

TO TELL OR NOT TO TELL: THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN OPEN-ENDED NARRATIVE PREACHING

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This essay will attempt to address the issue of open-endedness in narrative preaching. I will examine the potential problems behind a non-explicit approach to preaching and two contrasting theologies which illuminate the problem. I will ultimately argue for a mediating position between the explicit and non-explicit extremes in narrative preaching.

THE PROBLEM

As a homiletician, I am deeply concerned with effectively communicating God's Word with people, especially in a liturgical setting. Like most preachers, my early role model for preaching was my own pastor. He was primarily an expository preacher, that is, one who preached with an open Bible in his hand to which he constantly referred as he went verse by verse through a passage, expounding its meaning.¹ The other label which characterized his preaching was "deductive," meaning he essentially made an assertion and then supported it with the Scripture passage and various examples.²

In the fall of 1983, I eagerly sat in my first seminary preaching class. My professor was Dr. Ralph Lewis and, much to my surprise and delight, he introduced me to other ways of preaching. His primary method was called an "inductive" approach which generally delayed assertions and attempted to lead the listeners to the "point" or truth of the sermon.³ In its simplest notion, the inductive method reversed the deductive process often by placing examples up front which prepared the listener for and led him or her to the assertion to be made. An inductive approach tended to employ a rich use of narrative elements, active voice, a progression of discovery, visual images, and imagination. All of this resulted in a higher interest level for the listener.

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Needless to say, this kind of preaching was radically different from my previous conception of the preaching event—and I found I was deeply drawn to it. I have come to see the value of preaching the Word of God in a way which is conducive to “helping people listen.”⁴ The potential power of this method of preaching was made evident to me personally a few years ago when I delivered an inductive sermon on Luke 17:7-19. A woman in the audience (much to her own amazement) was able to go home and recount the *entire* sermon to her husband.⁵

In 1995, I was again in a graduate level preaching class which explored many of the “new voices” in homiletical theory with most of the views being based on a more inductive approach to preaching. During that course, the following paraphrased argument was put forth. Preachers should leave their sermons more open-ended. For too long, evangelical preachers have done their congregations a disservice by telling them what to do and believe. Such preachers should leave their sermons more open-ended to allow the mind of the listener to interact with the Holy Spirit so that the listener may draw more personal applications from the message.

I have chosen to call the argument above the “non-explicit model of sermonic communication.” This model of communication could be seen as an adaptation of Aristotle’s enthymematic approach to persuasion⁶ and Rogers’ theory of non-directive psychological counseling.⁷ This non-explicit sermonic model raises a crucial issue for communication—is it possible for listeners to draw an author-intended conclusion from a non-explicit communication?

In this preaching class, I was also exposed to a new genre in preaching—narrative preaching.⁸ While narrative elements are a key focus in any inductive preaching, narrative sermons are ones which give *primacy* to narrative itself.⁹ Lowry identified four kinds of narrative sermons which were delineated by the positioning of the narrative itself and the material extraneous to the narrative (e.g. explication, exploration, alternative examples). For example, the narrative could be presented first (often taking up the first half of the sermon) and the preacher would then step out of the narrative for the rest of the sermon, coming back to the narrative only at the conclusion (hence, the “suspending the story” method).

One of Lowry’s narrative sermon types was called “running the story.” In this kind of narrative sermon, the story itself *was* the sermon. The narrator (the preacher) avoided ever stepping outside of the actual narrative in order to make observations and “points” about the truths in the narrative. The preacher-as-narrator attempted to craft the narrative in such a way as to communicate the intended truth to the listener by means of the *narrative itself*—hence this specific type of narrative preaching would fall within the non-explicit model of sermonic communication described above. Once again, a potential problem is raised by this kind of sermon—are listeners even *able* to grasp the intended point in a sermon which is exclusively a narrative? The second question which is even more over-arching is: does it *matter* if listeners get the intended point?

OTHER VOICES

At least a few influential contemporary homileticians could be seen to hold to some form of the non-explicit model of sermonic communication, especially with regard to the sermon ending. Long calls for sermons with an “affective ending” which appears more

emotive than cognitive.¹⁰ Buttrick, in his monumental work, *Homiletic*, argued for “concrete” endings to sermons,¹¹ but felt they should not be “specific.”¹² He saw the most appropriate ending to a sermon as one which contained an image which would be filled in with details by the congregation (notice the Aristotelian enthymematic approach here).

