. It is also evident that adolescents who have experienced and resolved an identity crisis have questioned conventional morality but have attained the level of formal-operational thinking necessary to resolve it.[2] The close link between cognitive and moral development and the adolescent identity crisis is nowhere more evident than here.

It is perhaps significant that Podd's Ph.D. dissertation in which the above findings were tabled, was completed in 1969. The degree of relativism of adolescents in the transition stage (ie., between conventional and principled morality), and the number of adolescents in that stage, was markedly different to that observed by Kohlberg and Kramer in the early sixties. In the earlier research adolescents in this transitional stage were in a state of moratorium, that is, in "crisis" with vague and uncertain commitments. In the later research they were found to be in a state

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[1]Ibid., pp. 170-71. [2]Ibid.

of identity diffusion, that is, they had no commitment and no crisis. Kohlberg and Gilligan conclude from this that "extreme relativism is no longer the struggle for independence from a strongly internal conventional morality in a period of moratorium and crisis in one's identity." Nor is it now exercised only by a minority. Rather it represents a relatively common state in which there is "a more stable less crisis-like pattern of low commitment."[1]

Kohlberg and Gilligan make the astute observation that this extreme relativism, which is now prevalent even among high school adolescents, provides both a threat to current educational practice and a potentiality for a new focus in education.[2] There is little doubt that the same can be said of religious "instruction" as practiced within the Christian church.

Some Implications of Moral Development Theory for Preaching

Earlier we saw that during adolescence, identity formation and the capacity for formal-operational thinking enter the final stage in their movement toward optimum levels. Now we have seen that this age is also crucial in the development of moral values.

Adolescents who successfully resolve an identity crisis form their moral values and judgement on principles rather than by foreclosure. Foreclosure implies an adoption of attitudes and behaviour patterns based on a rather rigid observance of rules and formulae. This is considered less adequate than that which is based on a set of ideological values that have their roots in

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[1]Ibid., pp. 172-73. [2]Ibid., p. 175.

universal ethical principles. For a Christian, of course, these universal ethical values would be consistent with and founded on the teachings of Scripture.

The content of preaching (and all religious teaching) should therefore sensitively encourage adolescents to face issues, and to guide them in the decision-making process without making the decision for them. It is crucial to nurture them so that their ultimate system of belief, their mature ideological stance, is that which they have thought through and made their own. Only in this way are they equipped to cope in a reasoned and balanced way when future crises occur.

Early adolescents in the 1980s are more likely to be influenced by relativism than those who passed through this stage prior to the 1960s. They will be more likely, therefore, to question moral values. Those of earlier generations often regard this as a threat to a development of moral values that are consistent with Christianity. Undoubtedly there is that possibility. However, if adolescents are encouraged to examine Christian values, and if these are shown to be reasonable and in touch with life as an adolescent sees it, they are more likely to adopt these values as their own. Relativism then, may encourage more adolescents to enter an identity crisis rather than to foreclose. If they are prompted to utilize their developing cognitive abilities, and if appropriate support is available--and both can be achieved by stimulating and nurturing preaching--they will satisfactorily resolve this crisis. Moreover, they will be more

committed to their value system than the adolescent who has not been through that experience.

For too long there has been a dichotomy between sermons and life. Preaching to early adolescents, to achieve its purpose, must therefore be seen by those early adolescents as an aid to their search for identity. It must be comprehensible even to those who do not have, or who do not always utilize, their capacity for abstract or propositional thinking. And it must demonstrate the importance and relevance of Christian ideological values in their life setting.

Thus, our conclusions from the survey of developmental psychology to this point have conclusively demonstrated that the requirements for the form and content of contemporary sermons are identical to those that constitute the New Testament preaching model as outlined in chapter II.

Adolescent Faith Development

The phenomenon of faith is a prominent motif throughout Scripture. Its meaning varies from the implicit trust in the divine promises evident in the life of the patriarchs to its more abstract and propositional meaning in the soteriological "union with Christ" concept common throughout Pauline writings. But Paul Tillich in his Dynamics of Faith goes even further than this identification of faith with religion or belief. He challenges his readers to think of those things that are of ultimate concern, the "god values." They may be found in one's self or its extensions--work, prestige, recognition, power, influence or wealth. They may be found in one's family, nation or church or one of a myriad of

less worthy objects. Faith, to Tillich, is a state of being ultimately concerned. So understood, it is a very serious business for it is that which shapes the way we invest our deepest loves and our most costly loyalties.[1] Faith in this dimension is a universal concern and it is in this sense that we speak of it here.

One may doubt the validity of a quest for stages in the development of such a complex and dynamic frame of mind. However, it is evident that just as cognitive powers develop, so must faith. Some in relating it to conversion, may consider it to be an instantaneous happening but, as we have seen, it is much broader than that. Martin Buber has observed that the realization of faith does not take place in a single decision made at a single moment which is then decisive for the existence of the decider; rather it takes place in a person's whole life, in the totality of one's relationships, not only to God but also to one's world and to one's self.[2]

Faith "is indeed a process that has a history and a genesis and thus represents the fundamental disposition of human existence."[3] When does it begin? Erikson remarks, "The ratio and relation of basic trust and mistrust established during infancy determines much of the individual's capacity for simple faith. . . ."[4]

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[1]Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), passim; see also Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Herts: James Nisbet, 1964), 3:138-141.

[2]Martin Buber, cited by William Meissner, "Faith and Identity," in Psychohistory and Religion: The Case of Young Man Luther, ed. Roger A. Johnson (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), p. 112.

[3]Meissner, p. 112.

[4]Erik Erikson, Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History (New York: Norton, 1958), p. 225, cited by Meissner, p. 114.

The stage development of faith as a theory has been studied by Robert J. Fowler and presented in his book Stages of Faith.[1] He notes the relationships between Erikson's stages of identity formation, and Piaget's and Kohlberg's stages of cognitive and moral development. With these he correlates a series of faith development stages.

Having already observed the imprecision of correlations between various theories of development in their relationship to age, one must avoid the over literal and mechanistic picture that such a broad range of correlations as that in appendix 5 tends to depict. It is nevertheless helpful in the pursuit of a holistic view of adolescent development.

In the period from birth to age twenty-one Fowler posits four structural stages of faith development. The stage prior to adolescence, which is relevant in the context of this paper, is defined by Fowler as the stage of Mythic-Literal faith:

> Stage 2 Mythical-Literal faith is the stage in which the person begins to take on for him- or herself the stories, beliefs and observances that symbolize belonging to his or her community. Beliefs are appropriated with literal interpretations, as are moral rules and attitudes. . . . Story becomes the major way of giving unity and value to experience. This is the faith stage of the school child (though we sometimes find the structures dominant in adolescents and in adults). . . . They can be affected deeply and powerfully by symbolic and dramatic materials and can describe in endlessly detailed narrative what has occurred. They do not, however, step back from the flow of stories to formulate reflective, conceptual meanings. For this stage the meaning is both carried and "trapped" in the narrative. . . .
>
> The new capacity or strength in this stage is the rise of narrative and the emergence of story, drama and myth as ways of finding and giving co-herence to experience.

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[1]Robert J. Fowler. Stages of Faith (Blackburn, Victoria: Dove, 1981), pp. 52, 113.

> The limitation of literalness and an excessive reliance upon reciprocity as a principle for constructing an ultimate environment can result either in an overcontrolling, stilted perfectionism, or "works righteousness" or in their opposite, an abasing sense of badness embraced because of mistreatment, neglect or the apparent disfavour of significant others.[1]

On the mechanics of the transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3, Fowler writes:

> A factor initiating transition to Stage 3 is the implicit clash or contradictions in stories that leads to reflection on meanings. The transition to formal operational thought makes such reflection possible and necessary. Previous literalism breaks down; new "cognitive conceit" (Elkind) leads to disillusionment with previous teachers and teachings. Conflicts between authoritative stories . . . must be faced. The emergence of the mutual interpersonal perspective taking . . . creates the need for a more personal relationship with the unifying power of the ultimate environment.[2]

Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith ordinarily takes form during adolescence, although, as noted above, all do not attain this stage just as all do not attain formal-operational thinking. Synthetic-Conventional faith is termed such because it is conventional in the sense that it is seen as everybody's faith system or the faith system of the entire community. It is synthetic in that it is nonanalytical.[3]

Fowler's summary of Stage 3 faith is as follows:

> In Stage 3 Synthetic-Conventional faith, a person's experience of the world now extends beyond the family. A number of spheres demand attention: family, school or work, street society and media, and perhaps religion. Faith must provide a coherent orientation in the midst of that more complex and diverse range of involvements. Faith must synthesize values and information; it must provide a basis for identity and outlook.
>
> Stage 3 typically has its rise and ascendancy in adolescence, but for many adults it becomes a permanent place of

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[1] Ibid., p. 149.

[2] Ibid., p. 150.

[3] Ibid., p. 167.

> equilibrium. . . . It is a conformist stage in the sense that it is acutely tuned to the expectations and judgments of significant others and as yet does not have a sure enough grasp on its own identity and autonomous judgment to construct and maintain an independent perspective. While beliefs and values are deeply felt, they are typically tacitly held--the person "dwells" in them and in the meaning world they mediate. But there has not been occasion to step outside them explicitly or systematically. At Stage 3 a person has an "ideology," a more or less consistent clustering of values and beliefs, but he or she has not objectified it for examination and in a sense is unaware of it. Differences of outlook with others is experienced as differences in "kind" of person. Authority is located in the incumbents of traditional roles (if perceived personally worthy) or in the consensus of a valued, face-to-face group. . . .[1]

On the transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 Fowler adds:

> Factors contributing to the breakdown of Stage 3 and to readiness for transition may include: serious clashes or contradictions between valued authority sources; marked changes by officially sanctioned leaders, or policies or practices previously deemed sacred and unbreachable . . . ; the encounter with experiences or perspectives that lead to critical reflection on how one's beliefs and values formed and changed, and on how "relative" they are to one's particular group or background.[2]

Before noting the significance of this developmental stage for preaching it will be helpful to present a brief summary of Fowler's view of Stage 4 which he terms Individuative-Reflective faith.

