

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE EVANGELISTIC
PREACHING OF ROBERT L. HAMBLIN

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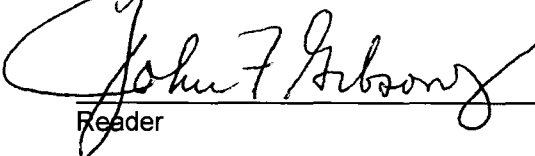
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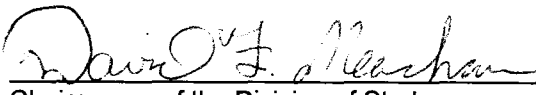
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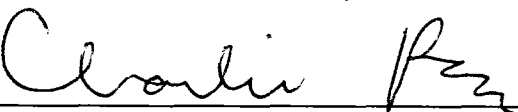
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To Leslie, Abigail, and Hayes,
my three faithful encouragers
thanks for your love and support

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ABSTRACT

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE EVANGELISTIC
PREACHING OF ROBERT L. HAMBLIN

Reginald L. Bridges, Ph.D.
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007
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The purpose of this dissertation was to examine Robert L. Hamblin's theology of evangelism, his evangelistic preaching theory, and his actual preaching in order to construct a contemporary evangelistic preaching model. Hamblin's theology of evangelism and theory of evangelistic preaching were discerned from his articles and books, his own class lecture notes, his academic lectures, and a personal interview. Meanwhile, characteristics of Hamblin's preaching were distinguished by examining selected sermons with research instruments based upon Ramesh Richard's evangelistic preaching theory.

After features of Hamblin's theology, theory, and practice were discerned, an attempt was made to formulate a

model of evangelistic preaching. Specifically, the researcher sought to extract a holistic perspective toward evangelistic preaching which could be compared to other respected evangelistic preaching theories. An integrated model of evangelistic preaching was proposed which encompassed three components: theological, organizational, and practical.

The following insights into evangelistic preaching were gleaned from the research. First, the study demonstrated that a holistic approach as opposed to the sequential models to evangelistic preaching was possible. Second, an integrated model to evangelistic preaching allowed for balance by considering the theological, organizational, and practical elements equally. Third, the research emphasized the comprehensive nature of evangelistic preaching as proclamation in "word, spirit, and deed." Fourth, the study indicated that the preacher's theology of evangelism influenced his evangelistic preaching theory and practice. Fifth, the proposed model indicated that evangelistic preaching was not synonymous with one sermon form. Sixth, the research demonstrated that the study of one individual evangelist could yield insight into the field of evangelistic preaching and provide a basis for a preaching paradigm.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The Problem and Its Setting

Research Problem and Question

The research problem of the study concerned the examination of Robert L. Hamblin's theology of evangelism, his evangelistic preaching theory, and his actual preaching in order to construct a contemporary evangelistic preaching model. The subsequent research question was, "How can Robert L. Hamblin's theology of evangelism as well as his evangelistic preaching theory and practice be used to construct a contemporary evangelistic preaching model?"

Hypotheses

Four hypotheses were proposed for this study. The first hypothesis was that Hamblin's preaching practice would reflect his theology of evangelism as well as his evangelistic preaching theory. The second was that Hamblin's theology of evangelism, preaching theory, and preaching practice would exhibit a holistic perspective on

his approach to evangelistic preaching. The third hypothesis was that an examination of this holistic approach would produce a contemporary model for evangelistic preaching. The fourth hypothesis was that Hamblin's model would not only exhibit features similar to other prevailing models in the field of evangelistic preaching, but it also would demonstrate differences unique to Hamblin.

Delimitations

The nature of this study necessitated certain delimitations. First, Hamblin's doctrinal presuppositions were considered only as they related to his theology of evangelism. An exhaustive examination of Hamblin's theology was beyond the scope of the study. Second, an in-depth look at Hamblin's life and ministry was not attempted. A brief biographical sketch appeared sufficient to introduce the subject. After that introduction, Hamblin's life and ministry was examined only as they intersected with his theology of evangelism and his evangelistic preaching theory. Third, only selected sermons by Hamblin were analyzed to discern his evangelistic preaching practice. Sermons were selected from a random sampling of all his

sermons preached on the W. T. V. A. television station from 1989 to 1994.

Definitions of Terms

Specific definitions were identified before the study in order to provide clarity in understanding and terminology. For example, *evangelism* meant "to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God, through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church"¹ while *preaching* was viewed as "the oral communication of biblical truth by the Holy Spirit through a human personality to a given audience with the intent of enabling a positive response."²

In addition, two areas of preaching were defined: evangelistic preaching and expository preaching. First,

¹J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1961), 37-8. This definition was formulated by the Archbishop's Committee in the Church of England at the end of World War I. Packer rejected the definition because of its close association with purpose and results. Despite this objection, the definition was chosen because it appropriately outlined the purpose of such evangelistic efforts.

²Jerry Vines and Jim Shaddix, *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver Expository Sermons* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 27.

evangelistic preaching was "the proclamation of the good news concerning the redemptive acts of God in Christ, by one who experientially knows Jesus Christ as their Savior and their Lord."¹ Second, *expository preaching* was "the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers."⁴

Clarification of two types of sermon presentation was also necessary. The first was the *expository sermon* which was a sermon that draws both its main points and subpoints from the natural thought unit of the text.⁵ The second was the *homily* which was defined as a pattern of sermon presentation that lacks a clear rhetorical structure, follows the order of the scriptural text, and is used merely to lift out for elaboration and application the

³Vernon L. Stanfield, *Effective Evangelistic Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1965), 11.

⁴Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 20.

⁵David Larsen, *The Anatomy of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989), 32.

successive parts of the passage as it stands. Within a homily, explanation characterized the overall presentation more than systematic structure.⁶

Finally, certain elements of the sermon were differentiated. *Formal elements* implied sermon components such as the introduction, body, and conclusion.⁷ *Functional elements*, on the other hand, referred to sermon components such as application, argumentation, and illustration.⁸

Assumptions

Certain assumptions were associated with the study. First, evangelistic preaching is still relevant in a postmodern world. Although the practice may have developed throughout history, evangelistic proclamation holds significance for the contemporary setting. Second, the examination of the preaching of notable evangelistic preachers will yield helpful insight into evangelistic

⁶Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching without Notes Plus Sermons Preached without Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962), 25-6.

⁷John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed., rev. by Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979), 77-125.

⁸Lloyd M. Perry and John R. Strubhar, *Evangelistic Preaching* (Chicago: Moody, 1979), 74-84.

preaching in general. Third, the evangelistic preacher becomes more mature in his preaching as he ages. Over the course of his life, the minister refines his theology and practice. Fourth, while the preacher may alter his sermon content and delivery slightly to meet the restrictions of a television broadcast, the preacher's basic theory and practice of evangelistic preaching is still reflected in his sermons.

Research Methodology

The nature of the study called for a historical approach, the method employed here. First, the writer established Hamblin's theology of evangelism as expressed in his articles, formal lectures, class lecture notes, and personal interviews. Some of the specific primary resources examined included Hamblin's articles entitled "The Message of Evangelism" and "The Biblical Basis of Evangelism," a series of articles about evangelism Hamblin wrote for the *NIV Disciple's Study Bible*,⁹ the 1996 Gurney Lectures on evangelism delivered by Hamblin at New Orleans Baptist

⁹These articles include topics concerning evangelism such as church evangelism, small group evangelism, mass evangelism, life-style evangelism, and relational evangelism.

Theological Seminary, and the lecture notes Hamblin used when he taught Introduction to Evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.¹⁰ After constructing a theology from these and other similar resources, the writer interviewed Hamblin to gain further insight.

Second, the researcher determined Hamblin's evangelistic preaching theory by examining his 2002 V. L. Stanfield Lectures on preaching; by investigating the lecture notes he used when he taught the course Evangelistic Preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; and by doing research in other pertinent documents such as "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," "The Gospel Invitation in Today's World," and "Responsible Christian Leadership in Evangelism."¹¹ After

¹⁰Robert L. Hamblin, "The Message of Evangelism," in *Evangelism Today and Tomorrow*, ed. Charles L. Chaney and Granville Watson (Nashville: Broadman, 1993), 88-96; and "The Biblical Basis of Evangelism," unpublished article, located in researcher's personal library, Zachary, LA.

¹¹Robert L. Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," unpublished article, located in researcher's personal library, Zachary, LA; "The Gospel Invitation in Today's World," *The Theological Educator* 57 (spring 1998): 22-30; and "Responsible Christian Leadership in Evangelism," unpublished article, located in researcher's personal library, Zachary, LA.

discerning an evangelistic preaching theory, the researcher interviewed Hamblin on the subject to obtain supplementary information.

Third, Hamblin's evangelistic preaching practice was considered through an analysis of selected sermons. In order to complete this analysis, the researcher employed research instruments that could be used to determine the characteristic features of Hamblin's evangelistic preaching practice. The instruments were based exclusively upon Ramesh Richard's theology of evangelistic preaching and his evangelistic preaching theory. An analysis of each sermon was conducted utilizing Richard's criteria for evangelistic preaching and recorded.

The sermons to be analyzed were taken from the messages Hamblin delivered on the W. T. V. A. television station from 1989 to 1994. These sermons are held currently by the L. D. Hancock Foundation located in Tupelo, Mississippi. These sermons were chosen because they represent the best and the most mature examples of Hamblin's evangelistic preaching. Additionally, the sermons were selected because Hamblin focused almost exclusively upon preaching evangelistic messages. Of the approximately six hundred messages located at the L. D. Hancock

Foundation, fifty were chosen for close analysis.¹² The selected sermons will serve as representatives of Hamblin's evangelistic preaching.

A specific process will be employed to analyze the selected messages. For instance, each sermon was viewed three times. The first time the sermon was viewed specific attention was given to examining the message for its theological characteristics. To accomplish this task, the researcher developed an instrument based upon Richard's theological framework for evangelistic preaching and used the tool to discern the theological components of Hamblin's message.¹³ The second time the sermon was observed, the message was analyzed for its structural content; and on the third occasion, the sermon delivery was noted. In the last

¹²The researcher chose fifty sermons to be examined not only because the number was an adequate and manageable sample but also because it was comparable to samples used in other research projects completed in the field. Specific sermons were selected according to the table of random numbers proposed by Paul Leedy and Jeanne E. Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 7th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001), 213.

¹³See appendix 1. The instrument was derived from Richard's discussion of a theological framework for evangelistic preaching. Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons: A Seven-Step Method for Preaching Salvation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2005), 60-70.

two instances, an instrument already developed by Richard was used.¹⁴ Utilizing this form aided in distinguishing the structural and delivery elements of each sermon. Through these three viewings, an essential understanding of the various aspects of Hamblin's evangelistic preaching theory was gained.

Fourth, Hamblin's evangelistic theology, preaching theory, and preaching practice was synthesized into an integrated model for contemporary evangelistic preaching. A special attempt was made to offer a holistic approach to evangelistic preaching.

Fifth, Hamblin's model was compared and contrasted to two respected paradigms in the field of evangelistic preaching. The first of these models involved Lloyd M. Perry and John R. Strubhar's view of evangelistic preaching. Perry and Strubhar's work was chosen because of its relationship to Hamblin. While teaching Evangelistic Preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary,

¹⁴See appendix 2. In his work, Richard included his Textual Evangelistic Sermon Evaluation Form. He claimed that he used this form to evaluate students in his evangelistic preaching classes. Ibid., 234-5.

Hamblin used the work by Perry and Strubhar as his primary textbook.¹⁵

The second model was the one expressed by Ramesh Richard in his work *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons*.¹⁶ This resource was selected not only because it is a relatively contemporary model but also because its author is a respected authority in the field of evangelistic preaching. Richard has served as a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary where he has taught evangelistic preaching. In such a capacity, Richard has helped shape students' mentality toward evangelistic preaching.

