



WORLDWIDE
CHURCH OF GOD

Living and Sharing the Gospel

GC2 equipper

www.wcg.org/mindev/

August 2008
Volume 3 Issue 8

The monthly ministry development newsletter of WCG-USA Church Administration and Development.
Equipping for active participation with Jesus in his Great Commandment – Great Commission ministry.

Dear gospel preacher:

What a blessing and privilege we have to participate with Jesus as he carries out the Father's mission in our world! We grow deeper and thus more fruitful in this participation as we yield to the Spirit as he "baptizes" us into the fullness of Jesus' love and life in three related areas:

- **Heart**, which pertains to our sharing in Jesus' *calling and character*
- **Head**, which pertains to our sharing in Jesus' *knowledge*
- **Hands**, which pertains to our sharing in Jesus' *skill*

"Growing deeper" with Jesus in these areas presents many challenges. In this issue, we address those related to **preaching**—the *calling* and *craft* by which we share in Jesus' proclamation of the gospel, God's word:

- As a **calling**, preaching flows from the Spirit's appointment to proclaim the gospel. Through this proclamation, Jesus, the Living Word, evangelizes non-believers and forms and nurtures his body, the church. When we share with Jesus the preaching of his gospel, God's transforming power is unleashed through the Spirit into the lives of those who hear and respond.
- As a **craft**, preaching involves the proclamation of the gospel with *knowledge* and *skill*—and both of these require our ongoing, careful attention.

Thanks for preaching faithfully and skillfully God's word, the gospel. We deeply appreciate your willingness to devote yourself to growing in this calling and craft—and we pray that this issue will assist you.

Ted Johnston
GC2 *equipper* editor



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Preaching: a calling and craft
- 2 Preach Christ
- 2 Provide application
- 3 Give a balanced presentation
- 3 Preach for transformation

Preach Christ

The May 27, 2008 issue of *PreachingNOW* highlights Michael Knowles' book, *We Preach Not Ourselves: Paul on Proclamation*. According to Knowles, who cites Paul...

...The basic task of every preacher...is to interpret the lives of their congregants - and all human experience - in light of Jesus' cross and resurrection, and to find there the foundational pattern of God's saving intervention in response to ongoing human need. He comes to this pastoral and theological insight in the courage of personal trials that severely test, yet ultimately affirm his faith.

The unexpected conclusion to which this leads him is that it is not personal strength, gifts, or ability, but ongoing weakness and insufficiency that draw even preachers near to Christ—not only at the outset, but throughout the course of their discipleship and ministry. In fact, Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection determine not only the preacher's message, not only the shape of Christian experience in general, but the act of preaching in particular, because *preaching is an act of utter dependence on the grace and generosity of a life-giving God*.

WCG pastor George Hart recommends the book *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*. Author Robert Smith Jr. writes the following:

A key to an effective pastoral ministry is serving the congregation a regular diet that nourishes both the mind and the heart. As scaffolding helps to form the building under construction, doctrine informs the sermon. The scaffold is retired after the building is completed. Similarly, the real object of doctrine is not the doctrine itself; rather, the doctrine points beyond itself to the person of Christ.

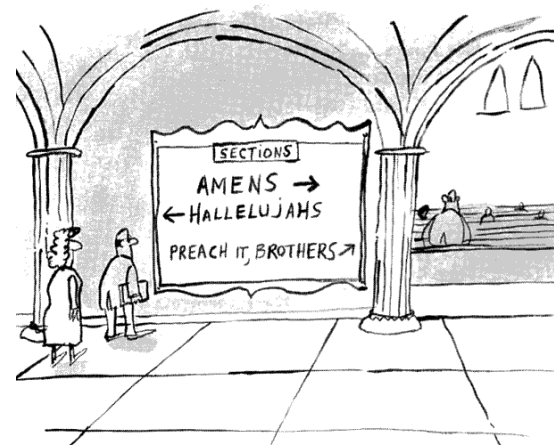
Doctrine is like a road sign that points to a destination. Consequently, if the doctrine is preached without focusing upon the person of Christ, then it is lifeless and insipid. Martin Luther's analogy of the swaddling clothes that contained Christ to the Scriptures that enfold Jesus, the self-revelation of God, is picturesquely poignant.