> Stage 4 most appropriately takes form in young adulthood (but let us remember that many adults do not construct it and that for a significant group it only emerges in the mid-thirties or forties). This stage is marked by a double development. The self, previously sustained in its identity and faith compositions by an interpersonal circle of significant others, now claims an identity no longer defined by the composite of one's roles or meanings to others. To sustain that new identity it composes a meaning frame conscious of its own boundaries and inner connections and aware of itself as a "world view." Self (identity) and outlook (world view) are differentiated from those of others and become acknowledged factors in the

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[1]Ibid., pp. 172-73. [2]Ibid., p. 173.

> reactions, interpretations and judgments one makes on the actions of self and others. . . . Stage 4 typically translates symbols into conceptual meanings. This is a "demythologizing" stage.[1]

In the transition from Stage 3 to Stage 4 there is an interruption of reliance on external sources of authority. There is now a critical reflection of one's previous assumptive or tacit system of values and a relocation of the source of authority within the self. Its strength is in its capacity to reflect on self (identity) and outlook (ideology). Its dangers are in excessive confidence in the conscious mind and in critical thought.[2]

Some Implications of Faith Development Theory for Preaching

Adolescence has earlier been shown to be the age of marked development of identity, cognition, and moral values. It has now been shown to be a critical age for faith development.

Mythic-Literal faith, the faith stage of childhood is characterized by a literal acceptance of the beliefs and values of those they regard as significant. In adolescence they begin to see the meanings of these beliefs and values and begin to apply them in a widened sphere of experience. This is the Synthetic-Conventional faith stage. Beyond adolescence, in the Individuative-Reflective stage of faith, the individual engages in a critical assessment of their previously-held beliefs and values with their attendant meanings.

The implications of faith stage development as Fowler has pictured it, are quite significant for preaching. He notes that the Mythic-Literal faith stage of childhood is sometimes still dominant

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[1]Ibid., p. 182. [2]Ibid.

in adolescents and adults. It is reasonable to conclude that many early adolescents are still in this stage. It is the stage in which "story is the major way of giving unity and value to experience, [and] they can be affected deeply and powerfully by symbolic and dramatic materials."[1] Preachers, therefore, ought not overlook the potential of narrative and dramatic preaching for this faith stage group. The inability of early adolescents to extract the deeper meaning from the story could be alleviated by verbal or situational prompts that make that meaning more evident.

The importance of helping individuals to proceed to the next stage is apparent. The problem for adults remaining in this stage, Fowler says, is a tendency toward "stilted perfectionism or works righteousness."[2] Preaching can help them through this stage by encouraging them in a caring and supportive way to see the irrationality of a simplistic and over-literal interpretation of faith issues. A study of the preaching of Jesus shows that He was constantly endeavouring to do this. It is not insignificant that He used parables to do it. That He sometimes explained them is evidence that He recognised the need to offer verbal prompts to clarify their meaning. On other occasions the situation in which the parable was told made the meaning abundantly clear, although undoubtedly there were also times when the point was lost on many of the hearers.

The Synthetic-Conventional faith stage is reached by some early adolescents, but generally it is not attained until late

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[1]Ibid., p. 149. [2]Ibid., p. 150.

adolescence or sometime in adulthood. Preaching to those entering this stage should help them to relate the meanings of their beliefs and value system to the widening sphere of experiences that their emerging cognitive and social capabilities present to them. As Fowler notes, these experiences now begin to extend beyond the family to include "school or work, street society and media and perhaps religion."[1]

Those who attain the capacity for formal-operational thinking will, as Fowler notes, never lose the fascination with stories but now have the ability to step back from them, "reflect upon them, and communicate their meanings by way of more abstract and general statements."[2] Narrative preaching is therefore still as relevant as it ever was. At this stage it is understood more fully than before and the meaning is better applied to the listener's life situation. So we observe again that developmental psychology confirms the validity of using the narrative form of sermon found to be predominant in the preaching of Jesus.

Fowler observed that the transition from this stage to the next is often prompted by awareness of contradictions between valued authority sources or change by group leaders with regard to cherished practices and policies. This is a significant observation for Seventh-day Adventist preachers in view of discussion within the church on various theological issues during the last six or seven years. Many members have been jolted out of their Synthetic-Conventional stage. Unfortunately, the success of the transition to

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[1]Ibid., p. 172.

[2]Ibid., pp. 136-37.

the next stage was marred for some because, by questioning the belief and value system that was held by the conventional majority, they were regarded as disloyal. As noted in the brief summary of Stage 4 the source of authority in this transition moves from the group to self. Preaching in such a situation should be directed at those in both positions, that is, those who are urgently endeavouring to protect the group beliefs and values and those who are entering a new stage, which is essentially a "demythologizing stage."[1]

Although at this point, this discussion takes us beyond the age of early adolescence, they are undoubtedly affected when they are part of a congregation in which a "crisis" prompts a relatively large number to attempt this transition. Preaching in such situations should attempt, through every means possible, to encourage tolerance, understanding, and genuine Christian love. There is a need for content material that re-assures those who are conservative, but allows those who are entering the Individuative-Reflective stage, or another stage beyond that, to sense that they are understood and have not necessarily moved beyond the limits of that which is acceptable to the rest of the body.[2] The failure to recognize such developmental stages inevitably leads to the alienation of some of the church's most creative thinkers.

Undoubtedly, the result of ignoring the faith development

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[1]Ibid., p. 182.

[2]This is not to say that a faith stage transition was all that was involved in the crisis that occurred in some Seventh-day Adventist congregations in the early 1980s. There were, no doubt, instances of doctrinal differences that made co-membership in a congregation difficult or pointless.

stage of the adolescent, which itself can be rather creative, will also result in alienation. Optimum development and nurture would best occur in what Gillespie terms an "intergenerational context of faith building." He observes that if this creativity encounters resentment because it appears to challenge the traditional view, adolescents will often regard it as "supression of personal identity and individuality." The most natural consequence of this is a counter-conversion and negative identity reaction.[1]

Having now surveyed the three fields of developmental theory considered relevant to the subject of this paper, a brief summary follows of the needs that religion might be expected to satisfy, that are perhaps first expressed distinctly and quite powerfully by the early adolescent.

Adolescent Needs

Goldman lists five basic needs of adolescents which religion must satisfy if it is to make a valid claim on their life and loyalty.

Security in freedom. Adolescents need freedom to experiment and to explore while establishing their system of belief and implementing their emerging sense of values. But they also need a secure base, in the form of mature models of the belief system, to whom they can return for clarification and confirmation. Preaching to this age group should be balanced and authoritative though not authoritarian.

Status. This finds expression in the desire for acceptance and respect as a maturing individual. No one senses as strongly as

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[1]Gillespie, pp. 208-10.

the adolescent that they are neither child nor adult; though at different times they appear to perform the role of first one, then the other. To treat them as they might become is to treat them as Jesus would have done. The preacher will speak to their level, being most cautious not to speak in a patronizing or condescending manner.

Idealism. Adolescents are characteristically altruistic. With sexual development there is an increased sensitivity to other people, particularly those of the opposite sex. There is an accompanying concern for truth and justice, for equality and freedom. The content of sermons should show an awareness of these attitudes and aspirations.

Love. Love takes on new meanings for the adolescent. Their craving for it reaches new boundaries and it seeks new forms of expression. A preaching model which does not concern itself with this great dynamic of adolescence is inadequate and unrealistic, for the theme of love is the great theme of Christianity. Love as an adolescent sees it is mixture of family love and friendship but it is also closely related to a new and surprising desire for a relationship with someone of the opposite sex. It would be incorrect to say that this always has sexual overtones, but it often does. Adolescents need to know how to view this new experience in relation to Christian values and love.

Meaning. This is undoubtedly closely linked to the search for identity and the establishment of moral values and a faith system.[1]

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[1]Ronald Goldman, Readiness for Religion: A Basis for Developmental Religious Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), pp. 166-74.

It is worthy of mention here, however, for it is central to much that determines whether or not religion is accepted as valid and worthy, or whether it is passed over as farcical and inadequate. The 1980s are an era of relativism and stress upon scientific discovery. It is common practice to doubt the worth or truth of all that cannot be validated by empirical scientific method. As adolescents seek to establish their identity they undoubtedly search for that which binds their experiences together into a meaningful whole. Religion, if correctly understood, will accomplish this purpose. The task of the preacher is to ensure that the Christian religion is presented as a valid and reasonable choice, even for the intellectually aware adolescent who is searching for meaning and purpose in life.

Conclusion

It is vitally important for the preacher, as he determines the form and content of the sermon, to be aware of the different stages of development and basic human needs. In particular, early adolescents should be seen as those who are at a crucial stage of development and whose needs are, in a sense, peculiar to their age. In the movement towards maturity, adolescence is the optimum age for identity formation; it is also the optimum age for the development of the capacity for formal-operational thinking and a personal system of values; and it is the age of transition to the stage of faith in which an individual sees deeper meaning behind faith issues.

Through this survey of relevant developmental research and theory it has become apparent that for a preacher to effectively reach early adolescents, a concerted effort is required to relate

Biblical truth and Christian values to that which is concrete and observable in their life situation. Only in this way can religion become comprehensible to them for the majority have not as yet attained the intellectual capacity to think abstractly. The widely practised propositional style of preaching is therefore generally beyond their understanding.

However, it has been observed that a variety of preaching styles, including narrative, and dialogue, and that which involves Christian drama, is particularly suitable for sermons intended to reach this age group. Since, as has been noted, only 57 per cent of American adults attain the ability to think abstractly by the age of fifty (and one may presume the statistics for Australia would be similar if they were available), preaching in these forms, particularly that of narrative, will in fact be suited to a large proportion of an average congregation.

A comparison of these findings with those of our survey of New Testament preaching and contemporary communication theory presents a convincing argument for less propositional preaching and more use of styles such as narrative.

On the other hand, there should be an attempt through the content of the sermon to lead the early adolescents through the concrete operational thought stage (limited as it is by a rather literalistic understanding of faith issues), to a more creative stage in which they are able to think more reflectively and critically. The preacher should not adopt a passive role in this regard. Such a transition can in fact be stimulated by preaching that both

encourages and nurtures while at the same time challenging rigid thought structures and behaviour.

The sermon content should also be influenced by the close relationship observed between identity formation and conversion. One who preaches to early adolescents must preach with this significant correlation in mind. The chief purpose of preaching should be to produce, under the blessing of the Spirit, the desire for a religion of the heart and to teach what it involves and how it may be developed. Many early adolescents have been church attenders all their lives so spiritual things are not strange to them. But their beliefs are largely those of their parents, therefore, they need to be challenged to internalize and personalize them.