Through a thorough analysis of both textbooks, the differences and similarities to Hamblin's model appeared. While an exhaustive comparison of the models was impossible, an attempt was made to make some general observations about the models' relationships. A particular emphasis was placed upon those areas where Hamblin's model appears to be unique. Conclusions then were drawn and implications for contemporary evangelistic preaching were offered.

¹⁵Perry and Strubhar.

¹⁶Richard.

Subject of Study

Born on June 29, 1928, Hamblin served Baptists in many different capacities. As a teenager, he surrendered to the gospel ministry and almost immediately began preparing himself for the spiritual vocation. Ultimately, Hamblin earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Union University and a Bachelor of Divinity Degree as well as a Doctor of Theology degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. (Later his Th.D. was converted to a Ph.D.).¹⁷

Throughout his ministry, Hamblin was committed to evangelism. As a pastor, he advanced the evangelism efforts of various churches. Most notably, Hamblin demonstrated his evangelistic zeal during his twenty-two-year pastorate of Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo, Mississippi. While serving at Harrisburg, Hamblin saw the church grow exponentially.¹⁸

In 1980 Hamblin resigned his position at Harrisburg to accept a teaching position at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was Associate Professor of

¹⁷Robert L. Hamblin, phone interview by author, 27 November 2004.

¹⁸"History of Harrisburg Baptist Church, 1933-2001," *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, 15 July 2001.

Evangelism at New Orleans for two years, leaving the seminary in 1982 to become the Vice President for Evangelism of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. For seven years, Hamblin developed the programs that influenced Southern Baptists' approach to evangelism.¹⁹

After resigning his position with the Home Mission Board, the minister returned to Tupelo. There he became the director of the L. D. Hancock Foundation, which enabled him the opportunity to continue to focus on evangelism. Hamblin's evangelistic fervor touched two specific arenas. One of these areas included his multiple evangelism trips to third-world countries. The second area of Hamblin's attention was in television. Every week Hamblin recorded a sermon that was shown on a couple of television networks. Through this medium he was able to communicate the gospel to numerous individuals, and many of these listeners responded favorably to his message.

After five years of ministry in Tupelo, Hamblin returned to the New Orleans seminary in 1994 as Professor

¹⁹One of the programs he helped develop was *Continuing Witness Training*, an evangelism strategy adopted by many Southern Baptist churches. Hamblin, phone interview.

of Evangelism and Chair of the Division of Pastoral Ministries, a position he held until his retirement. At the seminary, he helped teach young ministers about evangelism.²⁰

Even though Hamblin has advanced in age, he still continues to embrace evangelism. Currently he serves as President of Robert L. Hamblin Evangelism, Inc. and speaks at various revival engagements as well as forums on evangelism. In addition, the evangelist works as an interim pastor and as an active part of the North Carolina Baptist Convention. Clearly Hamblin's advanced age has not stopped him from keeping a busy schedule, and his high view of evangelism is still evident in his various ministry engagements.

Most of Hamblin's published works were actually printed sermons. Some of these texts were expositions on actual books of the Bible like Galatians, Ephesians, and 1 Peter, while others were commentaries on biblical events such as the Sermon on the Mount and the life of Christ. The books basically embody the sermons preached by Hamblin during his television ministry.

²⁰Ibid.

A Review of Related Literature

Several authors have written in the field of evangelistic preaching. Through their books, articles, and research projects, they have attempted to further the discussion concerning evangelistic preaching while generally emphasizing the significance of the topic. A few representative works will be discussed below to set the context of the present work.

Books

David Larsen underscored the importance of evangelism: "Our basic premise is that evangelism is to be pervasive in the church at all times and in all places. Evangelism is to be foundational and fundamental, from the primary department to the pulpit. Because of what evangelism is meant to be for the Christian enterprise, evangelistic preaching has validity and continuing relevancy."²¹ Larsen highlighted the role of evangelism in the church's life, especially in relationship to the preaching event. Also, he traced the biblical, historical, sociological, and practical foundations of evangelistic preaching. In

²¹David L. Larsen, *The Evangelism Mandate* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1992), 14.

identifying these foundations, he sought to capture the essence of preaching the good news in an effective and biblical manner.

Similarly, R. Alan Streett endorsed the concept of evangelistic preaching: "The job of the preacher is to point to the crucified and risen Lord and call upon them to trust in Him."²² Streett built upon this proposal by providing theological, biblical, and practical ways to win individuals to Christ. Also, he stressed the need for a proper message to accompany an invitation when he stated, "Proclamation and invitation are the two distinct components of every gospel presentation. Although related to each other in the evangelistic process, the preaching of the gospel must always precede the call for listeners to respond to its truth."²³

Vernon Stanfield offered his own definition of evangelistic preaching: "Evangelistic preaching is the proclamation of the good news concerning the redemptive acts of God in Christ, by one who experientially knows

²²R. Alan Streett, *The Effective Invitation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1984), 31.

²³*Ibid.*, 21-2.

Jesus Christ as their [sic] Savior and their [sic] Lord."²⁴
With this definition in mind, he provided a concise overview of the presuppositions of evangelistic preaching and of the evangelistic invitation.

Lloyd M. Perry and John R. Strubhar expanded on the topic of evangelistic preaching. While they presented a brief history of evangelistic preaching, the authors primarily sought to analyze "the methodological and structural aspects of evangelistic sermonic theory" using four of the five canons of classical rhetoric.²⁵ In doing so, Perry and Strubhar hoped to establish "an objective base and structural method for evangelistic preaching."²⁶

Charles Gresham and Keith Keeran produced a comparable but distinct work. In an attempt to provide an exhaustive textbook in the field of evangelistic preaching, Gresham and Keeran observed the nature and history of evangelism and evangelistic preaching. The authors then offered suggestions in evangelistic sermon preparation and

²⁴Stanfield, 11.

²⁵Perry and Strubhar, 8.

²⁶Ibid.

delivery. Additionally, Gresham and Keeran included various sermons from preachers of the past and the present.²⁷

Although not as exhaustive as Gresham and Keeran in his approach, Alan Walker dealt with several issues concerning the area of evangelistic preaching. Walker briefly considered the message of evangelism and evangelistic preaching, the construction and delivery of the evangelistic sermon, and the spiritual preparation of the preacher. The author clearly determined that the "central purpose of evangelistic preaching is to win an immediate commitment to Jesus Christ."²⁸

Craig A. Loscalzo desired to set forth an evangelistic preaching paradigm in *Evangelistic Preaching That Connects: Guidance in Shaping Fresh and Appealing Sermons*. Initially, he attempted to propose a proper theology for evangelistic preaching and to explore both the contemporary contexts and the communication that could be used effectively within those settings. From these foundational issues, Loscalzo focused attention on the preparation of evangelistic

²⁷Charles Gresham and Keith Keeran, *Evangelistic Preaching* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1991), 13.

²⁸Alan Walker, *Evangelistic Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury, 1988), 18.

messages, highlighting the necessary characteristics of the evangelistic sermon.²⁹

Like Loscalzo, Richard examined the foundation, framework, and method of preparing evangelistic sermons. He described his effort in the following manner: "This book focuses on your responsibility in preaching salvation. The first half discusses biblical and theological convictions an evangelist *must* possess. . . . The second half of the book deals with homiletical method in evangelistic preaching."³⁰ In the latter section of his work, Richard set forth a "seven-step method for preaching salvation."³¹

In a more recent text, Al Fasol, Roy Fish, Steve Gaines, and Ralph Douglas West demonstrated their own understanding of evangelistic preaching through a compilation of essays. They addressed topics such as the setting of the evangelistic sermon, the selection of the text, preparing and preaching the sermon, and extending the invitation. In the final chapter of the book, the authors

²⁹Craig A. Loscalzo, *Evangelistic Preaching That Connects: Guidance in Shaping Fresh and Appealing Sermons* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995).

³⁰Richard, 13.

³¹Ibid., 88-9.

included three evangelistic sermons as examples for the reader.³²

Articles

Many articles concerning evangelistic preaching can be classified into three general types: those dealing mostly with the intent of evangelistic sermons, those addressing primarily the presuppositions and characteristics of evangelistic preaching, and those focusing upon the communication of the evangelistic message to an emerging culture. In each case, the author demonstrated his appreciation for evangelistic preaching while emphasizing one of these specific areas.

For example, Robert Coleman highlighted the purpose of the evangelistic sermon when he said, "The test of preaching ultimately is what men do about it. The decision is what counts."³³ He argued that evangelistic preaching must be aimed at leading the hearer to a decision of faith.

³²Al Fasol, Roy Fish, Steve Gaines, and Ralph Douglas West, *Preaching Evangelistically: Proclaiming the Saving Message of Jesus* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), vii-viii.

³³Robert E. Coleman, "Preaching for a Verdict: Evangelistic Preaching in the Wesleyan Tradition," *Preaching* 15, no. 2 (September-October 1999): 53.

Coleman contended, "For this reason, the appeal for commitment is the most decisive point of the message."³⁴

This statement was consistent with an earlier assertion in which the author maintained, "Evangelistic preaching thus can be defined as the proclamation of the gospel of salvation in the power of the Holy Spirit, aiming for a clear verdict in the heart of all who hear."³⁵ In Coleman's view, the intent of evangelistic preaching centered around the call for decision.

In another article, Coleman did not discuss the purpose of preaching alone. Instead, he cited characteristics of the evangelistic sermon. Coleman believed that the evangelistic sermon should be Christ-exalting, scriptural, soul-searching, logical, simple, experiential, and demanding of a verdict. The author insisted that these attributes are essential to effective evangelistic sermons.³⁶

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Robert E. Coleman, "Evangelistic Preaching," *Fundamentalist Journal* 7, no. 2 (February 1988): 46.

³⁶Robert E. Coleman, "An Evangelistic Sermon Checklist," *Christianity Today* 10 (5 November 1965): 27.

Luis Palau presented similar characteristics for the evangelistic sermon. He suggested that the sermon ought to be marked by a relevant topic, a Christ-centered message, simple language, practical illustrations, a focused-approach, a logical structure, and a climactic moment. By including these elements in the sermon, the preacher could communicate more effectively the life-transforming message of Christ.³⁷

Jerry Drace echoed Palau's assessment of the evangelistic sermon by citing ten traits of evangelistic preaching. Some of these characteristics included an appeal to intellect and emotion, a sense of urgency in preparation and delivery, and a call for decision. According to Drace, expository preaching shared similar features with evangelistic preaching.³⁸

Larry Moyer addressed evangelistic preaching by identifying qualities of the evangelistic sermon also. He offered practical advice concerning the length of the presentation, the truths expressed in the sermon, and the

³⁷Luis Palau, "Preaching the Evangelistic Message," *Preaching* 8 (May-June 1993): 41-3.

³⁸Jerry Drace, "10 Characteristics of Evangelistic Preaching," *Preaching* 22 (November-December 2006): 9.

delivery of the message. Moyer concluded his article with an exhortation for the evangelist to submit himself to the Spirit and to develop his skills as a preacher.³⁹

Although he did not list the characteristics of the evangelistic sermon, Eric Alexander did underscore the presuppositions of evangelistic preaching. He reminded preachers that the Bible is authoritative and sufficient, that the Holy Spirit is responsible for genuine salvation, and that Christ is the only "Savior of sinners." Also, he pointed out two major motives for evangelistic preaching: the fear of God and the love of Christ. Alexander held that these motives compelled one to preach the gospel urgently and appropriately.⁴⁰

Aside from the presuppositions and characteristics of evangelistic preaching, some writers focused on the communication of the gospel to contemporary audiences. Craig Loscalzo was one example. Loscalzo recognized an "incarnational" model as the best approach to preaching

³⁹Larry Moyer, "Building an Evangelistic Message," *Preaching* 22 (November-December 2006): 6-11.