The above voices affirm a more non-explicit ending to sermons in general, but others join the chorus when the communication is a *narrative*. Craddock (1978), like Buttrick, also preferred more concrete endings to sermons. However, in *narrative* materials, Craddock preferred a more non-explicit approach¹³ (Craddock’s homiletic theology will be examined more closely in a moment).

Bartlett, in explicating preaching on the parables (or “parabolic preaching”), followed Craddock’s thinking when he wrote:

That element of inductive preaching that Craddock commends for its open-endedness and ability to involve the listener in reaching any conclusions fits most appropriately those most open-ended and participatory of texts, the parables.

This understanding of parables as almost inexhaustible metaphor cuts directly against the old first rule of parable preaching: Find out *the* point and preach it. Parables move us in certain directions but often they do not make a point or even several points. They leave us understanding but wishing to understand more.¹⁴ (emphasis original)

Note has already been made of Lowry’s notion of the narrative sermon. When the preacher delivered a narrative sermon which consisted of the narrative itself (the “running the story” form), then the preacher avoided all commentary on the narrative. The narrative *itself* told the story and conveyed truth. Explicitness outside of the narrative was to be *avoided* since the narrative itself *was* the sermon (entirely).¹⁵

In *Imagination of the Heart: New Understandings in Preaching*, Wilson followed Bultmann’s lead in discussing narrative materials.¹⁶ On one point, Wilson stated:

No conclusion is necessary if it is self-evident or irrelevant (Bultmann). Avoid nailing down the story too tightly. The sermon or homily should not be the story’s coffin. Instead, trust the meaning of the story to be apparent by the context in which it is placed. The process is called favoring understatement to overstatement. If we are uncomfortable with the ambiguity of life we may be uncomfortable with the ambiguity of story. To make stories fit too tightly into their interpretive framework is to rob them of some of their meaning. If you feel you over tell your stories, try writing them out and then cut off the first and last sentences: then you may have your story.

The same possible lack of need for a conclusion may be true for the sermon or homily as a whole. There is rarely a need to “tie everything up” with a neat doctrinal summary of everything that has been said. A simple reminder of the road we have been traveling (in the form of an explicit return to the major concern of the text and/or the major concern of the sermon/homily, possibly in the context of a good news story)

is generally sufficient. This format is invitational, inviting the people to live out the Good News, and is somewhat open-ended. It recognizes that at least from a faith perspective, a sermon or homily is not completed in the church on Sunday; it ends in the life and work of the people throughout the week.¹⁷ (emphasis added)

When discussing narrative materials in the broader field of communication, Kirkwood would have agreed with these homileticians in favoring a non-explicit approach. He asserted narratives could reduce polysemy¹⁸ if they revealed the state of mind of the main characters and were well-crafted such that the wording excluded rival interpretations. Thus for Kirkwood, no explicit statements by the story teller were necessary since the author-intended truth could be communicated without such explicitness.¹⁹

CHALLENGING THE NON-EXPLICIT APPROACH

In summation of the material above, several authors can be seen to argue for more open-endedness in preaching. Further, when the sermon material (or even the sermon itself) is narrative, then several other voices join in the demand for non-explicitness. However, there seems to be a major assumption in this assertion which may be stated as: listeners generally have the *ability* to draw an author-intended conclusion from narrative material when the conclusion to be drawn is not explicitly stated. However, a large body of social science literature indicates that listeners generally do *not* draw an author-intended conclusion when that conclusion is not explicitly stated for them (though those of greater intelligence occasionally are able to draw the intended conclusion).²⁰ With regard to the subject of conclusion drawing and a listener's ability to draw an author-intended conclusion from a communication, McGuire's summary statement is the most memorable: "In communication, it appears, it is not sufficient to lead the horse to the water; one must also push his head underneath to get him to drink."²¹

Clearly, evidence from the social sciences indicates that listeners are generally not likely to draw an author-intended conclusion from strictly narrative material without assistance. In order to understand the issue in more depth, we now turn to an examination of the homiletic theologies of two outstanding and contrasting representative preachers. First, we will examine the homiletic theology of Fred Craddock who has preferred the more open-ended approach to preaching. Next, we will examine the homiletic theology of John MacArthur, Jr. (hereafter, MacArthur) who has preferred an explicit approach to preaching.