The sermon content should unswervingly aim at relating Biblical truth and Christian values to the life situation of the adolescent. To do this, specific adolescent needs and issues need to be addressed. Sermons could and should, therefore, include such things as the Gospel and its significance to adolescents in this decade; love and interpersonal relationships on all levels (ie. family, peers, opposite sex); the relevance of Christian values such as peace and justice in contemporary society; the place of faith in a society dominated by the scientific method; ethical principles and their application to a variety of social and religious matters; relativism and Christian moral values; the apparent delay of the second advent; the sabbath and its observance; the existence of God; and the creation-evolution debate. This list is of course far from exhaustive and could readily be developed to include pertinent prophetic and doctrinal subjects. The key factor in all of this is

to relate the sermon to issues, problems, or situations that concern the adolescents in the congregation.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that can be made from what has been discussed in our study of New Testament preaching, contemporary communication theory, and developmental psychology is that the apparent disinterest and boredom observed in adolescents in many sermons does not necessarily indicate that the relevance of preaching is past. Preaching can most certainly still be a powerful agent of change, even for adolescents who live in the 1980s.

CHAPTER IV

MINISTRY DESIGN: ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TO THE SERMON

Introduction

A Biblical rationale for the centrality of preaching in the church has now been established. It has also been observed that among the various styles of preaching in the New Testament model, that of narrative was predominant, particularly in the preaching of Jesus. In the survey of communication theory and developmental psychology, it has been shown that the sermon can still have a significant role in the communication of Biblical truth, of Christian values, and of faith issues. From this study it was also evident that narrative is a particularly effective style of preaching for early adolescents and in fact for the church in general.

The purposes of this research project, as stated in the introduction, are: (1) to determine whether or not Australian Seventh-day Adventist adolescents react to sermons in a negative way as did the American adolescents surveyed by Dudley; and (2) if they do, can something positive be done about it? Is it perhaps possible to affect a positive change in this attitude through an educational and preaching ministry that is patterned after the New Testament

sermon model and established in the light of research in communication theory and developmental psychology? It is proposed that the ministry design that is described in this chapter should comply with these conditions and be capable of producing such a positive attitude change. It consists of an educational and a demonstration module.

Education Module

The first phase of the ministry design consists of a two-part educational module.

Education Module: Part 1

This module is directed at establishing rapport with the subject group and outlining to them the aims and objectives of the ministry project. The basic steps necessary to complete the ministry design will be described and the Church Youth Attitude Test will be administered. A brief talk will follow that emphasizes the fact that sermons can be interesting and helpful to all subgroups within the church community including early adolescents. This is designed to help them avoid "switching off" as soon as the preacher commences, regardless of what he is saying or how he says it. The significance of the sermon in helping adolescents understand the Scriptures and apply its teachings to their lives will also be emphasized.

Education Module: Part 2

This module will involve the youth in a discussion of various forms of sermon and their content. After a brief crowd-breaker exercise, a discussion sheet will be completed.[1]

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[1]See appendix 6.

Their answers will be recorded on the discussion sheet and then shared in a plenary discussion session. The group will then be divided into two subgroups and adult group leaders will be appointed. Each group will be asked to discuss things that they could do that would make the sermon more meaningful for them. After twenty minutes dicussion their conclusions will be shared with the whole group.

Ministry Module

The ministry module which will follow the educational module, consists of three sermons that will be scheduled within a fourteen-week period. These are designed to expose the subject group to a variety of sermon styles. Their content will address issues that are relevant to early adolescent youth. The sermon styles will be sufficiently different to enable comparative assessments to be made.

Sermon 1

This sermon will be preached by the writer and is classified as a youth devotional sermon. It is entitled "Lord, Make My Life a Miracle," and emphasizes that, though we make mistakes, the forgiveness of God enables us to live an abundant life. God's forgiveness breaks the cycle that says "The soul that sins must die." Forgiveness is His way for us to handle guilt, and to forget the past. It frees us to begin again, afresh. The miracle of life goes on because God forgives and forgets. Two narratives will be used. The first, "The Marble and the Shell,"[1] is the story of a

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[1]Arthur Milward, "The Marble and the Shell," Insight, 10 November 1981, pp. 8-9.

little boy who contracts a fatal disease. It will be employed as a parable of life in which one commences as a little child, happy and unhassled, but when sin enters, the hassles begin and the end is sorrow, despair, and death.

The second narrative entitled, "Bless the Beasts and the Turtles,"[1] will be used to portray the finality of the consequences of human frailty. Its suitability for reaching adolescents is heightened by its theme of animal pets.

Sermon 2

This sermon will be preached by June Honey, a Theology graduate who currently teaches Bible at Strathfield Seventh-day Adventist High School. She has been selected because of her ease of expression and familiarity with issues that concern adolescents. Her sermon will also be a youth devotional sermon that employs narrative to convey the message and lead to conviction. Although it will be narrative in style, it will be distinct from sermon 1 in that it will be preached by a woman.

Sermon 3

The third sermon will be taken by the writer and will be on the subject of forgiveness as was sermon 1. This sermon will, however, involve youth in drama and there will be opportunity for dialogue. Adolescents from the congregation will be involved in the two drama sections and three more will be involved in a sequential scripture reading. The congregation will be invited to participate

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[1]Deborah Anfenson-Vance, "Bless the Beasts and the Turtles," Insight, 13 July 1982, pp. 14-15.

by recalling passages of Scripture that are to do with forgiveness. Some will be asked to describe the circumstances that surround the passage of Scripture that they mention.

CHAPTER V

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Introduction

This chapter will first describe the procedure followed in developing and implementing the ministry modules and assessment instruments. The results of the various tests will then be noted and evaluated. Pertinent observations and comments will be made where they are warranted.

The objective of the ministry modules was to assess and positively modify the attitudes to the sermon of a small sample of Australian Seventh-day Adventist early adolescents. The stages that this involved are summarized as follows:

1. Development of the "Church Youth Attitude Test"[1]
2. Selection of the Erina Seventh-day Advenstist church as the church community in which to conduct the research
3. Approval from the pastor and board of the Erina church to conduct the education and demonstration modules in the period May to September 1985
4. Approval from the principal of the Avondale Seventh- day Adventist High School to administer the Attitude Test to a group of early adolescents[2] from this school
5. Administration of the Attitude Test to the subject group
6. Implementation of the educational module

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[1]Hereafter referred to as the "Attitude Test."

[2]Hereafter referred to as the "comparison group."

7. Development of the Sermon Evaluation Tests
8. Implementation of the demonstration module and administration of the Youth Sermon Evaluation Tests
9. Re-administration of the Attitude Test to the subject group
10. Administration of the Attitude Test to the comparison group

Description and Implementation

This section is an elaboration of the important stages included in the above summary.

Development and Implementation of Attitude Test

The preliminary developmental stage of the Attitude Test began in Adelaide in September 1984. A survey with ninety questions that related in various ways to preaching and worship was developed by the writer. This was administered to sixty-seven early adolescents at the Prospect Seventh-day Adventist High School in October 1984.

Scoring for that test was done by placing a mark in a column marked plus (+), MID, or minus (-). To obtain greater differentiation in the scores for this test, the scoring system was amended to include five categories ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Some questions which were not clearly answerable in this manner, were placed in a different section and were to be answered by a "yes" or "no."

Twenty-three questions were selected from the original questionnaire, some with adaptation. Questions that consistently

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[1]Hereafter referred to as the "subject group."

yielded a "MID" score, denoting uncertainty, were deleted. Questions that were repetitious, or that did not focus on the sermon, or factors that could significantly effect an adolescent's attitude to the sermon, were also deleted.

Biographical details including age group, sex, religion of parents, and church attendance habits of the subjects were retained. Brief instructions on the completion of the test were adapted from other tests that assess attitudes. The test in its revised and final form, excluding biographical details, included five questions requiring "YES" or "NO" answers and eighteen requiring answers in the categories "STRONGLY AGREE," "MILDLY AGREE," "UNDECIDED," "MILDLY DISAGREE," or "STRONGLY DISAGREE."[1]

The five questions that required a "YES" or "NO" answer in part 1 of the test are variables that could influence an adolescent's attitude to the sermon. These are:

Q1. I am a committed young Christian

Q2. Family worship is a regular part of our home-life

Q3. I watch more than 7 hours television in an average week

Q4. I go to church because I want to

Q5. The doctrines of the church are clear and I understand them

A further three questions in section 2 of the test are also considered potentially significant variables. These are:

Q6. Our pastor is a friendly man

Q8. Our church is a very happy church

Q15. Our church building is a good place in which to worship

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[1]See appendix 8 for a sample of the Church Youth Attitude Test.

Five questions that sought the subjects' attitude to significant beliefs or practices are as follows:

Q9. Lady preachers would be good to listen to

Q11. Worship of God is the most significant action of a human being

Q14. I feel the church has too many restrictions

Q16. Bible class is the most important class in an Adventist school

Q18. Sabbaths are very enjoyable

The remaining ten questions all relate directly to the sermon. Five of these, termed the "Sermon Assessment Block" questions, are designed to measure how effective the subjects perceived the sermon to be for their age group. They are as follows:

Q10. Most sermons are about issues and problems that effect youth my age (measures relevance)

Q13. Most sabbath sermons are quite interesting

Q17. Doctrinal sermons help me with my problems

Q19. Most sermons help me with my personal needs

Q23. The majority of sermons are readily understood

The other five, termed the "Sermon Improvement Block" questions, are designed to measure the subjects' attitude to factors that it is thought could improve their appreciation of the sermon. They are as follows:

Q7. Sermons should be finished by twelve o'clock

Q12. Christian drama makes a sermon more meaningful

Q20. It would be good to have a monthly youth sermon in our church

Q21. Sermons with stories are more easily understood

Q22. Young people should be more involved in sermons in our church

In summary, then, eight questions sought a response to certain variables, quite apart from the sermon, that could affect one's attitude towards it; five questions measured the subjects attitude to other significant religious practices or beliefs; and ten questions related specifically to the sermon.

Adolescent Component of Erina Seventh-day Adventist Church

The Erina church, because of its association with the Central Coast Adventist Primary and High School, has attracted a larger than average number of families with early adolescent family members. Of the number in this age group that attend regularly, fourteen were prepared to be involved in the research. Each member of the group was allocated a number to ensure a reasonable degree of anonymity and a more honest response to the tests. These numbers were used consistently throughout the period of testing.