⁴⁰Eric Alexander, "Evangelistic Preaching," in *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*, ed. Don Kistler, (Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002): 228-40.

evangelistically in new generations.⁴¹ Only by embracing Jesus' example of communicating the gospel to his audience could the contemporary evangelist challenge the contemporary context. Loscalzo then related practical ways in which the preacher could demonstrate the incarnational model.

In many instances, D. Cameron Murchison reiterated Loscalzo's insistence upon understanding one's context in communicating the gospel. Murchison wrote, "What will constitute preaching for conversion . . . may well vary from one cultural setting to another."⁴² The author then described his own cultural context and emphasized the obstacles that the evangelistic preacher faces. He specifically noted three major subcultural groups in America: the Cultural Left, the Cultural Right, and the Cultural Middle. Understanding these groups, he maintained, would help the preacher "preach for conversion."⁴³

⁴¹Craig A. Loscalzo, "How Are They to Hear? Evangelism and Proclamation," *Review and Expositor* 90, no. 1 (winter 1993): 102-4.

⁴²D. Cameron Murchison Jr., "Preaching for Conversion," *Journal for Preachers* 15, no. 3 (Easter 1992): 23.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 23-5.

Throughout the work, Murchison sought to accentuate the act of evangelistic preaching in a changing culture.

Research Projects

The research projects that informed the current study can be categorized into three areas. The first area concerned the evangelistic preacher and his theological presuppositions. In these projects, the authors not only sought to discuss the evangelistic preacher, but they also hoped to identify possible relationships between his evangelistic efforts and his theological convictions. Two dissertations were particularly notable. Kent Sweatman examined the evangelistic preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in light of Spurgeon's Calvinistic doctrine.⁴⁴ Sweatman determined the association between the two elements and offered implications of that relationship for evangelistic preaching.

Meanwhile, Sung Ho Kang compared and contrasted the evangelistic preaching of Asahel Nettleton and Charles G. Finney. Kang focused on the theological distinctions

⁴⁴Kent E. Sweatman, "The Doctrines of Calvinism in the Preaching of Charles Haddon Spurgeon" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1998).

between the two evangelistic preachers and how those doctrines played out in methodology. In the end, Kang suggested areas of contemporary application based upon his research.⁴⁵

The second area of research considered here involved the evangelistic preacher and his concept of evangelism. For example, Timothy McKnight sought to identify George Whitefield's theology and methodology of evangelism.⁴⁶ While McKnight considered some aspects of Whitefield's preaching, a detailed preaching theory was not identified. Moreover, a contemporary model was not presented.

Similarly, Michael Mark Hawley addressed Lee Rutland Scarborough's concept of evangelism. First, Hawley examined the biographical factors that influenced Scarborough's view of evangelism. Afterward, the author presented Scarborough's theory of evangelism and its effect upon his preaching. In the closing chapter, some application was

⁴⁵Sung Ho Kang, "The Evangelistic Preaching of Asahel Nettleton and Charles G. Finney in the Second Great Awakening and Applications for Contemporary Evangelism" (Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004).

⁴⁶Timothy Ray McKnight, "George Whitefield's Theology and Methodology of Evangelism" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003).

made. Specifically, Hawley emphasized the human and divine elements involved in evangelism as well as the need for compassion within the evangelistic effort.⁴⁷

The third category of evangelistic preaching research projects revolved around the evangelistic preacher's preaching theory and practice. The first study was Jerry Smith's treatment of V. L. Stanfield's homiletical theory.⁴⁸ Smith examined Stanfield's life, preaching theory, and ministry. His ultimate goal involved presenting Stanfield's contributions to Southern Baptist homiletical circles.

Another study considered was James Shaddix's work on Richard Jackson.⁴⁹ In the work, Shaddix explored Jackson's decisional preaching. Specifically, he examined Jackson's sermons for content, structure, and style. After his research, Shaddix determined the "decisional qualities"

⁴⁷Michael Mark Hawley, "A Critical Examination of Lee Rutland Scarborough's Concept of Evangelism" (Th.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1992).

⁴⁸Jerry Leon Smith, "An Examination of the Homiletical Theory of Vernon L. Stanfield between the Years 1947-1991" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1994).

⁴⁹James Shaddix, "A Critical Examination of the Decisional Preaching of Richard Allen Jackson" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1996).

inherent in Jackson's sermons and offered their implications within a decisional sermonic theory.

In his dissertation on the evangelistic exposition of Stephen F. Olford, Jonggil Lee presented a noteworthy study in which he investigated Olford's evangelistic homiletical theory and practice by using personal interviews and by analyzing selected sermons. The purpose of his study was to form a model of evangelistic preaching. Although he did propose a model, the paradigm was limited in its scope and only recognized general characteristics of evangelistic preaching.⁵⁰

Importance of Study

As indicated by the foregoing literature review, evangelistic preaching has been addressed in various ways. Yet, the present study made a unique contribution to the field of evangelistic preaching theory.

First, the model was based on more than theoretical conjecture. For example, while Loscalzo as well as Perry and Strubhar sought to present a paradigm of evangelistic

⁵⁰Jonggil Lee, "A Critical Examination of the Evangelistic Exposition of Stephen F. Olford" (Ph.D. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003).

preaching, neither model was based on the actual preaching of at least one evangelist. Hamblin is well known for his evangelistic preaching and serves as an example of the evangelistic preaching practice. Consequently, the results of the study yielded important information for a model.

Indeed, a primary distinction concerned the subject of study itself. Along with basing the study on more than theoretical conjecture, this research project also involved an evangelist who has made significant contributions to Southern Baptist life. Whether he was pastoring a church, teaching at a seminary, or leading the Home Mission Board's evangelism section, Hamblin influenced Southern Baptist life with his evangelistic preaching. His lifelong devotion to evangelistic preaching made him a logical candidate for study in the field.

Second, the study was distinct in its incorporation of the analysis of Hamblin's theology of evangelism. The existing research projects usually addressed only one facet of evangelistic preaching. Either the research dealt with preaching theory and practice while minimizing the preacher's theology of evangelism, or the study highlighted the preacher's concept of evangelism while largely ignoring his preaching theory and practice. This study, on the other

hand, incorporated both elements. Theology, theory, and practice were integrated together within the study. By including these aspects of Hamblin's work, a more holistic model was developed.

Third, this study demonstrated some important concerns in the homiletical dialogue about evangelistic preaching. In some ways, evangelistic preaching is just beginning to be a point of reference for homileticians. The proposed study can be used to further this important conversation. Indeed, the model set forth in this study may be compared and contrasted with other paradigms such as Lee's to understand evangelistic preaching better.

CHAPTER 2

HAMBLIN'S THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM AND THEORY OF EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

A Theology of Evangelism

Hamblin held that evangelism is at the center of Christian truth.¹ In fact, theology itself coalesces around evangelism and informs one's stance toward the sharing of the good news of Christ. Hamblin noted that a proper view of evangelism actually grows out of a proper understanding of theology. Through the comprehension of God and his mission appropriately, a person gains an overview of genuine evangelism. Moreover, Hamblin contended that the one who holds a defective theology subsequently will develop a skewed view of evangelism.²

¹Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism."

²In his class lecture notes, Hamblin confronted issues he identified as "inadequate theological concepts." Some of these aberrations include hyper-calvinism, universalism, and hyper-ecclesiasticism. See Robert L. Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," class lecture notes, located in researcher's personal library, Zachary, LA, 26.

In order to establish an overall theology of evangelism, Hamblin depended exclusively upon the Bible. He examined the biblical background of evangelism to formulate his definition of evangelism as well as the theological content for the message of evangelism. Within the Old and New Testaments, the evangelist finds a foundation for his theology.

The Biblical Background of Evangelism

Old Testament

While he recognized that the word *evangelism* comes from the New Testament, Hamblin believed the concept itself is ancient.³ He wrote, "Evangelism began with the earliest human beings. From the very beginning of the Bible, God is pictured as reaching down to us humans in order to redeem us."⁴ At the onset of recorded human history, God underscored the theological presuppositions of evangelism.

In Genesis 1-11, the biblical author introduced the central themes that inform evangelism: God, the Creator; humanity, the created; the consequences of sin; divine

³"Evangelism: 550," 3.

⁴Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 89.

judgment; and humanity's failure to gain the heavenly paradise.⁵ Simply stated, God always loved humanity, but sin ruptured the relationship between the Creator and his created people. Adam and Eve sinned against God and brought dire consequences upon themselves. Distrust, shame, and conflict marked their lives: "Enmity existed between the seed of woman (mankind) and the serpent (the devil). The serpent-tempter had led Adam and Eve into a terrible position. They had willingly responded to him. From that time on there would be conflict between them."⁶

Hamblin emphasized that in the midst of this hopeless situation the Creator made a promise. In Gen. 3:15, God promised that Eve's offspring would bruise the serpent's head. Hamblin agreed with others who identify the text as the pre-gospel, calling it the beginning of evangelism.⁷ He maintained that this first promise of the Redeemer was made to the entire human race and reflected clearly his love for all. He determined that the passage provided at least five

⁵Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 3.

⁶Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 1.

⁷Robert L. Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures on Evangelism, Part 1," lecture delivered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 16 April 1996 (CD).

theological insights: (1) salvation comes from God's grace; (2) salvation will destroy Satan, the enemy; (3) salvation will affect all humanity; (4) salvation is effected by the suffering of the Savior; and (5) salvation will be experienced in history, as the fall is actually a part of history.⁸

In Hamblin's opinion, God furthered his promise with his election of Abram: "God's strategy was to select one individual. . . . God chose Abram. God chose Abram because he is God. No one could dictate to God the person whom he would choose. . . . God selected Abram in order to reach all of the other families of the earth. It was an election to responsibility."⁹ God's purpose for Abram was a plan intimately connected to evangelism.

Indeed, Hamblin suggested that Abram experienced God's blessings and became a blessing to others. Through the patriarch, good news would go to all people.¹⁰ The divided families on earth would unite, and the curse would transition into a blessing. In essence, Hamblin believed

⁸Robert L. Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 3.

⁹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 6.

¹⁰Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

that God's election of Abram was a call to him and his descendants to establish God's kingdom on earth. God chose the patriarch for evangelistic service.¹¹ Much of the rest of the Old Testament concerns this service and mission.

Hamblin pointed out that God reaffirmed the covenant, or agreement, between him and Abram to Abram's descendants. He also highlighted the method he called "God's pattern for making human beings partners in world evangelization": election, covenant, and responsible obedience on the part of the people.¹² God chose the nation of Israel, made a covenant with them, and expected obedience from them.

Israel had a mission to fulfill, a mission Hamblin summarized by underscoring two images. First, the Israelites were a holy nation. God separated them from the world to represent his character in the world. Second, they were to be a nation of priests who would reach all nations.¹³ In their role as priests, the Israelites represented God to humanity and humanity to God.

¹¹Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 2-3.

¹²Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 5.

¹³In his notes, Hamblin highlighted the emphasis upon the phrase "to all people" in Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; and 28:14 ("Evangelism: 550," 9).

Hamblin noted that God reminded each successive generation of this national purpose. God used the prophets and poets to call the nation to holiness and to declare the Messianic hope. Throughout the Old Testament era, the Lord commissioned Israel with reaching all other nations and empowered them with his divine authority. In Israel's obedience to its mission, the entire world benefited. As Hamblin asserted, "The entire Old Testament is the record of God's care for all of the world."¹⁴

The Life and Teachings of Christ

The life and teachings of Christ are important factors in Hamblin's construction of a theology of evangelism as well. Hamblin insisted that Jesus brought into focus the missionary purpose of God seen in the Old Testament.¹⁵ Hamblin believed that Jesus' chief concern of his earthly life was revealing his identity to his followers. Jesus was the Messiah, and he wanted them to recognize him.¹⁶

¹⁴Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 6.

¹⁵Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 11.

¹⁶Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 89.