FRED CRADDOCK'S HOMILETIC THEOLOGY

Fred Craddock has been credited with instigating a kind of revolution in modern homiletics. In a 1993 essay entitled "The Revolution of Sermonic Shape," Lowry wrote:

When Fred Craddock's work *As One Without Authority* was published in 1971, a new era in North American homiletics was born. Certainly it was not that he dropped a new bombshell on the homiletical world; rather, it was that by means of a masterfully executed gestalt, he gave birth to a new mentality, beginning what Richard Eslinger has called 'the Copernican Revolution in homiletics.'²²

In short, Craddock introduced a concern for the hearer into homiletics, as opposed to the previous focus on theology and the preached word itself.²³

Craddock outlined his own theology of preaching in his 1985 work, *Preaching*. In general, he delineated his homiletic theology as, "... preaching is understood as making present and *appropriate to the hearers* the revelation of God"²⁴ (emphasis added). In order to communicate his theology, he employed the following metaphors: silence, whisper, and shout.

By "silence," Craddock meant the primal reality of God himself, the ultimate origin of any Word which the preacher might bring. By "whisper," Craddock meant the manner in which God speaks to humans. In the same manner in which one may or may not hear a whisper, so humans either do or do not hear God's message for them. It is not a matter of volume, but rather the ability to hear. "The plain, though often painful, truth about a whisper is that not everyone hears it."²⁵ Craddock continued this revelatory metaphor by saying, "But the whisper continues, for somewhere on the spectrum between opaque and transparent, the revelation of God in Jesus occurs."²⁶ Note the implied indirectness of God's revelation in this statement (the roots of Craddock's notion of indirectness will be examined in a moment).

By "shout," Craddock meant the public proclamation of God's message. Consequently, "To preach, then, is to shout a whisper."²⁷ He goes on to say that preachers cannot force listeners to hear, but can "remove some obstacles to hearing."

Clearly, one of the greatest influences (if not *the* greatest) on Craddock's thinking was Søren Kierkegaard. In Craddock's seminal *Overhearing the Gospel*, he quoted extensively from no less than eight of Kierkegaard's works.²⁸ In Craddock's introduction, he wrote metaphorically of Kierkegaard as a guest who came to visit him during a time of study and reflection at a time in his life when his work had "lost its edge, lying dull and heavy on [his] mind."²⁹ The following quote illustrates his dependence on Kierkegaard:

The time soon comes for inviting guests to the cottage to talk of teaching and preaching, of communicating the Christian message. It is important to have guests who have themselves faced the ponderous problem: How can we teach those who already know? How can we preach to those who have already heard? You who continue to read will observe in quotation and footnote the quality of those who shared with me in these conversations. But by far the most noticeable presence was Søren Kierkegaard (hereafter referred to simply as SK). The text will reflect that of all the visitors, he came earliest and stayed latest. ... More than once I had to remind myself that this was to be a book not about SK but about a subject central to his life and to mine. In the pursuit of that subject, any person who can bring lively new ways of thinking and speaking to a church grown cynical about its own lectern and pulpit; any person who can move in on our vague and sterile concepts with a language of imaginative elasticity; any person who can offer an alternative to the predictably dull patterns of studying, speaking, and listening beyond which few of us have ventured; any person who has the grace to restrain the display of knowledge in order to evoke and increase my own; any person who, instead of simply adding increments to my knowledge, awakens in me the sense of having already known; any person who can bring to our heavy business the delights of wit and

humor and the pathos of personal investment; that person is always welcome in my cottage, even if his presence is a judgment on my own dull efforts.³⁰

Consequently, Craddock's emphasis on homiletic indirectness has been greatly influenced by Kierkegaard, one of the leading proponents of indirectness.

Craddock saw the need for a new approach to homiletics because the gospel message in the United States had become commonplace. Craddock began *Overhearing the Gospel* with a quote from Søren Kierkegaard: "There is no lack of information in a Christian Land; something else is lacking, and this is a something which the one man cannot *directly communicate* to the other"³¹ (emphasis added). Thus Craddock may be seen to be clearly predisposed to Kierkegaard's indirectness as a means to communicate to those who have already heard the message and are utterly bored with it.³²

However, the critic might challenge Craddock's basic assumption that this is a "Christian Land," especially in this postmodern age in which the Christian message not only has less and less of an impact upon our society, but is also little understood. While the vast majority of U.S. citizens think of themselves as "Christians,"³³ few understand orthodox soteriology. In *The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators*, Barna wrote:

Most Americans believe that spiritual salvation is an outcome to be earned through their good character or behavior. Six out of ten people (57 percent) believe that "if a person is generally good, or does enough good things for others during their lives, they will earn a place in heaven." This perspective has remained constant throughout the nineties.³⁴

Barna went on to say: "... even though most Christian churches gear their corporate activities to believers, the data indicate that an incredibly high proportion of the people in the pews are not born again."³⁵ If Barna is correct, that most U.S. citizens think they are Christians but are not, that most church attendees are not Christians, and that neither group clearly understands the gospel message, then one may question if Craddock's (et al.) theory of indirectness would truly result in accurate sermonic conclusion drawing on behalf of ignorant audiences.