Avondale High School Comparison Group

It was felt that the response to the Attitude Test of a large group not associated with the Erina Church could add credibility and validity to the overall findings of the project. To this end, permission was obtained to administer the Attitude Test to a group of year eight, nine, and ten students from the Avondale Seventh-day Adventist High School. The test was administered to seventy-one students on 20 September 1985. A specific advantage of this arrangement was that students are drawn from a number of churches in the area. They therefore reflect the current attitude of early adolescents to sermons in more than one church.

Initial Administration of Attitude Test to Subject Group

The test was first administered on Friday evening 24 May to twenty-three youth in attendance at the first of the education modules. This is hereafter referred to as Attitude Test A. Only a brief explanation of the purpose of the test was given prior to the completion of the test to limit positive or negative bias that could find expression in the answers given. The instructions for the completion of the test were read aloud to the group to minimize invalid answers. Of the twenty-three who completed the test, fourteen were in the early adolescent subject group. The remainder of the group were older.

Education Module

The implementation of the components of the education module followed the pattern described under ministry design in chapter IV. As mentioned immediately above, a group of older youth and adults attended the first education module which was held on 24 May. The second, which was held on the 31 May, was attended only by the subject group and a few visiting friends their own age. A concerted effort was made to create an informal and open atmosphere that was conducive to honest thought and reactions.

Development of Sermon Evaluation Tests

The Sermon Evaluation Tests were designed to permit a comparison of the subjects' responses to questions on Attitude Test A with their responses to the same questions when applied to the sermons in the demonstration module.

Questions were selected from the Attitude Test and adapted for inclusion in the series of three Sermon Evaluation Tests, one for each of the sermons in the demonstration module. In adapting the question, care was taken to ensure that the original intent of the question was maintained. Here is an example: the "parent question" from the Attitude Test read, "Most sabbath sermons are quite interesting." It was adapted for the Sermon Evaluation Test to read "This sermon is quite interesting."

Scoring for these tests was identical to that for the attitude test. Space was also provided on the test form to record any suggestions for making the sermon more interesting, meaningful, or helpful.

Implementation of Demonstration Module and Administration of Sermon Evaluation Tests

The church sermons of the demonstration module were preached during the regular worship hour of the church. The entire congregation was involved and a brief explanation of the aims of the research was given just prior to the first sermon which was preached by the writer on 1 June 1985. The second sermon was preached by June Honey on 29 June. The third sermon which involved two drama segments was preached by the writer on 17 August.

The subject group was asked to complete the Sermon Evaluation Test during each of the sermons. No attempt was made to isolate the members of the subject group from each other but they were encouraged to record their individual reactions. The completed tests, identified with their number, were returned to the appointed person following the delivery of the sermon.

Re-administration of Attitude Test

On 13 September, four weeks after the last sermon of the demonstration module, the Attitude Test was completed again by the subject group. The delay between the final sermon and completion of the test was deliberate. It was important that the results of this test reflect their attitude to the sermons generally preached in that church, rather than to one or another of the sermons of the demonstration module. This test is referred to as test "B."

In an attempt to avoid any bias, no explanation was given as to why the re-test was being done until after the test was completed.

Reaction and Evaluation

Education Module Discussion Sheet

As mentioned under the ministry design in chapter IV a questionnaire formed the basis of discussion of the sermons in the second session of the Education Module.[1]

The first two questions related directly to how interesting sermons were, a key issue that Dudley found received a strong negative response. The education module questionnaire revealed that an average of only 16.5 percent of sermons are of interest to those in the group; a disturbing response that would appear to parallel that discovered by Dudley.

The second question sought a response to different sermon types. Four types were described and the group was asked to rate each of them on a scale of 1 to 5 with "5" as the most positive

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[1]See appendix 6 for a sample of the discussion sheet.

response. These ratings, expressed as averages,[1] are shown in appendix 7.

The average rating of 0.46 for sermon type "D" was very poor and indicates the need for sermons to relate more closely to a contemporary life situation. The low rating of "B" type sermons (1.38) could indicate a low interest in doctrine. But it is more likely that these sermons are among those which our survey of communication and developmental theory has indicated are beyond the intellectual capacity of early adolescents.

Illustration or story is the common factor that distinguishes "A" and "C" type sermons from those with lower ratings. The moderately high score of 2.84 for "A" types--those which do not relate very directly to Biblical truth, could indicate a lack of interest in Biblical truth as such, but the high rating of 4.23 given to "C" type sermons militates against this conclusion. Rather, it appears that the medium is that which an adolescent reacts against, for Biblical truth is a key factor, along with modern stories, in "C" type sermons.

The conclusions from this brief test, are consistent with the conclusions of our study to this point. That is, adolescents will be more interested in sermons that relate to the contemporary life situation and that convey Scriptural truth through narrative.

Question three of the discussion sheet sought first to discover the group members' expectations of a good sermon, or what a good sermon would do for them. One group member wrote, "It stirs

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[1]Ratings are the average response, i.e., the numerical total of the 1 to 5 ratings divided by the number of subjects.

you up to do something good." Another wrote, "That there will be a clear meaning to make you think." And a third wrote, "Modern illustrations and whatever I can relate to. Something that gives you a good feeling about religion." The thoughts of others that contributed can be summed up in this final comment, "Modern stories that can relate to us in some situation and that have something to do with Bible truth." Each of these is a worthwhile and positive statement that justifies the conclusion that the age of preaching is not past, at least not if it complies with the conclusions of this study as reiterated by these adolescents.

Part 2 of the questionnaire asked the subject group to imagine that they were the world's greatest preacher and to record some things that they would preach about to adolescents. A representative selection of their answers are as the follows: "Interesting stories with morals;" "How Jesus suffered (with modern illustrations);" "My experiences that relate to the Bible in some way;" "Surfing and friendship;" and "About teens and their problems and what they can do about them, and about what Jesus faced and what he did about it."

The question was intended to unearth a list of interesting subjects but except for "surfing" (mentioned three times) and "friendship," those hopes were not realized. Nevertheless, the principle of relating the sermon to the contemporary life situation of the adolescent was again evident in their answers.

The second question under part 2 asked the subject group for their thoughts on things they would not preach about. Again they were to imagine that they were the world's greatest preacher. The

following answers are representative of the whole: "Old Bible stories that have been heard hundreds of times before;" "Boring things like the mark of the beast . . . ;" "Daniel's animals--they confuse me;" and "The olden days, and "D" type sermons that have been heard before." The familiarity with many of Scripture's favourite stories and the messages that have perhaps been over-emphasized in Adventist preaching in the past has evidently worn thin any appreciation for them. There is an obvious need for preachers to be familiar with those issues that concern adolescents and address them in a fresh and relevant manner. Their tolerance for a sermon that does not meet this standard appears to be quite low.

Finally they were asked, "How would you preach so that young people will be interested?" One wrote, "With something exciting happening all the time;" another, "Use modern illustrations about things they like to do, e.g. surfing, windsurfing, hang-gliding, water skiing etc.; and a third, "Dramatized! and about things that youth are involved in, e.g. surfing, etc. Something different and unusual;" and finally, "Start off with interesting stories and have a really good spiritual meaning behind it." The answers without doubt again reflect the thought that preaching need not be uninteresting to adolescents. Again they reinforce the impression that interesting sermons are those which couch relevant spiritual truths in a creative form that adolescents can relate to.

Despite the amount of helpful information that it yielded, this brief test administered in part 2 of the education module was in a sense just a preliminary test. The primary assessment instrument of the research is, of course, the Attitude Test.

Attitude Test Results

As alluded to above the major conclusions of the research arise from the detailed comparisons and correlations of the statistical results of the Attitude Test.[1]

Scoring

Scoring section 1 questions is straightforward. However, to enable a comparison to be made of the responses to each of the section 2 questions, numerical values were given to each of the categories as follows: STRONGLY AGREE, five points; MILDLY AGREE, four points; UNDECIDED, three points; MILDLY DISAGREE, two points; and STRONGLY DISAGREE, one point.

The score for each question that is referred to throughout the assessment and correlations is the average score for that particular question. This is calculated by dividing the total numerical value of the answers given by the number who completed that particular question.[2]

The score for each question can be interpreted in accordance with the correlations above. For instance, an average score of 2.00 would indicate that the average response to the question was mild disagreement. An average score of 3.87 would indicate a response close to mild agreement. The exception to this principle is a score of 3.00. Rather than indicating indecision, it would be

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[1] See appendix 8.

[1] In several instances the answers to questions, particularly in part 1, were omitted. Rather than invalidate that test, the results for each correlation were calculated on the basis of those that were completed correctly.

statistically more correct to interpret it as an attitude mid-way between mild disagreement and mild agreement.

Subject group test A

Fourteen early adolescents completed the test when it was first administered. As mentioned above this test is termed Attitude Test A. Detailed comparisons and correlations of significant factors were made and summaries of these with pertinent observations form the remainder of this chapter.

Statistical comparisons:
section 2 questions

The statistical results for section 2 questions appear in appendix 10. The following observations drawn from these statistics are thought to be significant:

1. The five Sermon Assessment Block questions that demonstrate how effective the adolescents perceive the sermon to be, scored the lowest of all test questions with the exception of question eleven (school Bible class)

2. Question ten a primary question in the Sermon Assessment Block which measures the relevance of sermons scored 1.64. This was lower than all others by a considerable margin, i.e., greater than 0.50. This was in fact the strongest negative response obtained to any question

3. The five Sermon Improvement Block questions that involve factors that it was thought could improve an adolescents attitude towards the sermon all scored higher than 3.50 which establishes the validity of that conclusion

4. Question seven, a primary question in the Sermon Improvement Block which related to the finishing time of the sermon, and by inference--referred to its length, scored the highest possible score of 5.00. This was naturally the highest response obtained to any question

5. Question twelve, another primary question of the Sermon Improvement Block, and one which relates to narrative as a key factor in making sermons easier to understand, scored the second highest of any question (4.64)

6. The subjects' attitude to the pastor, the happiness of their church, lady preachers, worship in general, the church building as a place of worship and the sabbath as an enjoyable day, all scored above 3.50 which is almost acceptable

7. The moderately high score of 3.78 for question fourteen concerning restrictions, is in fact a negative response denoting that the subject group tends to agree mildly that the church has too many restrictions

8. Question sixteen was included because it was thought that there may be a correlation between an adolescent's attitude to Bible class at school and their attitude to the sermon. This appears to be correct for the score of 2.28 is quite close to the average response to the Sermon Assessment Block questions of 2.24. However, question eleven indicates that they do consider worship to be important (3.78)

Correlation: subject group
and comparison group

The validity of the statistics and observations above is enhanced considerably when one notes the very close correlation between the test results obtained for the subject and comparison groups.[1] A variation of 0.50 or more was observed for only four section 2 questions. The comparison group scored 0.57 higher in their attitude to drama, accounted for no doubt by the involvement of many from that group in a drama presentation in the sermon on the sabbath immediately preceding the completion of the test. They scored 0.50 and 0.55 higher respectively for questions thirteen (interest) and twenty-three (understanding). This may reflect their general attitude or again it may be the result of their involvement in the sermon referred to above. For the question that relates to

[1]See appendix 10 for a summary of the comparison group results and appendix 11 for a correlation of the results of the subject group and comparison group. This represents the variation between males and females. In each correlation, variations less than 0.20 are not considered significant; variations greater than 0.50 are considered quite significant; variations greater than 1.00 are considered very significant.

the happiness of the church (Q8), the subject group's score was higher by 0.51.