Consequently, evangelism was at the heart of Jesus' ministry.¹⁷

In addition, Hamblin argued that Jesus' post-resurrection remarks are important to the issue of evangelism. According to him, several themes emerge from these statements:

1. The authority for evangelism (Matthew 28:18)
2. The purpose of evangelism (to make disciples; Matthew 28:19)
3. The method of evangelism (witnessing; Acts 1:8; Luke 24:48)
4. The message of evangelism (the redemptive work of God and the conditions for receiving forgiveness; Luke 24:46-47)
5. The power of evangelism (the Holy Spirit; Acts 1:8)
6. The geography and dimensions of evangelism (neighborhoods, surrounding provinces and the uttermost parts of the earth; Acts 1:8)
7. The duration of evangelism (until the end of the ages; Matthew 28:20).¹⁸

Examining these themes, Hamblin formulated much of his theology of evangelism, which in turn informed his view of evangelistic preaching.

Of special significance to Hamblin was Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The evangelist held, "The

¹⁷Robert L. Hamblin, "Guide to Church Evangelism," in *NIV Disciple's Study Bible* (Nashville: Holman Bible, 1988), 1833.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 89-90.

concept of evangelism for the church is always rooted in the Great Commission of Christ."¹⁹ Within the Commission, Hamblin recognized authority and purpose. God provided the authority, making evangelization a divine-human act. In truth, God acted in his authority through the human instrument of the gospel to bring salvation. Hamblin observed that such power enabled the disciples to fulfill their purpose of making disciples. Making disciples, Hamblin believed, essentially meant to evangelize the lost.²⁰

The New Testament Church

Luke opened the Book of Acts by reminding his audience that he wrote about the ministry of Jesus in his first treatise. Drawing upon this concept, Hamblin posited that Luke wrote in Acts about what Jesus continued to do.²¹ Through his followers, Christ continued his ministry of redemption. The disciples went in the power of the Holy Spirit and evangelized lost communities. Such a tremendous

¹⁹Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 7.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 3.

effort prompted Hamblin to consider the Book of Acts "the text in evangelism."²²

Hamblin cited several realities about the disciples' evangelism in Acts. For example, he stated, "The early Christians had a deep conviction that the means of getting the message to the lost was the power of God himself."²³ The Holy Spirit provided the strength and boldness for the disciples to accomplish their evangelistic task.

In addition, Hamblin asserted that the disciples surrendered to the lordship of Christ.²⁴ They depended upon him and fully obeyed his commands. Even in their proclamation, the disciples called for individuals to repent, place their faith in Christ, and surrender to his lordship. In fact, Hamblin concluded that Acts affirmed

²²Hamblin, "Gurney Lecture, Part 1."

²³Ibid.

²⁴In the Gurney Lectures on Evangelism, Hamblin discussed the significance of the lordship of Christ in evangelism by noting three biblical images: (1) crucified with Christ; (2) slaves of Jesus; and (3) divine ownership. As the disciples understood these concepts, they submitted themselves to Christ's authority. Robert L. Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures on Evangelism, Part 2," lecture delivered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 17 April 1996 (CD).

that a person must accept Christ as Lord to be saved.²⁵ The oldest creed of the church, "Jesus is Lord," was one of the most basic theological convictions early believers embraced.²⁶

Closely associated with their commitment to Christ's lordship was the disciples' belief that salvation comes exclusively through Jesus. Hamblin suggested that the disciples reflected this evangelistic reality in their faithful message: "The key to the ability of the early church to proclaim the message of Christ in the face of opposition was their conviction that Jesus Christ was the only way to salvation. They accepted no concept of universal salvation. They believed that Jesus and Jesus only was the way to everlasting life."²⁷ Through Christ alone, sinners experience eternal life and salvation. The disciples' proclamation exhibited the exclusive character Hamblin believed to be essential to evangelistic proclamation.

²⁵Robert L. Hamblin and William H. Stephens, *The Doctrine of Lordship* (Nashville: Convention, 1990), 61.

²⁶Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 88.

²⁷Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 13.

Another evangelistic reality Hamblin distinguished in Acts concerns those individuals called to witness. He concluded that Christ calls every believer to testify of him²⁸ and that the early church was obsessed with witnessing.²⁹ This distinctive witness grew out of the disciples' genuine experience with Christ and found expression in a variety of ways. Hamblin observed, "The church used many methods of evangelizing. They were personal soul-winners. They preached Christ. They went house to house witnessing for Christ, and they certainly used their impact on society as a method of evangelizing."³⁰ As the evangelist related, "In Acts the believers used all of the facilities God gave them as tools for evangelism."³¹

Key New Testament Words and Concepts

In addition to the biblical background, Hamblin utilized actual words and concepts he derived from the

²⁸Hamblin believed the idea that "every Christian was a minister" was instrumental in the early church's successful evangelism ("Evangelism: 550," 24).

²⁹Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 10.

³⁰Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 17.

³¹Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 90.

New Testament to develop his theology of evangelism. These words and images informed his understanding of evangelism and helped him communicate this understanding to others.

New Testament Words

Several New Testament words relate to evangelism in some way. Of these words, Hamblin highlighted a few select terms in his notes and articles. The first involve the biblical words for evangelism itself: the verb form *euaggelisthai* and the noun form *euaggelion*. *Euaggelisthai* means "to evangelize or to announce good news" and occurs multiple times in the New Testament. *Euaggelion*, also used frequently, signifies the "gospel or good news." Hamblin proposed that these words taken together demonstrate the act of announcing and the nature of the gospel message.³²

The verb form of evangelism, according to Hamblin, links proclamation and demonstration. In other words, the use of the word implies evangelizing in both word and deed.³³ For Hamblin, this connection significantly displays a spoken and active element in evangelism.

³²Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 28.

³³Ibid.

Meanwhile, the noun form of evangelism offers similar insight. For instance, Hamblin noted that Mark equated the word *euaggelion* with Jesus, signifying that the noun itself refers to the person of Jesus Christ. Describing the relationship between the good news and Christ, Hamblin stated, "'Evangelism' became flesh and brought news of the eternal Father who loved His people enough to redeem them."³⁴

Overall, Hamblin associated the noun with the following concepts:

1. Evangelism proclaims the gospel of the kingdom, which is the authority and rule of Christ (Matt. 4:23; 9:35; 24:14).
2. It is a gospel of God. It is about God and from God (Mark 14-15).
3. It is a gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1; 2 Cor. 4:4).
4. It is a gospel which must be personally received (2 Cor. 4:3; 1 Thess. 1:5).
5. It is a gospel for all people (Mark 13:10; Acts 15:7).³⁵

According to Hamblin, the word *euaggelion* communicates these truths about the good news of Christ and informs one's theology of evangelism.

³⁴Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 88.

³⁵Ibid., 90-1.

Another word emphasized by Hamblin is the term *maturion*, which means "witness." Hamblin observed that early believers had been witnesses of the gospel in both word and action through God's power: "The apostles spoke, told, wrote, and preached about Jesus because they were directly illuminated or instructed."³⁶ As witnesses, the disciples experienced personal inspiration and engaged in person-to-person evangelism.

New Testament Concepts

Besides the New Testament terms, Hamblin employed images he described as New Testament concepts in discerning and communicating the premise of evangelism. While not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, the concepts find their substance in the biblical record.³⁷ Hamblin utilized two such ideas in particular as he related his view of evangelism.

The first of these concepts involves "the cycle of evangelism."³⁸ The cycle contains five distinct phases:

³⁶Ibid., 91-2.

³⁷Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 28-9.

³⁸See appendix 3 for the visual depiction of the cycle of evangelism.

(1) identification and relationships, (2) presentation (sharing the gospel), (3) decision, (4) nurture, and (5) enabling. This cycle is a representation of the stages involved in making mature disciples. As such, the idea reflects the pattern and purpose of biblical evangelism.³⁹

The second New Testament concept includes three interwoven threads.⁴⁰ Each thread in the image symbolizes a component of evangelism. One thread stands for "being," another for "doing," and yet another for "saying." For Hamblin, evangelism means "being," daily lifestyle or character. However, evangelism does not end there but also encompasses "doing" and "saying." "Doing" indicates the performing of benevolent deeds for others, while "saying" denotes the telling of good news. Hamblin believed these three interwoven threads picture the elements of evangelism and claimed that no thread could be eliminated without compromising genuine evangelism.⁴¹ Together, "being," "doing," and "saying" constitute evangelism.

³⁹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 29.

⁴⁰Again, see appendix 3 for a visual representation of Hamblin's concept.

⁴¹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 29.

Through the cycle of evangelism and the three interwoven threads, Hamblin furthered his view of evangelism and explained it to others. In essence, the concepts provide visual images of his theology and practice.

A Definition of Evangelism

With the biblical context in mind, Hamblin offered his own basic definition of evangelism: "Evangelism is the declaration in word, deed, and spirit of the gospel."⁴² Framed another way, evangelism is "the person-to-person outreach of believers to unbelievers with the gospel of Christ."⁴³ In this concise definition, Hamblin demonstrated that evangelism entails several components including witness, persuasion, and proclamation. According to Hamblin's view, the evangelist utilizes all God-given resources in the work of evangelism.⁴⁴ He uses both his personal testimony and his public preaching.

⁴² Ibid., 1. This definition is repeated often in Hamblin's writings and lectures.

⁴³ Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 90.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

As indicated, Hamblin understood that his definition carries with it much more than initially apparent. In his class lecture notes, he expanded upon the definition:

This gospel is that good news about God in Christ which has been placed in the Bible and has been given by the commission of God to the Church to proclaim. Far more than verbal and human proclamation is implicated. God himself participates in the redemptive action of evangelism by reaching out to man to reveal himself personally. Never is a person in greater need for the fullness of the Holy Spirit than when he witnesses for Jesus Christ, and never is the Holy Spirit more desirous to fill a person than when he witnesses for Jesus.⁴⁵

This description touches many of the theological presuppositions Hamblin deemed inherent in evangelism. Hamblin believed evangelism extends beyond simple human declaration; the practice encompasses God's cosmic mission of redemption. God's purpose for humanity as well as his nature predicates the work of evangelism. The Lord has a specific plan to redeem the world, and evangelism provides an opportunity to participate in this plan.

The Theological Content of Evangelism

In order to discover Hamblin's theology of evangelism, the researcher observed not only the definition Hamblin

⁴⁵Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 1.

developed from biblical backgrounds but also the theological content the preacher determined necessary in the message of evangelism. By addressing the theological substance of evangelism's message, Hamblin exhibited some, but not all, of the chief aspects of his theology of evangelism. Also, his attention to the issue underscores the import of correct theology to him.

According to Hamblin, evangelism requires a certain theological framework. He asserted, "Evangelism cannot be based on emotional feelings alone. It must have a strong theological base. For many reasons, evangelism must be understood theologically. Theology and evangelism are never separated in the Bible. Many doctrinal statements were made and are nourished by the evangelistic and pastoral concerns for the church."⁴⁶ In Hamblin's opinion, theology motivates evangelism and includes the biblical view of God and his purposes.

Hamblin warned that the absence of proper theological content could prevent genuine evangelism: "Without sound theology, evangelism degenerates into sentimentalism, emotionalism, and tactical gimmicks. Any form of evangelism

⁴⁶Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 93-4.

that results in the manipulation of people, regardless of motive, is unworthy of the Christ of the gospel. More tragically, this can lead to a shallow experience that falls short of genuine salvation."⁴⁷ To Hamblin, any evangelism that does not express sound doctrine is unacceptable and harmful.

Consequently, Hamblin challenged individuals to honor God's Word and to offer a message of theological substance: "Scriptural evangelism demands that we fill the presentation of the gospel with solid theological content. A human soul is worthy of our best."⁴⁸ The evangelistic effort requires the presentation of a clear, sound message. In Hamblin's perspective, God not only desires the preaching of substantive doctrine, but he also historically blessed preachers who evangelized on a sound theological base.

In one article, Hamblin described such a theological foundation by highlighting five theological themes that he deemed necessary within the message of evangelism.⁴⁹ The

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., 94.