JOHN MACARTHUR'S HOMILETIC THEOLOGY

John MacArthur could almost certainly be seen as being at the opposite end of the spectrum of homiletical thought from Fred Craddock's indirectness and open-endedness. Typical of his deductive approach to preaching, MacArthur quoted 2 Tim. 4:1-4 and explicated four points to the call to preach: "the *seriousness* of the preacher's commission," (v. 1); "the *subject* of the preacher's commission" ("preach the word," v. 2); "the *scope*" (at all times, v. 2); and "the *urgency* of the preacher's commission" ("sinners will be intolerant of the uncomfortable truths," vv. 3 and 4)³⁶ (emphasis original). The Scripture passage reads:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage—

with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (NIV)

As he exemplified in his own writing, MacArthur saw that *all* preaching ultimately should be expository in nature, which he defined as, "By expositively, I mean preaching in such a way that the meaning of the Bible passage is presented *entirely* and *exactly* as it was intended by God. Expository preaching is the proclamation of the truth of God as mediated through the preacher"³⁷ (emphasis original). In this definition (as opposed to Craddock's views), one may note the lack of any focus on the hearer.

For MacArthur, there was a direct link between expository preaching and the doctrine of biblical inerrancy. Though he did not explicitly define inerrancy as the property of the Bible to be without error, he asserted five "postulates," heavily documented with Scripture references: 1. God is; 2. God is true; 3. God speaks in harmony with His nature; 4. God speaks only truth; and 5. God spoke His true Word as consistent with His true Nature to be communicated to people.³⁸ From this foundation, he then offered the following propositions:

1. God gave His true Word to be communicated *entirely* as He gave it, that is, the whole counsel of God is to be preached (Matt. 28:20; Acts 5:20; 20:27). Correspondingly, every portion of the Word of God needs to be considered in the light of its whole.
2. God gave His true Word to be communicated *exactly* as He gave it. It is to be dispensed precisely as it was delivered, without altering the message.
3. Only the exegetical process that yields expository proclamation will accomplish propositions 1 and 2.³⁹ (emphasis original)

That MacArthur would prefer a more explicit approach to preaching would be an *understatement*. His theology demands absolute precision and clarity.

Nonetheless, the critic might quickly challenge the second and third propositions stated above. If God does indeed desire his word to be communicated "exactly" as he gave it, then does not preaching *itself* violate this? Is not the *only* way to fulfill proposition two to simply *read* the Scriptures to the worshipping assembly? Further, the third proposition assumes that all other forms of preaching⁴⁰ are in no way to be considered expository. I would disagree. While a well-crafted narrative sermon may contain *less information* than a fully supported deductive sermon (it may in fact contain only one "point"), it may communicate the truth of a passage of Scripture to the listener in a much more faithful and, in fact, "accurate" manner, being much closer to the form in which it is found in Scripture. Thus God's Word may be communicated *more* effectively and truthfully in an inductive form than in a traditionally "expositional" form.

To be fair, MacArthur was clearly not oblivious to the nature of good public speaking, and hence, the listener. However, the discussion above makes it clear that the listener was, at best, a secondary concern. In fact, in noting that listeners were often found "wanti-

ng their ears tickled," MacArthur demonstrated that they are fickle and not to be trusted as ultimate judges of effective preaching.

A MEDIATING POSITION

The fact that MacArthur believed the word of God to be powerful and life-changing in its entirety is important to effective preaching. However, his deductive-expositional bias as found in his propositions can easily be challenged. Further, his *own* excellent rhetorical skills demonstrate he has a much higher regard for rhetoric (and hence the listener) than he admits in his writing.