Correlations: subject group test A:

The first correlation is made between the responses of males and females. This seeks to determine if males or females respond differently to the sermon.

Male--Female

Appendix 12 is a summary of the male and female scores as revealed in the subject group test A. Differences between the sexes, greater than 0.50 occur for nine of the twenty-three questions. The most notable of these indicate that females obtain more help from sermons (1.79); males agree more strongly that the pastor is a friendly man (1.33); and females have a more positive attitude to lady preachers (1.04). Females registered a stronger agreement concerning a monthly youth sermon by a 1.04 higher score than males for question twenty.

Variations less than 1.00 but greater than 0.50 are as follows: females feel that sermons are more relevant and meet their needs more than males do (0.54 higher for both Q10 and Q19); females also score higher for question twenty-three (understanding) by 0.67. Female subjects' view of their church as a happy church is 0.87 higher than males, but their view of the importance of worship is 0.96 lower than males.

The average response of females to the Sermon Assessment Block questions was 0.76 higher than males, it can be said therefore

that females respond more positively to sermons as they are currently preached than do males. The secondary reasons for this are clear from this correlation, that is, they receive more help from them etc. But the reason that they are able to receive more help is not as clear. They may be more receptive by nature, or they may be more intellectually advanced and so are able to understand the sermon better. Their higher response to question twenty-three (understanding) would suggest that intellectual capacity is a likely reason.

It is significant that the variation in response to the Sermon Improvement Block questions are minimal with the exception of that which relates to a monthly youth sermon (Q20). This would seem to indicate that males and females generally agree on the degree to which these factors would improve a sermon. The responses of both sexes for all of these questions is greater than 3.50 which seems acceptable.

The correlations that follow are those that have been made between the key factors in part 1 questions and answers to part 2 questions.

Committed--not committed[1]

Those who regard themselves as committed young Christians and those who do not differed by more than 0.50 for five questions. The most significant without doubt is the marked difference of 2.16 for question seventeen: "Doctrinal sermons help me with my problems."

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[1]See appendix 13 for a statistical summary of this correlation.

The score of 3.16 by those who are committed is almost acceptable, certainly much more so than the 1.00 scored by the not-committed. This question was intended to refer to the more propositional style of sermon. If it was interpreted in this way by the subject group, at the risk of stating the obvious, it appears that this style of sermon is more acceptable to those who are committed. The score of 1.00 for the non-committed group is the lowest score obtained by any question in any of the correlations.

Committed subjects indicated their preference for scheduling a monthly youth sermon by scoring 1.60 higher than the non-committed for question twenty. However, the non-committed group scored higher for questions six, eight, and fifteen. These indicate a more favourable attitude towards the pastor, the happiness of the church, and the suitability of the church as a place of worship.

Regular family worship--irregular family worship[1]

Again there are five questions for which a variation greater that 0.50 is observed. Those who have regular family worship are more favourable towards scheduling a monthly youth sermon (1.04) and towards involvement of youth in the sermon (0.85). They do not feel as strongly about restrictions in the church (0.75) and they scored lower with regard to the happiness of their church (0.62). The most surprising result is their response to question eleven: "Worship of God is the most significant action of a human being." Their score was 0.70 lower than that of those who do not have regular family

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[1]See appendix 14 for the statistical summary of this correlation.

worship. Although this is not a large variation it is significant. It appears to have little effect on their attitude to the sermon though for the scores for Sermon Assessment Block questions are not consistently lower than that of those who do not have regular family worship. The score for this question would appear to relate most directly therefore to the adolescents motivation for involvement in family worship (i.e., do they participate in it because they think it is important) and discussion of that is outside the scope of this paper.

Less that seven hours TV per week--more than seven hours TV per week[1]

As for both of the previous correlations there are five questions here in which there is a variation greater than 0.50. Those who view less than seven hours television per week have a more favourable view of the importance of Bible class in the school and a more favourable view of the pastor (0.50 and 0.56 respectively). The first correlation may be significant the second is probably not. A larger variation is noted in relation to the way in which sermons are seen to meet the needs of the subject group (0.80). A larger variation again (1.14), is seen in relation to question twenty-three: "The majority of sermons are understood." And an even larger variation is observed for question thirteen: "Most sabbath sermons are quite interesting." The variation is 1.27. It is significant that it was this question that brought the strongest response to Dudley's survey as has been noted above.

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[1]See appendix 15 for the statistical summary of this correlation.

A favourable response to test questions is more consistent among those who view less than seven hours television per week than for any group in any previous correlation. They score an average of 0.80 higher for the Sermon Assessment Block questions than those who watch more than seven hours television per week.

This factor therefore appears to have some relationship to the adolescents' attitude to the sermon. In view of previous comments made in our study of communication theory this is not surprising. The "cooled off" adolescents who are effected by the media will have difficulty relating to the "hot" propositional style of sermon. Although one ought to be cautious in suggesting that viewing more than seven hours television per week effects an adolescent's attitude to the sermon, these results suggest that it is not a totally unjustifiable conclusion.

Go to church because they want to--do not go to church because they want to[1]

This correlation is characterized by an even greater number of variations between the those who responded positively and those who responded negatively. Eight questions scored a variation greater than 0.50. There is also a consistent pattern of favourable response among those who answered positively as in the previous correlation although its significance is not thought to be the same. Whereas television viewing can possibly be considered as cause of a

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[1]See appendix 16 for details of the statistical correlations.

less positive attitude to the sermon, not wanting to go to church is probably a secondary cause, or an indication of an attitude rather than its cause.

A strong positive response is observed to all five Sermon Measurement Block questions (0.50 or greater) by those who go to church because they want to. The largest variation (1.50) is in response to question seventeen, "Doctrinal sermons help me with my problems." Those who attend church because they want to scored 2.75 and the other group scored 1.25. Even so a score of 2.75 is hardly acceptable.

Understand doctrines--do not understand doctrines[1]

In this correlation nine questions yield variations greater than 0.50. The most significant variations are as follows: those who say they understand the doctrines score 0.89 higher for question ten (relevance); 0.77 lower for question twenty-one (stories): and 0.55 higher for question twenty-three (understanding). This may indicate that they have attained the level of formal-operational thinking and are able to understand the propositional style of sermon better. However, it is significant that only three of the subject group said that they understood the doctrines and all were females. Curiously their assessment of the importance of Bible class in the Adventist school was lower (down 0.38) than for those who said they did not understand the doctrines clearly.

A close examination of the response of each of these three

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[1]See appendix 17 for details of the statistical correlations.

subjects for Sermon Measurement Block questions reveals that two of the three in fact scored quite low (2.00 or less) for each of the questions, and the higher average score is due to one of the subjects who scored 4.00 on four of the questions and 3.00 on the fifth. A conclusion that one of these three subjects has attained the formal-operational level of thinking is probably more justifiable.

Summary

The findings of the correlations of Attitude Test "A" may be summarized as follows: female adolescents tend to respond more favourably to sermons than do males; committed adolescents generally respond more favourably to propositional sermons than do the non-committed; the regularity of family worship does not appear to have any relationship to an adolescent's attitude to the sermon; viewing more than seven hours television per week appears to have a negative effect on an adolescent's attitude to the sermon; those adolescents who go to church because they want to have a more favourable attitude toward the sermon; and those who understand the doctrines of the church have a more positive attitude towards the sermon.

Sermon Evaluation Tests

The next stage of the research project was the presentation and assessment of the sermons that composed the demonstration module. As mentioned above, the assessment of the components of this module involved the completion by the subject group of a Sermon Evaluation Test for each of the sermons.

Statistical correlation:
test A and sermon 1

The Sermon Evaluation Test for sermon 1 asked for a reaction to six questions.[1] Four of them were from the Sermon Assessment Block and two from the Sermon Improvement Block. The first four assessed how relevant and interesting the sermon was, how readily it was understood, and how well it met the needs of the subject group. The last two assessed their response to the narratives in the sermon and to its length.

The assessment of the sermon is perhaps best perceived when the answers to the Sermon Evaluation Test are compared to the answers given to their parent questions in Attitude Test A. For three of the four Sermon Measurement Block questions included in the Sermon Evaluation Test, a shift of 2.00 or greater was attained and a shift of 1.09 was attained for the fourth question (Q19) relating to need-fulfillment. The greatest shift (2.34) was noted for question ten which measured relevance. A shift of 2.00 was generated for question thirteen which related to interest.

The response to question twenty-one relating to stories is worth noting. Test A and Sermon Evaluation Test 1 yielded an identical score of 4.75. Thus it appears that the adolescents know what form of sermon is the most meaningful for them and respond accordingly when they hear one that is preached in that style.

The score for question seven relating to length in the Sermon Evaluation Test is a negative score and indicates of course

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[1]See appendix 9 for the form of the Sermon Evaluation Tests and appendix 18 for a summary of the correlations of the statistical averages for each of the Test A and Sermon Evaluation Tests.

that they did not think that the sermon was too long. It did in fact extend to twenty-six minutes.