⁴⁹Ibid., 93-6.

first concerns the centrality of Christ. Hamblin clearly stated, "The gospel is the good news, but the gospel, in a word, is Jesus."⁵⁰ As indicated previously, even the New Testament words relating to evangelism reflect an emphasis upon Jesus. Evangelistic proclamation, in Hamblin's view, helps people define their lives in terms of the unique fact that Christ is the subject and object of faith.⁵¹

A second theme is the nature of God. Hamblin resolved that Christian proclamation begins with God and declares him as the Almighty God, both holy and loving. He argued that an individual truly understands God's nature in the fact that God the Father sent his Son to confront humanity's problem.⁵²

The plight of human beings is actually the third theme mentioned by Hamblin. He explained that the biblical witness portrays the present situation of human beings as one of rebellion. Every individual sins, creating a separation between the person and God. Hamblin contended

⁵⁰Ibid., 88.

⁵¹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 3.

⁵²Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 94.

that the message of evangelism incorporates this theological truth about the condition of humanity.⁵³

The fourth theme focuses on redemption in Christ. Hamblin reminded his audience that God provides salvation for the human dilemma through Jesus Christ. In the Savior, an individual finds forgiveness and justification. The Lord appropriates these benefits to the individual's life as the person repents of sin and expresses faith in Christ. Accordingly, Hamblin held that redemption in Christ is at the core of evangelism's message.⁵⁴

"The purpose of God is also important to a biblical understanding of the message of evangelism," Hamblin related.⁵⁵ This stance motivated Hamblin to include divine purpose as a fifth theological theme. He affirmed that the God revealed in Scripture always has been purposeful and that his plan entails the redemption of sinful humanity. Before creation, God intended to send his one and only Son to the world with the specific purpose of providing the

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 11.

⁵⁵Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 95.

atonement for sin. Evangelism, in essence, is the proclamation of that divine plan of salvation.⁵⁶

Toward a Theology of Evangelism

Hamblin's theology of evangelism is understood by considering the emphases Hamblin placed upon the biblical backgrounds, the New Testament words and concepts, the definition of evangelism, and the theological content of evangelism. In the following paragraphs, these aspects will be drawn together in order to set forth Hamblin's theology of evangelism.

The Person of Christ

A presentation of Hamblin's theology of evangelism begins with the Christocentric character of his beliefs and the defining role it assumes in Hamblin's view of evangelism. Clearly, Hamblin's theology of evangelism centers on Jesus Christ. Throughout his discussions of evangelism, Hamblin stressed Jesus and his redemptive work. He insisted that the content of evangelism be Christ centered and expanded his definition to reflect the Lord's

⁵⁶Ibid.

role in evangelism. Through Christ alone, the world discovers salvation. Even in the simple declaration that "the gospel is Jesus," Hamblin underscored his focus upon Christ.⁵⁷

Whether considering God's purpose or the activity of salvation, Hamblin focused on Christ's teaching and work. In truth, he examined all doctrinal presuppositions through the lens of Christ. Every evangelistic issue, from Hamblin's viewpoint, revolves around Jesus and is measured by him. Christ is at the center of both history and theology. As the evangelist related, Christ not only informs one's convictions but also embodies evangelism. "He is the message of evangelism incarnate," Hamblin reminded. "He is the good news."⁵⁸

The Bible

In Hamblin's opinion, the Bible encapsulates the story of Christ. He described the gospel as the "good news about God in Christ which has been placed in the Bible."⁵⁹ God

⁵⁷Ibid., 88.

⁵⁸Ibid., 95.

⁵⁹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 1.

specifically reveals himself and his reconciling effort in the pages of the Scripture, and within the Word of God the evangelist discovers God's saving message to the world. Subsequently, Hamblin placed great emphasis upon the Bible in his theology. His terminology itself reflects this emphasis and demonstrates that his theology finds its roots in the Bible.⁶⁰

As indicated, Hamblin drew his view of evangelism exclusively on the Scripture. He investigated the biblical record so that he might understand evangelism's far-reaching significance and outline God's mission throughout history. In addition, he examined New Testament examples of evangelists to promote his understanding of evangelism.⁶¹ From the biblical background to specific New Testament words and concepts, Hamblin identified nuances of evangelism as well as the substance of evangelism.

⁶⁰For example, Hamblin often employed terms like "biblical evangelism," "the biblical background" of evangelism, "the biblical basis of evangelism," and other similar language ("Evangelism: 550," "The Biblical Basis of Evangelism," and "The Message of Evangelism").

⁶¹Robert L. Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures on Evangelism, Part 3," lecture delivered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 18 April 1996 (CD).

These observations illustrate the significance of the scriptural witness for evangelism. In Hamblin's theological framework, the Bible is the authoritative basis for understanding and practicing evangelism. The Scripture is the source from which one derives the message, means, and methodology of evangelism.⁶²

The Nature of God

Hamblin confirmed that the Scripture is essential in revealing the identity and nature of God. In his class lecture notes, he expressed four facts about God that have an affect upon evangelism. First, Hamblin assumed the reality of one God for all people and rejected the idea of a pantheon that includes multiple gods. Second, Hamblin proclaimed the holiness of God, the Lord's moral and spatial distance. Third, he explained that God is righteous and personifies that character which is totally good and sinless. Fourth, Hamblin said that God is love and that the supreme act of love was the sending of his Son on a redemptive mission.⁶³

⁶²Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

⁶³Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 67.

In many regards, Hamblin determined God's nature to be at the heart of understanding evangelism. He reminded individuals that people too often artificially divide theology into specific doctrines instead of focusing on one God who is about one business. As a matter of fact, he contended that one summarizes evangelism in the following manner: "Our God loves us. He provides for us out of His love. His desire is to save every person [and] then to be the Lord of that life into eternity."⁶⁴ Several issues in the theology of evangelism find root in the nature of God.

The Sinful Condition of Humanity

Human separation from God is a result of differing natures. Hamblin claimed that God's pure, loving nature is in sharp contrast to the vile, sinful nature of humanity. Human beings are in a state of rebellion. They sin and fail to reach God's creation intentions, and as a consequence humanity faces brokenness and alienation. Hamblin wrote, "Sin results in a broken relationship between people and God. Psychologically, alienation occurs because of sin.

⁶⁴Robert L. Hamblin, personal interview by author, 17 May 2007, Huntersville, NC.

Sociologically, alienation from others occurs. Theologically, alienation from God occurs. Ecologically, alienation from the world occurs. Hell is the ultimate alienation because of its separation from God. This consequence of sin, coupled with the fact that all have sinned, demands evangelism."⁶⁵ Sin, according to Hamblin, mars the whole human existence and brings separation. Only through God's plan can a person address the radical sinfulness of humanity.

The Plan of God

While recounting the theological content of evangelism, Hamblin stated the need to understand the reality of a divine purpose: "God is revealed in the Bible as a sovereign God who is purposeful. He is the God of predetermination, election, initiative, promise, and fulfillment."⁶⁶ He willingly acknowledged that he did not understand every detail of election and predestination, but he confidently asserted that God had a plan from the very beginning. God knew what he desired and how to accomplish

⁶⁵Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 94.

⁶⁶Ibid., 95.

that desire. Concerning this tension, the professor advised his students, "Believe that God does everything there is to do about it [salvation], and believe that God wants you to take the good news to every person in the world and to ask them to put their trust in Christ."⁶⁷

Hamblin resolved God's purpose includes complete fellowship with his created people.⁶⁸ The Lord's plan for humanity is for men and women to conform to the image of Christ. To fulfill such a purpose, God sent his Son to confront the problem of sin and redeem the human race. Jesus achieved the purpose of the Father and proclaimed good news through his redemptive work. Hamblin held the necessity of believers to participate in God's purpose by communicating the truth to the world. Through evangelism, humanity becomes part of the divine intention.⁶⁹

The Redemptive Work of Christ

God, in his plan, provides salvation. Hamblin believed this truth is of utmost importance in evangelism. Salvation

⁶⁷Hamblin, personal interview.

⁶⁸Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 1.

⁶⁹Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 95.

is a result of God's activity. Out of his love, God took the initiative to send his one and only Son to the world to die a sacrificial death. Hamblin determined that this claim makes Christianity superior to all other religions, for no other set of teachings offers such a message.⁷⁰

As already mentioned, Hamblin considered Christ the focal point of evangelism and affirmed that Jesus embodies the good news. In particular, Hamblin concentrated on the work of Christ as it related to salvation, labeling the cross as "a deed of redemption."⁷¹ For him, the cross is not just a demonstration of the love of God; the sacrifice provided victory over sin through justification. The Christ event bridged the chasm between God and humanity, providing an avenue of fellowship that had not existed since Genesis.

Christ's resurrection is as significant to Hamblin as the cross. "The great wonder to the early Christians was the resurrection," he explained.⁷² He maintained that the apostles themselves were "documented proofs" who saw the Lord and testified of him. This apostolic example prompted

⁷⁰Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 67.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 5.

Hamblin to conclude, "Integrity in evangelism requires a deep conviction that Jesus is alive."⁷³ The resurrection punctuates the work of Christ and provides salvation to all who respond appropriately.

The Response to Christ's Work

When Hamblin traced the Old Testament beginnings of evangelism, he recalled the promise made to Adam and Eve in Gen. 3:15. The promise was the first to indicate the coming Messiah and his future work. Hamblin insisted that the passage speaks of God's love for all people. God, he said, became the Savior of the whole human race: "It is necessary that any leadership in evangelism comes to a full realization of this holistic desire of the heavenly Father."⁷⁴

God's love for all people means that all people can be saved. Hamblin adopted this stance and added that God brings salvation to all people everywhere. All humanity needs salvation, and all experience the opportunity for redemption through Christ. In his lectures on evangelism,

⁷³Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

⁷⁴Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 2.

Hamblin posited, "There is the deep conviction that any person can be saved anywhere at any time."⁷⁵

The evangelist's belief in unlimited atonement does not dictate a position of universalism. On the contrary, Hamblin rejected any form of universalism and reaffirmed the exclusive nature of salvation through Christ. In his study of the New Testament believers, he determined that the apostolic testimony was one that proclaimed salvation in Jesus alone. Only as an individual responds in repentance and faith can he or she experience genuine salvation.⁷⁶

Hamblin argued that the first response required by God for salvation is repentance. According to him, repentance denotes first a change of mind and then a change of the whole person.⁷⁷ Repentance requires a turning away from sin and a renunciation of sin.⁷⁸ In that action, the person realizes his or her sinful identity and reacts against it. Describing repentance, Hamblin said, "It is the process of

⁷⁵Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

⁷⁶Hamblin, "Biblical Basis," 13.

⁷⁷Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 95.

⁷⁸Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 68.

rejecting what we are in favor of what Christ can make us."⁷⁹

Faith is also necessary in salvation. Hamblin called it the "flip-side" of repentance and defined it as a "whole-hearted trust in and commitment to God."⁸⁰ Faith, as Hamblin understood it, is the aspect of conversion in which the soul turns to Christ for salvation. The believer commits his or her life to Jesus as Savior and Lord. Coupled with repentance, faith is the necessary response to God's redemptive work, a response that brings salvation and ensures continuing submission to the lordship of Christ.

The Lordship of Christ

A prominent element of Hamblin's theology of evangelism is the lordship of Christ. Hamblin strongly asserted that Jesus is the Lord of all and that each believer must surrender to him. He defined his position by citing the example of the New Testament disciples: "To acknowledge Christ as Lord in the sense in which they [the disciples] proclaimed Him is to accept Jesus' sovereignty

⁷⁹Hamblin, *Doctrine of Lordship*, 66.

⁸⁰Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 95.

over one's own life."⁸¹ The doctrine of lordship affected the way Hamblin viewed virtually every area of evangelism, especially the subjects of salvation and evangelistic service.