Craddock has indeed brought about a much-needed revolution in preaching by introducing (or rather, reintroducing) the listener into the preaching equation. If truth is true, then surely there is more than one way to proclaim that truth, and surely there are some ways which are more effective than others—all the while remaining uncompromisingly faithful to the truth! However, especially with regard to narrative preaching, Craddock may assume too much in the power of the rhetorician and the abilities of the listeners to grasp the point. Indirectness may indeed have a powerful impact when the truth is grasped—but what if that truth escapes a large proportion of the hearers? The great danger of indirectness is that the truth may be missed. As preachers, can we rightfully assert that we have proclaimed the Word of God if a large number of our hearers never grasp the proclamation?¹¹

I advocate a mediating position—a position which upholds the primacy of the Scriptures and their centrality in the proclamation while also acknowledging the rhetorical needs of the listener. While MacArthur's choice of 2 Tim. 4:1-4 is an excellent choice from which to base a theology of preaching, I would also offer Rom. 10:13-17:

'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our message?' Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. (NIV)

Consequently, the word of Christ, the calling and the preaching are all ultimately from God. However, the hearer is present as well. They may believe *if* they "hear." Consequently, preachers must proclaim the truth of the word of Christ in such a way that people may *hear*. They may not believe, but they at least may hear. I assert it is possible for a sermon to be *both* expositional *and* inductive in nature.

As to the more specific genre of narrative preaching, the evidence suggests that even in a well-crafted narrative sermon, many listeners will not grasp the intended truth without some additional help from the preacher. However, this "help" from the preacher need not be so explicit that it takes on an Aesopian form ("and the moral of the story is..."). While a detailed treatment of the rhetorical devices which may be effective in conveying author-

intended messages in narrative sermons is beyond the scope of this essay, I offer up one such technique. Listeners often have a greater tendency to remember the last words spoken,⁴² thus the closing words of a narrative sermon can be crucial. If the truth (or "point") of the sermon can somehow be brought out several paragraphs from the end, then the sermon may be effectively concluded with a few rhetorical questions or generic assertions which reemphasize that truth, without resorting to the explicit, "...and so the lesson we learn from this event is...."

Preaching the word of God is a high calling and privilege. By God's grace, we may *both* uphold the integrity and power of his word *and* help our postmodern parishioners to hear.

NOTES

1. See R. L. Mayhue, ed., *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992) and H. W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) for texts on this conception of expository preaching.

2. A thorough discussion may be found in R. L. Lewis and G. Lewis, *Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1983), pp. 31-33.

3. Lewis & Lewis, *Inductive Preaching*; see also P. S. Wilson, *Imagination of the Heart: New Understandings in Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), though he found the terms "inductive" and "deductive" to be inadequate.

4. As Lewis and Lewis subtitled their book (*Inductive Preaching*).

5. I was able to replicate and document this finding in a research project I conducted in 1998 on this same sermon. Out of five parishioner-participants, one remembered nothing of the sermon (he was only thinking of all he had to do at work on Monday morning), one remembered a large portion of the sermon, and two remembered almost the entire sermon (example by example, topic by topic)! The findings are as yet unpublished.

6. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, G. A. Kennedy, trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). For Aristotle, the most powerful form of argumentation was the "enthymeme." An enthymeme is a syllogistic argument in which one or more of the premises are so widely held and understood as to not be needed to be stated explicitly. They are thus "filled in" by the listener.

7. See C. R. Rogers, "Some Observations on the Organization of Personality," *American Psychologist* 2 (1947): 358-68. Rogers found that clients who reached their own conclusions as to their problems (and solutions) experienced the greatest amount of positive change in their lives.

8. See E. L. Lowry, *How to Preach a Parable: Designs for Narrative Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989).

9. For several key works on narrative see: D. Coste, *Narrative As Communication, Theory and History of Literature*, 64 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); K. J. Danielson, "A Comparative Study of Narrative in Rhetorical Theory and Narrative Theology: Implications in Paradigm, Homiletic, and Interdisciplinary Studies," Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1991; W. R. Fisher, *Human Communication As Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1989); S. Hauerwas and L. G. Jones, eds., *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989); W. Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981); D. E. Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988).