Statistical correlation:
test A and sermon 2

Once again three of the four Sermon Measurement Block questions yielded a shift of 2.00 or greater. For this sermon the shift for the questions assessing relevance (Q10) and understanding (23) were identical (2.17), and the question measuring interest (Q10) was 2.08. The other significant and different factor in this test was question nine which related to lady preachers. There was a shift of 0.25 to 4.25 after having heard a lady preach. Comment on the questions relating to narrative and length could be made as for sermon 1 above.

Statistical correlation:
test A and sermon 3

Again three of the four Sermon Measurement Block questions attained a shift greater than 2.00. On this occasion question ten which measured relevance scored 4.16 and attained the largest shift in attitude (2.50) for any of these questions for any of the three sermons.

The distinctive characteristics of this sermon, drama and youth involvement resulted in a shift for question twelve (drama) of 0.84 to 4.50, and a shift of 0.67 to 4.75 for question twenty-two (youth involvement) making this the highest scoring question apart from question seven (length).

Summary

The statistical assessment of the demonstration module presents an encouraging picture with good positive responses to the core questions of the Attitude Test. Statistics of this nature more than adequately demonstrate the validity and suitability of the New Testament sermon model for reaching the contemporary early adolescent.

The subject group were also asked in section 2 of the Sermon Evaluation Test, to list some ways in which the sermon (including its content and presentation), could have been more interesting, meaningful, or helpful. The responses for each sermon are included here in point form. Some have been shortened or amended so that they read more clearly.

Section 2 suggestions:
sermon 1

1. There could have been something to look at, something audio-visual
2. Great stories, great meanings, bring it down a bit so it's not quite over my head (hope you get what I mean). Good topic, great sermon
3. The sermon was really short and I was impressed
4. It was interesting (most of it)
5. Have a surfing story--surfing rules
6. It was cool how it was
7. It was great and I understood it perfectly
9. It was very good
10. It was absolutely excellent. Thanks for making an effort to make it interesting for us

Section 2 suggestions:
sermon 2

1. You have done a great job, but the problems I face you do not cover. But then I do not expect you to because you do not know what my needs are as they change from occasion to occasion

2. More stories and illustrations--a good topic. I enjoyed a lady preacher! Excellent sermon

3. Miss Honey was good for she expressed it clearly. I liked it for she made you listen by the way she expressed it. Voice expression was good

4. She spoke really clearly and put expression and meaning into what she said. Understandable to all ages. She was really good. Even if she did go too much over-time, it wouldn't matter because she is a top preacheress. We need more preachers like her

5. It was great just how it was! She got the message through really well and it was unreal to listen to. It was one of the best sermons I've ever heard

6. She did an excellent sermon. We should have more like her

7. Getting straight to the point quicker (sometimes). She was very good I enjoyed her

Section 2 suggestions:
sermon 3

1. The reading was a bit funny. But it was unreal

2. Very good and glad I could have a part in it!

3. It was fantastic. I was very nervous so I would like it more if I wasn't involved!

4. Stuff that helps me understand and deal with problems of people my age and time, e.g. not stories about problems a hundred years ago etc. Good stories

5. How about a sermon on why the SDA church is the chosen church of the last days

6. It was excellent

Summary

Several of the responses were constructive in that they pointed to areas that could have been improved. The majority, however, chose to respond positively to the sermon presented. The spontaneity of these responses indicates that they were genuine. The frequent mention of story and the necessity of linking the sermon with the needs or problems of the adolescent was again underscored.

The Final Test

Having been able to obtain a quite considerable shift in the attitude of the subject group for each of the sermons, the final part of the research was to determine if through the education and ministry modules a permanent shift in the attitude to the sermon had been affected. As mentioned previously the Attitude Test was administered again five weeks after the final sermon of the ministry module. The comparison of the results of this test with Attitude Test A can be seen in appendix 19. The salient points derived from these statistics are listed below.

1. Of those questions that relate specifically to the sermon, there was a significant and favourable shift in four areas.
2. The strongest shift (1.27) was observed in the appreciation of drama in the sermon.
3. The second strongest shift (1.15) was seen in the perceived relevance of sermons.
4. The third strongest shift (1.00) was observed in the ease with which sermons are understood.
5. The other shift (0.84) was in relation to the interest level of sermons.

6. Among the questions not directly related to the sermon the strongest shift of all (1.30) was observed in the attitude to Bible Class in school. The reason for this highly desirable shift is unknown but it is unlikely to be related to anything done as part of this research.

7. There was also a favourable shift (0.54) in the attitude to lady preachers.

8. The insignificant shift observed in attitudes toward other factors such as the ability of sermons to meet the needs or address the problems of adolescents, indicate that although a more favourable shift was obtained during the ministry module, this lapsed at its conclusion or shortly thereafter.

9. The average improvement of Sermon Assessment Block question responses was 0.66. Although one should be glad for some improvement it is evident that the key factors measured here require urgent attention. Much more effort is required to ensure that sermons are relevant and helpful for early adolescents.

10. The average improvement in scores for Sermon Improvement Block questions was 0.31. This small increase on their already high scores only confirms their value for sermons that are intended for early adolescents.

11. The consistency in the scores for questions that one would not expect to change in the period between tests, such as the subject group's attitude towards the pastor, worship in general, restrictions of the church, and suitability of the church building for worship, suggest that the test questions designed to assess their attitudes to those factors were valid. Since all other questions were designed with the same care and attention and every effort was made to avoid inherent bias and ambiguity, it is thought reasonable to conclude that they also were valid questions.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

General

The purpose of this research project was to assess and, if possible, positively modify the attitude to the sermon of a small sample of Australian Seventh-day Adventist adolescents. Prompted by Dudley's research into the attitude of American Adventist adolescents and the writer's own observations, the specific task was to answer two major questions? Do Australian Adventist adolescents have a negative attitude toward the sermon? If they do, can anything be done about it?

The first question was answered when tests developed as part of the research project were administered to a small sample of Australian adolescent Adventists (eighty-four in all). On the basis of the response of this small but representative sample it can be postulated with reasonable confidence that Australian Adventist early adolescents do respond negatively to the sermon.

To answer the second question an attempt was made to determine the role and importance of preaching in the life and worship of the church. A study of preaching in the New Testament revealed that preaching played a diverse but vital role in the nurture and growth of the early church.

A study of the form and content of the preaching of Jesus

revealed timeless principles that have a direct bearing on the form and content of preaching in the 1980s. Effective preaching relates Biblical truth to the life-situation of the hearers and couches it in a medium that facilitates comprehension.

Because of the impact of the electronic media on early adolescents of the 1980s it appears that narrative, dialogue, and drama, are the most suitable mediums for reaching them. This was first evident in the study of contemporary communication theory; it was re-inforced by the survey of developmental psychology; and it was confirmed by the response to the tests in the research ministry modules.

The research also demonstrated that sermons should be need-related. Early adolescence is a crucial age for the development of identity and ideological values. It is the optimum age for the transition to a mature stage of faith. This period is therefore the most likely age for a conversion experience. Sermons must be preached with this in mind. They should provide relevant answers to the existential questions of adolescents. They should encourage thoughtful consideration of Biblical principles and concepts that will lead to a meaningful conversion experience and a successful transition through their developmental stages.

It is possible to do something about early adolescents' negative attitudes to the sermon. Change the sermon! The New Testament model provides the key to how this can be done. The responses to the sermons of the demonstration module clearly show how effectively this model can be applied to today's preaching.

Recommendations

Further research in this area could build on the results of this study if the following points were considered. The Sermon Evaluation Tests reveal that the weakest shift in attitude for each of the sermons was in the area of need-fulfillment. A clearer picture of their needs could be obtained during one of the education modules.

Other factors could be assessed and correlated to continue the search for that which affects an adolescent's attitude to the sermon. This could include some of the factors in this test which because of the constraints of time and space have not been correlated. These include the attitude to the pastor, the attitude to restrictions of the church, and the enjoyment of the sabbath.

Finally, preachers should not ignore the restlessness of the adolescent mind. It may be that the suggestion of a special youth sermon once per month is a practical way that their needs can be met. Every sermon should, however, be preached cognizant of the fact that not only adolescents, but also the majority of an average audience are not able to apply themselves in a sustained way to comprehend propositional preaching. But at least for the sake of adolescents, preachers should take note that there are practical and realistic methods, used by the Master Preacher, that will, under the blessing of His Spirit, impress the truths of the gospel upon the hearts and minds of young listeners.

APPENDIX 1

ERIKSON'S STAGES OF THE HUMAN LIFE CYCLE: TRUST VS. MISTRUST TO INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION

ERIKSON'S STAGES OF THE HUMAN LIFE CYCLE: TRUST VS. MISTRUST TO INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION[1]

"NORMATIVE CRISIS	AGE	MAJOR CHARACTERISTICS
"Trust vs. Mistrust	0-1	Primary social interaction with mothering caretaker; oral concerns; trust in life-sustaining care, including feeding
"Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	1-2	Primary social interaction with parents; toilet training; 'holding on' and 'letting go' and the beginnings of autonomous will
"Initiative vs. Guilt	3-5	Primary social interaction with nuclear family; beginnings of 'Oedipal' feelings; development of language and locomotion; development of conscience as governor of initiative
"Industry vs. Inferiority	6-puberty	Primary social interaction outside home among peers and teachers; school-age assessment of task ability
"Identity vs. Role Confusion	Adolescence	Primary social interaction with peers, culminating in heterosexual friendship; psychological moratorium from adult commitments; identity crisis; consolidation of resolutions of four previous stages into coherent sense of self
"Intimacy vs. Isolation	Early adulthood	Primary social interaction in intimate relationship with member of opposite sex; adult role commitments accepted, including commitment to another person

[1]J. Roy Hopkins, Adolescence: the Transitional Years (New York: Academic Press), p. 75.

APPENDIX 2

PIAGET'S FOUR STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

PIAGET'S FOUR STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

"Stage I	Sensory-Motor Stage (birth to age one-and-a-half) Sensory-motor action schemes, such as sucking, grasping. Reflexes
"Stage II	Preoperational Stage (age one-and-a-half to six) Internalized representations of objects and events. Symbolic representation and language
"Stage III	Concrete operational stage (age six to puberty) True operations applied to objects in the here-and-now
"Stage IV	Formal-Operational Stage (adolescence and adulthood) Hypothetical and deductive thinking. Propositional logic

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[1]J. Roy Hopkins, Adolescence: the Transitional Years (New York: Academic Press), p. 75. p. 149; For a more complete description of these stages see Jean Piaget, The Principles of Genetic Epistemology, trans., Wolfe Mays (New York: Basic Books, 1972), pp. 19-51.