Provide application

Christ-centered preaching, by definition, is highly *relevant* because it shows how Jesus is *actually* present in the day-to-day lives of the listeners. Preachers enhance this sense of relevance by providing meaningful *life-application*. In *Ministry Toolbox*, Rick Warren suggests six guidelines for putting application into sermons:

1. Aim for specific action
2. Model it from your own life
3. Ask penetrating questions
4. Give specific action steps
5. Give practical examples
6. Offer people hope

Ask: *Are these six elements present in most of my sermons?*



Looking for help preaching about marriage?

To download a free 2-part sermon series (with video and PowerPoint support), go to: www.tighterknot.com and click on "church leaders" then "free sermon resources"

Looking for help preaching from Revelation?

To read a summary of the book "Discipleship on the Edge," copy the following web address and then paste it into your web browser:

www.christianbooksummaries.com/library/v3/cbs0332.pdf

Give a balanced presentation

A good rule of thumb offered by many expert preachers is to give approximately equal time within each sermon to three essential and interrelated elements:

- **Scripture reading** (what does the word *say*?)
- **Scripture explanation** (what does the word *mean*?)
- **Scripture application** (what does the word look like as it is lived out in the audience's *daily living*?)

Ask: *Are my presentations truly sermons, or are they more like Bible studies or classroom lectures?*

Preach for transformation

The May-June issue of Rev! magazine includes the article, "Sermons Most Likely to Succeed" (pp. 71-72). The article notes that the goal of preaching is not mere *information*—it is life *transformation*.

Transformative sermons are organized for listening and provide depth of content:

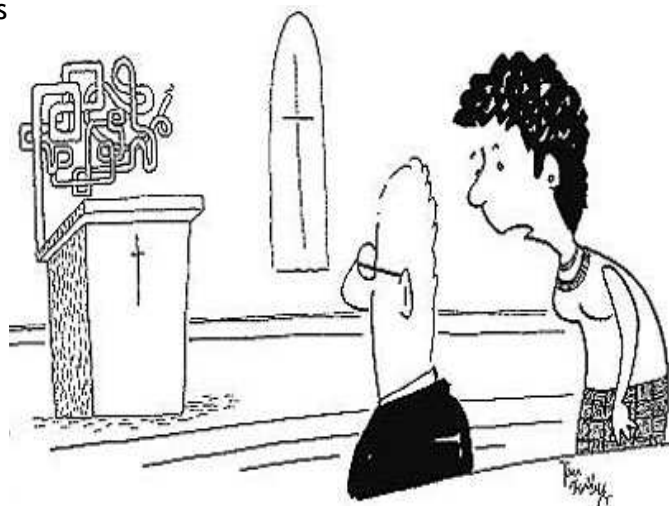
Sermons that are **organized for listening** have...

- an attention-getting opening to focus listeners' thinking on a clearly articulated subject
- a specific, spiritual-growth goal delineated in the introduction
- two or three clearly connected, memorably worded main points
- conceptual links between the main points that move listeners from one idea to the next
- a concise review that doesn't include extraneous information
- a compelling final statement connected to the spiritual-growth goal

Sermons that provide **depth of content**...

- are clearly linked to and derived from the Scripture
- are clearly connected to the delineated change goal
- provide insight
- balance intellect and emotion
- delineate implementation ideas
- declare the grace and power of God to enable change

Ask: *Are my sermons consistently organized for listening? Do they consistently provide depth of content?*



"He remained on the same point for so long he went into screensaver mode."

Looking for help in sermon preparation?

The WCG Ministry Development Team provides **Sermon Series**— an exegetical outline of a passage of Scripture (usually in a series covering a book of the Bible). It is sent out weekly by email. To subscribe, email your request to Ted.Johnston@wcg.org

Looking for help in preaching effectively?

To listen to an excellent audio presentation from Tim Keller on preaching as *Persuasion*, copy the following web address and then paste it into your web browser: http://my.ekkleisia360.com/Clients/sermonaudioplayer.php?CMSCODE=EKK&siteid=26&sermonid=27503&useSkin=skin_plain.xml&CMS_LINK=http://my.ekkleisia360.com