10. T. G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster, 1989), p. 153.

11. D. G. Buttrick, *Homiletic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), p. 106.

12. Ibid, p. 107.
13. F. B. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1978), pp. 135-37.
14. D. L. Bartlett, "Texts Shaping Sermons" in *Listening to the Word*, G. R. O'Day and T. G. Long, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), p. 151, emphasis in original.
15. See Lowry, *How to Preach a Parable*, p. 42.
16. Wilson cites R. Bultmann, *History of the Synoptic Tradition*, J. Marsh, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).
17. Wilson, *Imagination of the Heart*, p. 225, emphasis added.
18. Polysemy is defined simplistically as the multiple meanings present in a text or artifact. For more, see C. M. Condit, "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* vol. 6, no. 2 (1989): 103-22 and L. Ceccarelli, "Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* vol. 84, no. 4 (1998): 395-415.
19. See W. G. Kirkwood, "Narrative and the Rhetoric of Possibility," *Communication Monographs* vol. 59, no. 3 (1992): 30-47.
20. The conclusion drawing body of literature is rather sizable. Examples include: E. Cooper and H. Dinerman, "Analysis of the Film 'Don't Be a Sucker': a Study of Communication," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 15 (1951): 243-64; C. I. Hovland and W. Mandell, "An Experimental Comparison of Conclusion-Drawing by the Communicator and by the Audience," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 47 (1952): 581-88; D. L. Thistlethwaite, H. de Haan, and J. Kamenetzky, "The Effects of 'Directive' and 'Nondirective' Communication Procedures on Attitudes," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 51 (1955): 107-13; Fine, B. J., "Conclusion-Drawing, Communicator Credibility, and Anxiety As Factors in Opinion Change" *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 54 (1957): 369-74; E. Stotland, D. Katz, and M. Patchen, "The Reduction of Prejudice Through the Arousal of Self-Insight," *Journal of Personality* 27 (1959): 507-31; W. Weiss and S. Steenbock, "The Influence on Communication Effectiveness of Explicitly Urging Action and Policy Consequences," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 1 (1965): 396-406; F. R. Kardes, "Spontaneous Inference Processes in Advertising: The Effects of Conclusion Omission and Involvement on Persuasion," *Journal of Consumer Research* 15 (1988): 225-33; A. G. Sawyer and D. J. Howard, "Effects of Omitting Conclusions in Advertisements to Involved and Uninvolved Audiences," *Journal of Marketing Research* 28 (1991): 467-74; J. M. Gutteling, "A Field Experiment in Communicating a New Risk: Effects of the Source and a Message Containing Explicit Conclusions," *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 14 (1993): 295-316; J. P. Frantz, "Effect of Location and Procedural Explicitness on User Processing of and Compliance With Product Warnings," *Human Factors* 36 (1994): 532-46; K. Greene, D. L. Rubin, and J. L. Hale "Egocentrism, Message Explicitness, and AIDS Messages Directed Toward Adolescents: An Application of the Theory of Reasoned Action," *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality* 10 (1995): 547-70; D. Struckman-Johnson and C. Struckman-Johnson, "Can You Say Condom? It Makes a Difference in Fear-Arousing AIDS Prevention Public Service Announcements," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 26 (1996): 1068-83; and D. J. O'Keefe, "Standpoint Explicitness and Persuasive Effect: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Effects of Varying Conclusion Explicitness in Persuasive Messages," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 34, summer (1997): 1-12.
21. W. J. McGuire, "The Nature of Attitudes and Attitude Change" in *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 2nd ed., G. Lindzey and E. Aronson, eds., vol. 3 (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley, 1969), p. 209.
22. E. L. Lowry, "The Revolution of Sermonic Shape," in *Listening to the Word*, G. R. O'Day and T. G. Long, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), p. 93.
23. See T. Long's excellent treatment in T. G. Long, "And How Shall They Hear? The Listener in Contemporary Preaching" in *Listening to the Word*, G. R. O'Day and T. G. Long, eds. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993), pp. 167-88.

24. F. B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985), p. 51, emphasis added.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
28. Craddock cites the following works by Kierkegaard: *Attack Upon 'Christendom'*, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *Edifying Discourses*, *Either/Or*, *On Authority and Revelation*, *The Point of View for My Work As an Author*, *The Present Age*, and *Works of Love*.
29. Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, p. 5.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 9, emphasis added.
32. See Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel*, p. 13.
33. See G. Barna, *The Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators* (Dallas: Word, 1996), p. 9.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
36. J. MacArthur, Jr., "Introduction" in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, R. L. Mayhue, ed., (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), pp. xiii-xvii, emphasis original.
37. J. MacArthur, Jr., "The Mandate of Biblical Inerrancy: Expository Preaching" in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*, R. L. Mayhue, ed. (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), pp. 23-24, emphasis original.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26, emphasis original.
40. That is all non-deductive/non-"expositional" forms, e.g., inductive forms.
41. Or (heaven forbid), grasp it incorrectly!
42. In the social science literature, this phenomenon is referred to as "primacy" (first) versus "recency" (last, nearest the end) effects.