APPENDIX 3

PIAGET'S ERA IV AND SUBSTAGES OF LOGICAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

PIAGET'S ERA IV AND SUBSTAGES OF LOGICAL AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT[1]

"Era IV (age 11 to adulthood)

"Inferences through logical operations upon propositions or 'operations upon operations.' Reasoning about reasoning. Construction of systems of all possible relations and implications. Hypothetico-deductive isolation of variables and testing of hypotheses

"Substage 1. Formation of the inverse of the reciprocal. Capacity to form negative classes . . . and to see relations as simultaneously reciprocal (for example, to understand that liquid in a U-shaped tube holds an equal level because of counterbalanced pressures)

"Substage 2. Capacity to order triads of propositions or relations (for example, to understand that if Bob is taller than Joe and Joe is shorter than Dick, then Joe is shortest of the three)

"Substage 3. True formal thought. Construction of all possible combinations of relations, systematic isolation of variables, deductive hypothesis-testing

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[1]Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, "The Adolescent as Philospher," in Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence, ed. Jerome Kagan and Robert Coles (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 154.

APPENDIX 4

CORRELATION OF COGNITIVE AND MORAL STAGE DEVELOPMENT

CORRELATION OF COGNITIVE AND MORAL STAGE DEVELOPMENT[1]

"PIAGET'S COGNITIVE STAGES	KOHLBERG'S MORAL STAGES
	Preconventional Level (Ages 4-10)
"Symbolic, intuitive thought	Stage 0: The good is what I want and like
"Concrete operations, Substage 1 Categorical classification	Stage 1: Punishment-obedience orientation
"Concrete operations, Substage 2 Reversible concrete thought	Stage 2: Instrumental hedonism and concrete reciprocity
	Conventional Level (Ages 11-13)
"Formal operations, Substage 1 Relations involving the inverse of reciprocal	Stage 3: Orientation to interpersonal relations of mutuality
"Formal operations, Substage 2	Stage 4: Maintenance of social order, fixed rules, and authority
	Postconventional Level (Over 13)
"Formal operations, Substage 3	Stage 5A: Social contract, utilitarian law-making perspective
	Stage 5B: Higher law and conscience orientation
	Stage 6: Universal ethical principles

[1]Adapted from Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, "The Adolescent as Philospher," in Twelve to Sixteen: Early Adolescence, ed. Jerome Kagan and Robert Coles (New York: Norton, 1972), p. 165.

APPENDIX 5

OPTIMAL STAGES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

OPTIMAL STAGES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT[1]

ERAS OR AGES	ERIKSON IDENTITY	PIAGET COGNITIVE	KOHLBERG MORAL	FOWLER FAITH
Infancy 0-1 1/2	Basic Trust vs. Mistrust	Sensorimotor	--	Undifferentiated
Early Childhood 2-6	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	Preoperational or Intuitive	___	Intuitive-Projective
	Initiative vs. Guilt		Heteronomous Morality	--
Childhood 7-12	Industry vs. Inferiority	Concrete Operational	Instrumental Exchange	Mythic-Literal
Adolescence 13-21	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Formal-Operational	Mutual Interpersonal Relations	Synthetic-Conventional
Young Adulthood 21-35	Intimacy vs. Isolation	--	Social System and Conscience	Individuative Reflective
Adulthood 35-60	Generativity vs. Stagnation	--	Social Contract Individual Rights	Conjunctive
Maturity 60+	Integrity vs. Despair	--	Universal Ethical Principles	Universalizing

[1]Adapted from Robert J. Fowler, Stages of Faith (Blackburn, Victoria: Dove, 1981), pp. 52, 113.

APPENDIX 6

EDUCATION MODULE DISCUSSION SHEET

EDUCATION MODULE DISCUSSION SHEET

PART ONE

1. What percentage of sermons do you find interesting? ____%

2. What type of sermon do you find most interesting? Rate the following on a scale of 0 - 5

____ A. A sermon that is made up largely of illustrations which are good but which do not relate very directly to Biblical truth

____ B. A sermon that delves deeply into Scripture and makes its doctrines very clear.

____ C. A sermon that is made up largely of modern stories that illustrate Biblical truth

____ D. A sermon that delves deeply into Scripture but does not relate it to today's situation.

3. What do you think a good sermon will do for you? In other words, what do you expect from a good sermon?

_____

_____

_____

PART TWO

IMAGINE THAT YOU ARE THE WORLD'S GREATEST PREACHER:

A. What are some things that you would preach about?

_____

_____

B. What are some things that you would not preach about?

_____

_____

B. How would you try to preach so that young people are interested?

_____

_____

APPENDIX 7

EDUCATION MODULE: SERMON ASSESSMENT

EDUCATION MODULE: SERMON ASSESSMENT

A. A sermon that is made up largely of illustrations which are good but which do not relate very directly to Biblical truth 2.84

B. A sermon that delves deeply into Scripture and makes its doctrines very clear 1.38

C. A sermon that is made up largely of modern stories that illustrate Biblical truth 4.23

D. A sermon that delves deeply into Scripture but which does not relate it to today's situation . . . 0.46

APPENDIX 8

CHURCH YOUTH ATTITUDE TEST

CHURCH YOUTH ATTITUDE TEST

NAME OF CHURCH I ATTEND: _____

I ATTEND CHURCH: (Tick) REGULARLY_____ QUITE OFTEN_____ RARELY_____

AGE GROUP: UNDER 13_____ 13-16_____ OVER 16_____

MALE:___ FEMALE:_____ MOTHER SDA: YES___ NO___ FATHER SDA: YES___ NO___

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please answer each question even if you are uncertain of the answer. Don't think too long about any one question.

2. This questionnaire is in two parts. The first part requires only a yes or no answer the second requires a tick in one of five columns as follows:
   Tick the first column - if you strongly agree
   Tick the second column - if you mildly agree
   Tick the third column - if you are unsure
   Tick the fourth column - if you mildly disagree
   Tick the fifth column - if you strongly disagree

3. Please don't discuss your answers while completing the questionnaire.

4. If possible, avoid giving answers in the undecided column

PLEASE READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE COMMENCING THIS TEST

SECTION 1 (Answer 'Yes' or 'No')

1. I am a committed young Christian . . . . . ____
2. Family worship is a regular part of our home-life . . . . . ____
3. I watch more than 7 hours television in an average week . . . . ____
4. I go to church because I want to. . . . . ____
5. The doctrines of the church are clear and I understand them . . . ____

SECTION 2 (Place a tick in the column that best suits your answer)

	STRONGLY AGREE	MILDLY AGREE	UNDECIDED	MILDLY DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
6. Our pastor is a friendly man					
7. Sermons should be finished by 12 o'clock					
8. Our church is a very happy church					
9. Lady preachers would be good to listen to					
10. Most sermons are about issues and problems that effect youth my age					
11. Worship of God is the most significant action of a human being					
12. Christian drama makes a sermon more meaningful					
13. Most sabbath sermons are quite interesting					
14. I feel the church has too many restrictions					
15. Our church building is a good place in which to worship					
16. Bible class is the most important class in an Adventist school					
17. Doctrinal sermons help me with my problems					
18. Sabbaths are very enjoyable					
19. Most sermons help me with my personal needs					
20. It would be good to have a monthly youth sermon in our church					
21. Sermons with stories are more easily understood					
22. Young people should be more involved in sermons in our church					
23. The majority of sermons are readily understood					

APPENDIX 9

SERMON EVALUATION TESTS

SERMON EVALUATION TEST: SERMON 1[1]

Date: 17-8-85 Please put your number here: ___

This survey is in two sections: in the first section you are asked to record your evaluation in the area suggested by the questionnaire below, as you listen to the sermon. In the second section you are asked for suggestions that might have made it more helpful etc. This may be more accurate if completed towards the end of the sermon.

SECTION 1. EVALUATION

Tick the first column if you strongly agree
Tick the second column if you mildly agreee
Tick the third column if you are unsure
Tick the fourth column if you mildly disagree
Tick the fifth column if you strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1 This sermon is about issues that affect youth my age					
2 This sermon is quite interesting . .					
3 This sermon is readily understood . .					
4 This sermon helped me with my personal needs					
5 The stories in this sermon made it more readily understood					
6 This sermon was too long					

SECTION 2. SUGGESTIONS

List here some ways in which the sermon (including its content and presentation), could have been made more interesting, meaningful, or helpful.

_____

_____

[1]The questions on this test are repeated on the following sheets, except for Q5 which is omitted from test 3.

SERMON EVALUATION TEST: SERMON 2[1]

Date: 30-6-85 Please put your number here: ___

This survey is in two sections: in the first section you are asked to record your evaluation in the area suggested by the questionnaire below, as you listen to the sermon. In the second section you are asked for suggestions that might have made it more helpful etc. This may be more accurate if completed towards the end of the sermon.

SECTION 1. EVALUATION

Tick the first column if you strongly agree
Tick the second column if you mildly agreee
Tick the third column if you are unsure
Tick the fourth column if you mildly disagree
Tick the fifth column if you strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1 This sermon is about issues that affect youth my age					
2 This sermon is quite interesting					
3 This sermon is readily understood					
4 This sermon helped me with my personal needs					
5 The stories in this sermon made it more readily understood					
6 This sermon was too long					
7 Lady preachers are good to listen to . .					

SECTION 2. SUGGESTIONS

List here some ways in which the sermon (including its content and presentation), could have been made more interesting, meaningful, or helpful.

_____

_____

_____

[1]The questions on this sheet are the same as for test 1 with the addition of Q7.

SERMON EVALUATION TEST: SERMON 3[1]

Date: 30-6-85 Please put your number here: ___

This survey is in two sections: in the first section you are asked to record your evaluation in the area suggested by the questionnaire below, as you listen to the sermon. In the second section you are asked for suggestions that might have made it more helpful etc. This may be more accurate if completed towards the end of the sermon.

SECTION 1. EVALUATION

Tick the first column if you strongly agree
Tick the second column if you mildly agreee
Tick the third column if you are unsure
Tick the fourth column if you mildly disagree
Tick the fifth column if you strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1 This sermon is about issues that affect youth my age					
2 This sermon is quite interesting					
3 This sermon is readily understood					
4 This sermon helped me with my personal needs					
5 The drama in this sermon made it more meaningful					
6 This sermon was too long					
7 It is good to have young people involved in the sermon					

SECTION 2. SUGGESTIONS

List here some ways in which the sermon (including its content and presentation), could have been made more interesting, meaningful, or helpful.