Concerning salvation, Hamblin felt that a person must surrender to Christ as Lord in that initial response. As a person surrenders, God touches the basic need of humanity. "Man's first need is not freedom but a master," he related.⁸² Hamblin rejected the idea that an individual could be saved without responding to Jesus as Lord and insisted that a person embraces Jesus as both Savior and Lord in order to obtain salvation. A person cannot separate the two realities. The individual has to submit his or her life fully to Christ as Lord.

Anything short of proclaiming Christ's lordship is unacceptable to Hamblin. In fact, he denounced those ministers who would declare a message that does not call for an immediate surrender to Jesus. Hamblin lamented, "In our zeal for souls we have not emphasized repentance and Christ's lordship enough. The result of undisciplined

⁸¹Hamblin, *Doctrine of Lordship*, 63.

⁸²Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 68.

evangelism is a superficial understanding of why Christ died and what He expects. It is human-centered evangelism."⁸³ The aim of Hamblin's God-centered evangelism involves encouraging unbelievers to surrender themselves to Christ.

Hamblin noted that submission to the Lord occurs willingly. "Without choice," he contended, "there is no faith in the biblical sense."⁸⁴ In Hamblin's concept, people make their own choices to surrender to Jesus as the Lord of their lives. No one involuntarily makes a decision: "Everyone may yield to pressures to reject Christ or may yield to pressures to join a church without choosing Christ. Salvation comes only when a conscious choice is made to turn life over to Him."⁸⁵

The degree to which the believer yields to the lordship of Christ also affects his or her service. Hamblin believed that the submission to Christ as Lord applies to every facet of life, specifically evangelism. The concept of lordship provides the evangelist with substance for the

⁸³Hamblin, *Doctrine of Lordship*, 69.

⁸⁴Ibid., 63.

⁸⁵Ibid.

evangelistic message and with motivation for the evangelistic task. Simple obedience to the Lord prompts the preacher to a life of evangelism. Submission to Christ's lordship means that he follows God's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations.⁸⁶

Hamblin claimed the doctrine offered strength as well. As Lord, Jesus possesses authority over all aspects of life and power to accomplish any task. Hamblin held that believers share in Christ's authority and power as they submit to him and as they carry out the evangelistic mission. In truth, the Christian relies on Jesus for the work of evangelism. Only through submission to Christ does the believer access the strength to witness. "Responsible evangelism," Hamblin stated, "requires total dependence on the Lordship of Christ."⁸⁷

The Holy Spirit

For Hamblin, the power for evangelism originates from more than just a realization of Christ's lordship. The Holy Spirit himself empowers the evangelist and the actual work

⁸⁶Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 2."

⁸⁷Ibid.

of evangelism. From salvation to witnessing, the evangelistic effort encompasses the Holy Spirit and his strength.

Hamblin resolved that many people need to be saved but they have little or no interest in the gospel: "In order for these people to be saved, the gospel must come to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. He will bring conviction and reproof. He will also bring faith."⁸⁸ Only through the Spirit's work does the sinner experience a new birth in Christ. Since this statement is true, Hamblin reckoned it absolutely necessary that evangelists depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

Indeed, Hamblin considered the Holy Spirit's strength essential in the actual act of witnessing. In his expanded definition of evangelism, he determined, "Never is a person in greater need for the fullness of the Holy Spirit than when he witnesses for Jesus Christ, and never is the Holy Spirit more desirous to fill a person than when he witnesses for Jesus."⁸⁹ The Holy Spirit, according to

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 1.

Hamblin, grants each believer the power he or she needs to proclaim the good news of Christ. Without that resource, the believer proves inept. The Spirit both inspires and energizes the evangelistic work.

In addition to power, the Holy Spirit provides the impetus to evangelize. Hamblin contended that the indwelling presence of the Spirit motivates people to witness and to proclaim Christ.⁹⁰ He wrote, "The true Spirit-filled life is a witnessing life."⁹¹ The influence of the Spirit consumes the believer, overwhelming him or her with a desire to tell.

An Evangelistic Preaching Theory

Hamblin's theology of evangelism informs his theory of evangelistic preaching and provides it a solid foundation. Describing the connection between his theology and theory, Hamblin said, "Evangelistic preaching is demonstrative and interpretive of the theology of God, of what you know about God, how you understand God, and how you present God to

⁹⁰Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 90.

⁹¹Robert L. Hamblin, *The Spirit-Filled Trauma* (Nashville: Broadman, 1974), 133.

others."⁹² A person can see the association between Hamblin's theology and theory by observing his definition of evangelistic preaching.

The Definition of Evangelistic Preaching

In the "V. L. Stanfield Lectures on Preaching," Hamblin presented his own definition of preaching. He contended that preaching is "the God-called person going into the presence of God, finding out what God wants said, and saying it."⁹³ Within his definition, Hamblin sought to expose three general components of preaching: (1) the God-called person, (2) going into the presence of God, and (3) finding out what God wants said and saying it. These elements are necessary to all types of preaching but especially to evangelistic preaching: "Biblical evangelistic preaching is done by a God-called preacher who does it in a contemporary fashion by going to God now and finding out what is needed."⁹⁴

⁹²Hamblin, personal interview.

⁹³Robert L. Hamblin, "V. L. Stanfield Lectures on Preaching, Part 1," a lecture delivered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 17 September 2002 (CD).

⁹⁴Hamblin, personal interview.

From a general definition, Hamblin moved to a specific description of evangelistic preaching: "Evangelistic preaching is the proclamation in word, spirit, and deed of the good news about Christ."⁹⁵ Clearly, Hamblin's definition of evangelistic preaching mirrors his definition of evangelism. Even as Hamblin expanded his evangelistic preaching definition, he reflected his stance toward evangelism:

The gospel is that good news about God in Christ which has been placed in the Bible and has been given to the church to proclaim by the commission of God. Far more than verbal and human proclamation is implicated. God himself participates in the redemptive action of evangelism by reaching out to man to reveal himself personally. Never is the preacher in greater need for the fullness of the Holy Spirit than when he preaches the evangelistic sermon, and never is the Holy Spirit more desirous to fill the preacher than when he preaches evangelistically.⁹⁶

Again, Hamblin's expanded definition of evangelistic preaching is virtually a verbatim restatement of his discussion of evangelism. The similarities between

⁹⁵Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 1.

⁹⁶Robert L. Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," class lecture notes, located in researcher's personal library, Zachary, LA, 1.

Hamblin's definitions of evangelistic preaching and evangelism indicate that he clearly connected the two subjects.

The Necessity of Evangelistic Preaching

A basic presupposition of Hamblin's theory concerns the necessity for evangelistic preaching. Hamblin held that evangelistic preaching is essential in the present age. He emphatically affirmed the relevance of evangelistic preaching in the contemporary context and called on preachers to proclaim the gospel. According to him, the greatest need of the world is for people to experience new life in Christ. The only way to meet the need is through preachers declaring the evangelistic message: "It is imperative that we believe in the power of evangelistic preaching and that we preach evangelistic sermons. . . . God has indicated evangelistic preaching as the method of His choice for reaching the masses of people."⁹⁷ Through the vehicle of preaching, the evangelist delivers the good news to a lost world so that people can respond in faith and

⁹⁷Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 2-3.

experience salvation. Without the proclamation of the gospel, humanity faces a hopeless situation.

The Evangelistic Preacher

Before approaching issues like sermonic content and structure, Hamblin addressed the preacher of the evangelistic sermon. Specifically, he depicted the characteristics of an evangelistic preacher. These traits, he claimed, are vital in successful evangelistic preaching.⁹⁸

The first characteristic cited by Hamblin is genuineness. By this trait, Hamblin meant that the preacher is an authentic believer who experiences genuine salvation: "Any responsible leader in evangelism must know by experience that sins are forgiven by the atoning deed of Jesus Christ."⁹⁹ He advised the preacher, "Before preaching any evangelistic sermon the preacher needs to recall his own salvation experience. Recall it with clarity. If you have never done so, write your experience and then tell it

⁹⁸Ibid., 3.

⁹⁹Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 5.

to another person."¹⁰⁰ Through the recognition of his salvation, the preacher gains confidence in declaring the message of life. Indeed, he demonstrates passion, for he speaks out of his own experience, not simply about a theory.¹⁰¹

Hamblin suggested that the second quality of the evangelistic preacher involves his submission to the Holy Spirit. The preacher's acceptance of God's vocational call is evidence of his submission to the Spirit. Hamblin strongly believed that God specifically calls the preacher to engage in the proclamation of good news. While he agreed that God empowers the laity to do evangelism, he also held to the reality of a unique call that comes from God to preachers to proclaim the gospel.¹⁰² In Hamblin's opinion, the God-called person is most effective in preaching the

¹⁰⁰Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 3.

¹⁰¹Throughout the study, the researcher used the masculine pronoun to refer to the preacher because it seems most consistent with Hamblin's work. Although he never made an exclusive case for male preachers, Hamblin always used masculine terminology when speaking of the evangelistic preacher. See the following resources for examples: "Evangelistic Preaching: P607"; "Evangelism: 550"; and "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World."

¹⁰²Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 1."

gospel: "There is a power in the gospel itself that will sometimes bring success in evangelism even if it is not a God-called preacher doing it, but the most effective evangelistic preaching is done by those whom God has chosen to do it."¹⁰³

Moreover, Hamblin determined that a life surrendered to the Spirit allows the preacher to be equipped. The Holy Spirit strengthens the preacher physically and spiritually. Hamblin related, "The Holy Spirit is able to give the preacher ability beyond his ability. . . . He is the energy of the evangelistic sermon."¹⁰⁴ Through submitting to the Holy Spirit, the evangelistic preacher opens himself to the Spirit's empowering work.

A third characteristic of the evangelistic preacher revolves around the minister's perception of need. "Evangelistic sermons," Hamblin testified, "are preached by preachers who understand the need for them."¹⁰⁵ Simply stated, the preacher recognizes that people apart from

¹⁰³Hamblin, interview.

¹⁰⁴Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 4.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

Christ are lost and that they can be saved only through the gospel. Hamblin reasoned that an awareness of the world's need prompts the preacher to communicate the love of God in the evangelistic message.

The fourth feature of the evangelistic preacher is a lifestyle of faith in God. The concept of lifestyle complements Hamblin's idea of "proclamation in word, spirit, and deed." The preacher is comprehensive in his witness, both in testimony and in lifestyle. Hamblin quickly noted that this fact does not mean that the preacher is sinless. Rather, a lifestyle of faith in God denotes the deep humility of the preacher. As Hamblin indicated, the minister knows he must find forgiveness in Christ continually and that he must depend constantly upon the lordship of Christ.¹⁰⁶

The Message of the Evangelistic Sermon

Hamblin held that the message of evangelistic preaching comes as the God-called preacher enters the presence of God: "The preacher goes to the Lord and discovers what God wants to say to the hearers. . . . The

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 5.

evangelistic sermon . . . must come from a preacher who has lately been with the Lord and who is anxious to tell what God has to say."¹⁰⁷ The initial step to securing God's message entails entering into the presence of God through an intentional act. The evangelistic preacher approaches the Lord in the Lord's way by living in God's presence through confession, faith, and submission to his lordship. In his self-denial, the evangelistic preacher embraces a life that is usable to God and that is open to receive the specific message of the evangelistic sermon from the Lord.¹⁰⁸

As he enters into the presence of God, the evangelistic preacher obtains the message God prepares. Generally speaking, Hamblin understood the message of evangelistic preaching to be synonymous with the message of the Bible.¹⁰⁹ "What God wants said," he claimed, "comes from

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Robert L. Hamblin, "V. L. Stanfield Lectures on Preaching, Part 2," lecture delivered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 18 September 2002 (CD).

¹⁰⁹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 1.