_____

_____

[1]Questions 1-4 and 6 on this test are the same as test 1 and 2, but Q5 and Q7 are added.

APPENDIX 10

ATTITUDE TEST: SUBJECT GROUP TEST A

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

ATTITUDE TEST: SUBJECT GROUP TEST A

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
5.00	3.64	4.43	4.64	3.93	1.64	2.36	2.36	2.64

Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
2.21	4.43	4.00	3.86	3.78	3.21	4.28	2.28	3.71

Legend: The abbreviations above are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 11

ATTITUDE TEST: CORRELATION SUBJECT GROUP

TEST A--COMPARISON GROUP

ATTITUDE TEST: CORRELATION SUBJECT GROUP

TEST A--COMPARISON GROUP

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
SUBJ	5.00	3.64	4.43	4.64	3.93	1.64	2.36	2.64	2.21
COMP	4.64	4.21	4.38	4.56	4.00	2.02	2.86	2.30	2.59
VAR	0.36	0.57	0.05	0.08	0.07	0.38	0.50	0.34	0.38

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
SUBJ	2.21	4.07	4.00	3.86	3.87	3.21	4.28	2.28	3.71
COMP	2.84	4.00	3.49	3.77	4.21	3.26	4.01	2.77	3.66
VAR	0.55	0.07	0.51	0.09	0.34	0.05	0.27	0.49	0.05

Legend: SUBJ = subject group COMP= comparison group
VAR = variation between the scores of the two groups

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 12

ATTITUDE TEST: SUBJECT GROUP TEST A

MALE--FEMALE COMPARISON

ATTITUDE TEST: SUBJECT GROUP TEST A

MALE--FEMALE COMPARISON

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
MALE	5.00	3.83	3.83	4.66	4.00	1.33	2.50	1.33	2.33
FEMALE	5.00	3.50	4.87	4.62	3.87	1.87	2.25	3.12	2.87
VAR	0.00	0.33	1.03	0.02	0.13	0.55	0.25	1.79	0.55

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
MALE	1.83	4.83	3.50	3.33	4.33	3.33	4.00	2.16	3.66
FEMALE	2.50	3.50	4.37	4.37	3.37	3.12	4.50	2.37	3.75
VAR	0.67	1.33	0.87	1.04	0.96	0.21	0.50	0.21	0.09

Legend: SUBJ = subject group COMP = comparison group
VAR = variation between the scores of the two groups

Other abbreviations above are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 13

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION

COMMITTED--NON-COMMITTED

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION

COMMITTED--NON-COMMITTED

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
COM	5.00	3.66	5.00	4.66	3.66	1.66	2.00	3.16	2.66
NOTCOM	5.00	4.00	3.40	4.40	3.80	1.80	2.20	1.00	2.20
VAR	0.00	0.34	1.60	0.26	0.14	0.14	0.20	2.16	0.46

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
COM	2.16	3.66	4.50	4.16	3.66	3.33	4.83	2.16	4.00
NOTCOM	2.00	4.60	4.00	4.00	3.80	3.60	4.20	2.00	3.60
VAR	0.16	0.94	0.50	0.16	0.14	0.27	0.63	0.16	0.40

Legend: COM = committed NOTCOM = not committed
VAR = variation

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 14

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION

REGULAR-IRREGULAR FAMILY WORSHIP

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION

REGULAR-IRREGULAR FAMILY WORSHIP

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
REG	5.00	3.88	4.44	4.66	4.10	1.66	2.33	2.33	2.66
IRREG	5.00	3.75	3.40	4.50	3.25	1.75	2.25	2.50	2.50
VAR	0.00	0.13	1.04	0.16	0.85	0.09	0.08	0.17	0.16

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
REG	2.33	4.00	3.88	4.00	3.55	3.00	4.44	2.44	3.66
IRREG	2.00	4.25	4.50	4.00	4.25	3.75	4.50	1.75	3.75
VAR	0.33	0.25	0.62	0.00	0.70	0.75	0.06	0.69	0.09

Legend: REG = regular family worship IRREG = irregular family worship
VAR = variation

Other abbreviations above are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 15

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION MORE THAN SEVEN HOURS TELEVISION PER WEEK-- LESS THAN SEVEN HOURS TELEVISION PER WEEK

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION
MORE THAN SEVEN HOURS TELEVISION PER WEEK--
LESS THAN SEVEN HOURS TELEVISION PER WEEK

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
LESS	5.00	3.90	4.20	4.70	3.90	1.80	2.60	2.40	2.80
MORE	5.00	3.66	5.00	4.33	3.66	1.33	1.33	2.33	2.00
VAR	0.00	0.24	0.80	0.37	0.24	0.47	1.27	0.07	0.80

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
LESS	2.80	4.20	4.00	4.10	3.80	3.30	4.40	2.10	3.80
MORE	1.66	3.66	4.33	3.66	3.66	3.00	4.66	2.66	3.33
VAR	1.14	0.54	0.33	0.44	0.14	0.30	0.26	0.50	0.47

Legend: LESS = view less than seven hours television per week
MORE = view more than seven hours television per week
VAR = variation between the two groups

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 16

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION
GO TO CHURCH WILLINGLY--GO
TO CHURCH UNWILLINGLY

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION
GO TO CHURCH WILLINGLY--GO
TO CHURCH UNWILLINGLY

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
WILL	5.00	4.00	4.87	4.62	4.00	1.75	2.50	2.75	2.87
UNWILL	5.00	3.75	3.25	4.20	3.75	1.75	2.00	1.25	2.00
VAR	0.00	0.25	1.62	0.40	0.25	0.00	0.50	1.50	0.87

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
WILL	2.62	4.00	4.25	4.37	3.62	3.12	4.50	2.12	3.50
UNWILL	1.50	4.50	3.50	3.25	4.00	3.25	4.25	2.50	3.75
VAR	1.12	0.50	0.75	1.12	0.38	0.13	0.25	0.38	0.25

Legend: WILL = go to church because I want to
UNWILL = go to church not because I want to
VAR = variation between the two groups

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 17

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION
UNDERSTAND DOCTRINES--DO NOT
UNDERSTAND DOCTRINES

ATTITUDE TEST SUBJECT GROUP TEST A: CORRELATION
UNDERSTAND DOCTRINES--DO NOT
UNDERSTAND DOCTRINES

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
DO	5.00	3.66	4.66	4.00	3.66	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.66
DO NOT	5.00	4.00	4.22	4.77	3.77	1.44	2.22	2.11	2.55
VAR	0.00	0.34	0.44	0.77	0.11	0.89	0.11	0.22	0.11

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
DO	2.66	3.33	4.66	4.33	3.33	2.33	4.00	2.00	3.33
DO NOT	2.11	4.44	4.11	3.88	4.00	3.55	4.66	2.11	4.00
VAR	0.55	1.11	0.55	0.45	0.67	1.22	0.66	0.11	0.67

Legend: DO = do understand doctrines
DO NOT = do not understand doctrines
VAR = variation between the two groups

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 18

SERMON EVALUATION TEST STATISTICS

SERMON EVALUATION TEST STATISTICS

QUESTION	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q23 UND	Q19 NEE	Q21 STO	Q7 LEN
TEST A	1.66	2.41	2.20	2.66	4.75	5.00
SERMON 1	4.00	4.41	4.25	3.75	4.75	1.33
VAR	2.34	2.00	2.05	1.09	0.00	3.67

QUESTION	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q23 UND	Q19 NEE	Q21 STO	Q7 LEN	Q9 LAD
TEST A	1.58	2.42	2.25	2.75	4.66	5.00	4.00
SERMON 2	3.75	4.50	4.42	4.59	4.50	1.58	4.25
VAR	2.17	2.08	2.17	1.84	0.16	3.42	0.25

QUESTION	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q23 UND	Q19 NEE	Q12 DRA	Q7 LEN	Q22 INV
TEST A	1.66	2.42	2.25	2.66	3.66	5.00	4.08
SERMON 3	4.16	4.50	4.42	4.00	4.50	1.00	4.75
VAR	2.50	2.08	2.17	1.34	0.84	4.00	0.67

Legend: VAR = variation between test A and sermon 1, 2, or 3.

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
HAP = happy
LAD = lady
WOR = worship
RES = restrictions
BUI = building
BIB = Bible
SAB = sabbath

Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

APPENDIX 19

ATTITUDE TEST: COMPARISON SUBJECT GROUP

TEST A--SUBJECT GROUP TEST B

ATTITUDE TEST: COMPARISON SUBJECT GROUP

TEST A--SUBJECT GROUP TEST B

	Q7 LEN	Q12 DRA	Q20 MON	Q21 STO	Q22 INV	Q10 REL	Q13 INT	Q17 HEL	Q19 NEE
TEST A	5.00	3.64	4.43	4.61	4.00	1.61	2.31	2.46	2.69
TEST B	4.92	4.91	4.77	4.53	3.92	2.76	3.15	2.61	2.85
VAR	0.08	1.27	0.34	0.08	0.08	1.15	0.84	0.15	0.16

	Q23 UND	Q6 PAS	Q8 HAP	Q9 LAD	Q11 WOR	Q14 RES	Q15 BUI	Q16 BIB	Q18 SAB
TEST A	2.23	4.00	4.08	3.92	3.69	3.15	4.23	2.31	3.69
TEST B	3.23	3.92	3.92	4.23	3.77	3.30	3.92	3.61	4.15
VAR	1.00	0.08	0.16	0.54	0.08	0.15	0.31	1.30	0.46

Legend: VAR = variation between the two administrations of the Attitude Test

Other abbreviations are key words or concepts contained in the test questions

LEN = length
DRA = drama
MON = monthly
STO = story
INV = involvement
REL = relevance
INT = interest
HEL = help
NEE = need
UND = understood
PAS = pastor
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Questions in the above table are arranged in such a way that those questions in the improvement and assessment blocks appear together:

Sermon Improvement Block: Q7, Q12, Q20, Q21, and Q22
Sermon Assessment Block: Q10, Q13, Q17, Q19, and Q23

Other questions are grouped as follows:

External variables that could affect attitudes to sermon: Q6, Q8, and Q15
Significant beliefs and practices: Q9, Q11, Q14, Q16, and Q18

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