His Word."¹¹⁰ The message of evangelistic preaching is the testimony of God rooted in the Scripture. Subsequently, the evangelist approaches the Word of God prayerfully with an open heart to find the evangelistic message.¹¹¹

Hamblin noted also that the Bible's central message is Jesus Christ, which in turn means that the core message of evangelistic preaching is Christ. Repeatedly, he insisted that the evangelistic preacher preach Jesus.¹¹² He wrote, "All evangelistic preaching must tell the good news of Christ. . . . The powerful elements of truth in the good news are the revelation of Christ as God's Son, the person Christ, and the works of Christ."¹¹³

Evangelistic preaching, in Hamblin's view, first declares the identity of Jesus and proclaims him as the Son of God who has come to save sinners. The Lord's redemptive

¹¹⁰Robert L. Hamblin, "V. L. Stanfield Lectures on Preaching, Part 3," lecture delivered at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 19 September 2002 (CD).

¹¹¹Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 3."

¹¹²Hamblin once said that the preacher should "have Jesus on his heart, on his mind, and on his lips" ("Gurney Lectures, Part 3").

¹¹³Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 5-6.

work on the cross and his demonstrative resurrection accomplished complete salvation. As a result, evangelistic preaching encompasses both Christ's crucifixion and resurrection.¹¹⁴

Hamblin claimed that the Christ event, and subsequently the evangelistic sermon, demonstrate the true image of God. The living God created all people in his own image and exercises his control over the universe continually. The God proclaimed in evangelism is just and merciful; he is the one who provides salvation through his Son, Christ.¹¹⁵

The message of evangelistic preaching also embodies the story of salvation. For Hamblin, biblical evangelistic preaching offers individuals the solution to their dilemma of sin and calls them to genuine faith and repentance. The gospel meets the primary need of people who are desperately lost apart from Christ. Hamblin commented, "The message of hope for the lost is the content of evangelistic preaching. Lost sinners are presented the saving truth of the person

¹¹⁴Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 5-10.

¹¹⁵Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 10.

and works of Christ as their hope for deliverance. This truth must be given by a preacher who is in the loving spirit of God."¹¹⁶

Not only was Hamblin confident that the gospel comprises the message of the evangelistic sermon, but he also held that every sermon encapsulates the good news. He recounted his practice: "When I was a young preacher, my pastor advised me to make sure that every sermon I preached contained the gospel. He said that even when preaching to Christians, there would be excitement when they learned the good news of salvation. He also added that someone might need salvation. All of my life, I have made sure that the gospel is in each of my sermons."¹¹⁷

Hamblin reaffirmed his commitment to this practice in seminary. In an exchange between him and his primary preaching professor, he declared his commitment to preaching the main objective of the text but also stated that he must address the "side objectives" of the passage as well. His professor disputed the practice and related the appropriate time to proclaim those things. Hamblin

¹¹⁶Ibid., 12.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

responded by suggesting that every time is a time for certain subjects, especially the sharing of the gospel.¹¹⁸ No matter the sermon's main objective, Hamblin considered the gospel of Jesus Christ to be imperative to the evangelistic message.

The Text of the Evangelistic Sermon

Since the Bible possesses what "God wanted said," Hamblin proposed that the evangelistic preacher began his sermon preparation with the text of Scripture. Describing his preparation, he simply said, "I started with the text."¹¹⁹ He further outlined his evangelistic sermon process in the following manner:

1. Study your text.
2. Decide on the essence of the text.
3. Draw the subject from this.
4. Develop the subject under two or more subtitles or points.
5. Develop each of these subtitles as much as possible.
6. Find and arrange illustrations for your main subtitles.

¹¹⁸Hamblin, personal interview.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

7. Outline your introduction.
8. Write your proposition.
9. Write your conclusion.
10. Let it jell.¹²⁰

With the sermon anchored in the text, the evangelistic preacher speaks God's message to his audience with assurance.

According to Hamblin, the text for an evangelistic sermon ought to present the gospel. The passage recalls the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection.¹²¹ This stance did not mean that Hamblin was advocating the preaching of only New Testament texts. Rather, Hamblin believed that preachers could use Old Testament passages evangelistically: "The premise of the Old Testament is to reveal God. Therefore, in most texts, you can go straight to who God is and what God does through Christ because the Old Testament is pointing to what he was going to do, what he is doing even then."¹²² Whether taken from an Old

¹²⁰Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 45-6.

¹²¹Ibid., 15.

¹²²Hamblin, personal interview.

Testament or New Testament pericope, the evangelistic text reflects God's redemptive activity and work through Christ.

In order to choose the evangelistic text for the specific moment, Hamblin suggested that the preacher must rely continually upon the Bible and the Holy Spirit: "The evangelistic preacher needs to live in the Word of God. When truth from the Word becomes a point of his spirit, then he has found an evangelistic text. The Holy Spirit will guide in the selection and development of the evangelistic text."¹²³ The preacher needs to immerse himself in the biblical witness and become sensitive to the Spirit's direction. Through such practices, the evangelist finds the text for the specific sermon.

After locating the text, Hamblin resolved that the evangelist studied the text. He regarded the development of the text as the most important part of the preparation of the evangelistic preacher. Specifically, he called for the application of hermeneutics to the passage so that the preacher might determine the meaning of the text in its context. Again and again, Hamblin warned of eisegesis and

¹²³Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 13-4.

endorsed exegesis. He argued that the evangelist draws the sermon from the text instead of reading his meaning into it.¹²⁴

To accomplish the task, Hamblin suggested an examination of the text with regard to its original language. In addition, he encouraged the preacher to look toward reliable commentaries for help. Through these resources, the evangelistic preacher discovers the intent of the text and eventually understands how it enters into the redemptive story of Christ.¹²⁵

Hamblin insisted that the investigation of the evangelistic text does not demand hermeneutical principles alone. Moreover, subjective aspect to the study of the passage is evident. The preacher, Hamblin affirmed, has to encounter the text personally: "The text must become a part of the preacher. The sermon is truth passing through the life of the preacher. The text must grip the preacher and stir his heart."¹²⁶ Both the selection and the study of the text require adequate time from the evangelist. The time

¹²⁴Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 24-5.

¹²⁵Hamblin, personal interview.

¹²⁶Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 15.

provides opportunity for the evangelistic preacher to interact with the passage personally and internally.

The Subject of the Evangelistic Sermon

From the text, the preacher fashions the subject of the sermon. Hamblin explained that the subject defines the theme that the evangelist wishes to develop in the evangelistic message. The subject grows out of the selected text's theme and forms a unifying factor around which the sermon could be built.¹²⁷

Hamblin cited several characteristics of an effective evangelistic subject. For example, he promoted a subject that is direct, definite, clear, and brief. The subject needs a specific aim, Hamblin proposed, that communicates directly to the audience. Usually the subject of an evangelistic sermon is doctrinal. The preacher takes the specific doctrine and words it in a manner to capture the timeless principle or truth of the text. In whatever case, the hearer ought to be able to distinguish the subject clearly. Also, Hamblin deemed it necessary to frame the subject in way to entice listeners to respond to the

¹²⁷Ibid., 32.

gospel.¹²⁸ The evangelistic preacher gains his audience's attention through a well-developed subject and evokes interest in the overall text.

The Functional Elements of the Evangelistic Sermon

Identifying the subject of the evangelistic sermon allows the preacher a focal point from which he develops the functional elements of the sermon. Hamblin identified three functional elements he thought to be essential to the organization of the sermon: application, argumentation, and illustration.¹²⁹

The first component, application, is particularly significant to Hamblin. In fact, he regarded application to be the primary element of the message of evangelistic preaching.¹³⁰ He related, "The context in which people are going to be saved is today."¹³¹ Because of this fact, he

¹²⁸Ibid., 32-3.

¹²⁹Ibid., 36. Although Hamblin used explanation extensively in his sermons, he omitted that classical functional element from the theory set forth in his notes.

¹³⁰Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 36-7.

¹³¹Hamblin, personal interview.

believed the message must be applied to the contemporary situation.

Consistent with his definition of evangelistic preaching, Hamblin felt that application goes beyond the pulpit. He assumed that if the preacher were to direct application to the lives of people, he first must demonstrate evangelism in his own life. The evangelistic preacher accomplishes this application by personally witnessing, training others to witness, and preaching the good news.¹³²

Within the actual sermon itself, the application exhibits a personal and persuasive character. Hamblin decided the sermon's application interacts with the hearer's own life. The effective preacher relates the truth of the good news to the events and issues of the contemporary world. Furthermore, Hamblin determined that the preacher applies the gospel persuasively. The evangelistic preacher, in his view, does not deliver a lecture or an essay. Rather, God ordains him to plead for a verdict. By applying the gospel to the lives of the

¹³²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 37.

audience in a fervent way, the preacher seeks to persuade the listeners to repent and to trust in Christ.¹³³

The second functional element of the evangelistic sermon is argumentation. Hamblin defined argumentation as the component of the sermon which "provides rational proof for a particular statement."¹³⁴ According to Hamblin, argumentation is the area in which much evangelistic preaching falls short. He insisted that the evangelistic sermon be logical and reasonable in its argument. He also suggested that the preacher make his case in a positive nature and that his argument be biblically based. In essence, Hamblin envisioned that the evangelistic preacher logically would develop his argument as to convince his hearers of the great doctrines of the Bible.¹³⁵

Illustration is the third element of evangelistic preaching given by Hamblin. "Illustrations," he wrote, "are

¹³³Ibid., 37-8.

¹³⁴Ibid., 40.

¹³⁵Ibid., 40-1.

windows that give light to the truth that is being preached."¹³⁶ Moreover, they expose the truth of the message to the listener.

Hamblin determined that illustration is important to the sermon for a variety of reasons. For instance, illustrations appeal to the imagination, give clarity and vitality to the message, and help maintain the hearers' attention. Perhaps the most significant impact of illustration, according to Hamblin, deals with the audience's understanding: "They [illustrations] are important in evangelistic preaching because many lost people are not familiar with the Bible and Christian doctrine."¹³⁷ Illustrations reflect the message of the gospel in an understandable way.

Hamblin outlined some general guidelines for incorporating illustrations into the sermon. First, he reminded the preacher to keep illustrations subordinate to the truth: "Evangelistic preaching is not a string of stories. It is the presentation of the good news of

¹³⁶Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 15.

¹³⁷Ibid.

salvation from the Word of God."¹³⁸ Illustrations, he argued, should not overshadow the gospel message. Instead of using too many illustrations, the preacher must select appropriate illustrations compatible with his aim.

Hamblin also asserted that illustrations should be factual, relevant, and apparent. He contended that effective illustrations consist of true representations, not discrepancies, and that they show relevance to the specific audience at hand. The preacher does not explain illustrations in themselves but includes illustrations readily understood by the audience and whose relationship to the subject is apparent.¹³⁹

The evangelistic preacher draws upon resources to find the exact illustration he needs. Hamblin offered the following list of sources: the Bible, daily life, history, travel, literature, science, art, and nature.¹⁴⁰ Of these sources, he determined daily life to be the best resource and claimed that illustrations based on personal experience are the most effective for evangelistic preaching.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 42-3.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 43.

Hamblin cited humor as another useful tool for illustrating the message, although he cautioned the preacher in his utilization of humor. The evangelist rejects every offensive aspect of humor and embraces appropriate examples that naturally flow from his personality. While Hamblin believed that some preachers are gifted with the ability to use humor, he also held that an individual could work to develop a suitable style.¹⁴¹

The Structure of the Evangelistic Sermon

Although necessary, the functional elements of the sermon depend upon each other. The evangelist arranges them together for an effective presentation. In Hamblin's theory, a good structure is essential to a good evangelistic sermon: "It is important that people hear evangelistic sermons. Their salvation hangs in the balance. They will hear you better and remember what you said if the arrangement is done well."¹⁴² In addition, Hamblin considered structure indispensable to effective delivery.

¹⁴¹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16.

¹⁴²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 45.

Arranging the sermon in a specific way aids the preacher in recalling and in sharing the message.

Basically, Hamblin arranged the evangelistic sermon into three formal elements: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Of these, he chose to develop the body of the message first. As indicated by his sermon process, Hamblin developed his subject into two or more subtitles or points. Although he recognized the possibility of a one-point sermon, he preferred to structure the body of his sermon around at least two points. If possible, these divisions flowed straight from the text.¹⁴³ Hamblin noted that the structure could assume a topical, textual, or expository form.¹⁴⁴ The form itself was not the issue: "We don't have to have a definition of what kind of sermon this is for people to get saved."¹⁴⁵ What Hamblin endorsed is not a specific form but rather arrangement that advances the

¹⁴³Hamblin did not believe that the preacher had to draw every subtitle from the passage. Hamblin, personal interview.

¹⁴⁴Hamblin defined the topical sermon as one that developed a theme using multiple texts, the textual sermon as one that expounded upon a theme using one single passage, and the expository sermon as one that addressed the subject of the text verse by verse.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

message. He called upon the evangelistic preacher to organize the main points of the sermon symmetrically in a progressive series. With this arrangement of the body, he concluded that the preacher communicated clearly the truth of Scripture.

After the body, Hamblin turned his attention to the introduction. He deliberately developed his introduction after he organized the body because he believed one first must understand the topic he is going to introduce.¹⁴⁶ Once he knows his subject, the preacher is then ready to relate it to his audience. The introduction addresses the subject and draws attention to the text and theme. The evangelist accomplishes this purpose in a brief, natural, and pertinent fashion.

Following the completion of the introduction, Hamblin wrote his sermon's conclusion or invitation. According to him, the evangelistic sermon's conclusion and invitation are the same.¹⁴⁷ No distinction existed between the two. Defining the invitation, he wrote, "The gospel invitation is the invitation given by the Holy Spirit through a human

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

agent who has presented the gospel and offered a person or persons an opportunity to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is an effort to move the human will and to change lives by the grace of God."¹⁴⁸ Hamblin strongly held that the truth of the gospel demands a response, and he believed that the invitation allows the hearer to make his or her choice.

The significance of the invitation necessitates intentional preparation, both spiritually and physically. Spiritually, the evangelistic preacher readies himself through prayer and through submission to the Holy Spirit. Hamblin expressed, "This awesome task [giving an invitation] can be done only by a person who has prayed until the assurance of the fullness of God's Spirit has become evident."¹⁴⁹ Physically, the preacher prepares for the invitation in several ways. For example, Hamblin proposed that the evangelist prepare for the invitation by explaining the good news of Christ before extending the sermon's invitation. Also, he determined that the

¹⁴⁸Robert L. Hamblin, "The Gospel Invitation in Today's World," *The Theological Educator* 57 (spring 1998): 22.

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 29.

evangelistic preacher planned how he would proceed with the invitation to his audience and informed the support staff of his plan. Through Spirit-filled preparation, the preacher issues effective invitations.¹⁵⁰

Hamblin warned the evangelistic preacher against manipulative tactics in giving the invitation: "The invitation must be given with integrity. The purpose is not to persuade people to walk down the aisle; it is to invite people to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. The person giving the invitation should never take advantage of people."¹⁵¹ At no time should the evangelist employ questionable methods or techniques in eliciting a response from the listener.

Instead, Hamblin called upon the preacher to be positive, direct, and clear. He insisted that the evangelist tell people clearly the response he expects them to make which includes accepting Christ as Savior and Lord, confessing Christ, and being baptized. A negative idea, in Hamblin's view, has no place in a successful invitation. The preacher's goal involves the reinforcement of a

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 29-30.

positive response to the gospel that results in submission to Christ.¹⁵²

The evangelist uses several methods to accomplish this purpose. Hamblin identified approaches such as altar calls, standing, or raising hands as examples of viable invitational methods. Regardless of the technique chosen, Hamblin contended that no break should occur between the body and the invitation. Anything that would disrupt the natural flow of the invitation (such as the announcement of a hymn) ought to be avoided. In Hamblin's opinion, "The invitation should move smoothly from the facts of the gospel to an appeal to the soul."¹⁵³

Hamblin commented that a transitional question helps to bridge the body and the invitation together, especially a question concerning Christ's forgiveness. Through such a question, the preacher moved smoothly into an appeal for a response. Hamblin posited that the most effective appeal of the evangelist is one of forgiveness and that an effective

¹⁵²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 18.

¹⁵³Hamblin, "The Gospel Invitation," 22.

transition to the invitation is a question concerning forgiveness.¹⁵⁴

The Delivery of the Evangelistic Sermon

Although he did not write extensively about the issue, Hamblin offered a few observations about the delivery of evangelistic sermons. First, he emphasized the individuality of the evangelistic preacher in the delivery process: "Delivery is part of personality, and God called you because He wants you."¹⁵⁵ As truth passed through personality, Hamblin believed each evangelistic preacher develops his own style of delivery.

While it allowed flexibility within delivery, the stance does not mean that Hamblin opposed general guidelines for delivery. In fact, he endorsed various delivery practices. One of those methods is the preacher's extemporaneous delivery without notes. Hamblin argued that using no notes encourages the evangelistic preacher to prepare better and enables him to build a rapport with his audience. As to the establishment of this rapport, he

¹⁵⁴Hamblin, personal interview.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

determined that delivering the sermon without notes allows for better eye contact between the preacher and his congregation, which in turn advances the relationship between speaker and hearer. Hamblin suggested that the listener more readily accepts the sermon as a message from the preacher's heart if no notes are used.¹⁵⁶

Another practice Hamblin advocated is the use of simple language. He contended that the evangelistic preacher should employ words and phrases easily understood by his audience. He discouraged the preacher from using flowery language or difficult theological terminology. From Hamblin's perspective, short sentences and simple vocabulary are adequate and effective for evangelistic preaching.¹⁵⁷

Hamblin recognized that the preacher's use of voice complements his use of understandable language. He called upon the evangelist to speak clearly so that the hearer could understand and process the message. He also noted the significance of maintaining an appropriate tone throughout

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16-7.

the message. For example, Hamblin challenged the preacher, "If you preach on hell, don't act like you're proud they're going there."¹⁵⁸ Through the proper use of voice, the evangelistic preacher enhances the communication of his message.

With these guidelines stated, Hamblin cited perhaps the most important rule of delivery: "Don't be boring!"¹⁵⁹ The evangelistic preacher, in Hamblin's estimation, demonstrates his excitement about God, about who he was, and about what he did. The evangelist lets his excitement show forth in all aspects of his presentation. Only then can he share the good news effectively.

¹⁵⁸Hamblin, personal interview.

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

HAMBLIN'S EVANGELISTIC PREACHING PRACTICE

In order to understand Hamblin's preaching practice, one must analyze his sermons. Such an analysis can be accomplished by utilizing a research instrument aimed at discerning the basic characteristics of Hamblin's preaching. As noted, the researcher employed two instruments based upon Ramesh Richard's guide to preparing evangelistic sermons.¹

Research Instruments

The first research tool concerned the theological content of the sermon. The researcher developed this instrument from Richard's discussion of the theological framework for evangelistic preaching.² The tool centered on both humanity's lostness and God's provision of salvation. The second instrument, which addressed structure and

¹Richard, 60-2, 234-5.

²See appendix 1.

delivery, embodied Richard's Textual Evangelistic Sermon Evaluation Form.³ Richard used this form to evaluate the sermon organization and style of his own students in his evangelistic preaching courses.

A Research Tool Based upon Richard's
Theological Approach

*The Evangelistic Stance
of the Trinity*

According to Richard, the theological framework of evangelistic preaching originated in the work of the Trinity: "Evangelistic preaching continues the saving initiatives of the Trinity on behalf of the unbeliever. We thoroughly ground such preaching in the doctrine, outlook, and relations of the Godhead in terms of the lost."⁴ Within evangelistic preaching, Richard believed that the Father's, Son's, and Holy Spirit's relationship to salvation finds expression.

As to the first relationship, Richard contended that the Father's work in salvation revolves around his two basic traits: holiness and love. Together, these

³See appendix 2.

⁴Richard, 60.

characteristics form God's core attribute. Richard referred to this attribute as holy-love and considered it necessary in evangelistic proclamation. The Father's holiness separates him from humanity, resulting in humanity's judgment. On the other hand, the Father's love is directed toward all people as he seeks reconciliation. Evangelistic preaching encompasses these realities by proclaiming humanity's distance from God and how God bridges the eternal distance through his one and only Son, Jesus.⁵

Christ's relationship to salvation complements the Father's work. Through the Son, the Father provides the world with an opportunity for reconciliation. Richard explained, "The *Son's* relation to human salvation is quadrangular, or to use an algebraic term, quadrinomial (four terms): (1) the uniqueness of his divine-human personhood, (2) the exclusivity of the condition of belief on him, (3) the necessity and sufficiency of his work on the cross, and (4) the universality of his invitation to all people."⁶ Evangelistic preaching, in Richard's opinion,

⁵Ibid., 60-1.

⁶Ibid., 61.

describes the Son's relationship to salvation in these terms either implicitly or explicitly.

The final person of the Trinity also plays a role in salvation that deserves attention in the evangelistic sermon. Richard determined that the Holy Spirit works in salvation to convict, convert, and confirm. In Richard's own words, "The Holy Spirit's engaging sound strikes salvation's fundamental chord before a person's salvation in conviction, during his salvation in conversion, and after his salvation in confirmation."⁷ Through the evangelistic message, the preacher declares the Spirit's work in salvation.

From Richard's presentation of the Trinity's role in salvation, the researcher developed three major theological questions concerning the Trinity to be used in examining the theological content of Hamblin's sermons: (1) Does the preacher highlight God's basic attributes of holiness and love? (2) Does the preacher explain the Son's relationship to human salvation? (3) Does the preacher explain (implicitly or explicitly) the Holy Spirit's ministry in salvation? In addition, the researcher formulated

⁷Ibid.

sub-questions under each major question in order to aid in the analysis.

*The Evangelistic Situation
of Humanity*

Not only did Richard consider the Trinitarian work essential in evangelistic proclamation, but he also felt compelled to include the evangelistic situation of humanity as well. In his view, every individual is lost without Christ: "While election to salvation is based on God's free and gracious choice of heirs to salvation, God practices an eternal embargo that holds people responsible for their preferences."⁸ By rejecting Christ, a person is eternally and perpetually lost.

The truth of the gospel, according to Richard, involves the fact that people can be saved. A person's refusal to receive salvation relates more to his or her unwillingness to accept than to God's unwillingness to provide. God indeed works in people's lives to bring about salvation. After God's activity, the individual responds in faith, receiving salvation as a child receives a gift.

⁸Ibid.

Evangelistic preaching entails a call to embrace Christ as Lord and Savior in genuine faith.⁹

From Richard's presentation, the researcher developed three major theological questions related to the human situation: (1) Does the preacher proclaim that people are eternally and perpetually lost without the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ? (2) Does the preacher convey the truth that people are savable but unwilling to be saved? (3) Does the preacher declare that people must embrace the Lord Jesus as the only God who saves them from their lostness? Together with the questions about the evangelistic stance of the Trinity, these questions concerning the evangelistic situation of humanity form the research instrument used to analyze Hamblin's evangelistic sermons for their theological content.

Textual Evangelistic Sermon Evaluation Form

As stated above, the researcher employed Richard's "Textual Evangelistic Sermon Evaluation Form" in distinguishing characteristic traits of structure and delivery within Hamblin's sermons. The form was divided

⁹Ibid.

into four areas: textual faithfulness, content and organization, style and delivery, and relevance. The first two areas related to structure, while the latter two corresponded primarily to delivery. Using Richard's form, the researcher discerned certain features of Hamblin's preaching practice.

Textual Faithfulness

For Richard, the evangelistic preacher needs biblical authority behind his sermon, and the textual evangelistic sermon is an effective means of communicating that authority. He called upon those evangelists using the form to anchor their sermon in the text. He also exhorted them to reflect the original intent of the text in their message. By expounding the true nature of the passage, the evangelist demonstrates faithfulness to the author's intent and proclaims the authentic revelation of God's good news.¹⁰

Content and Organization

With his sermon rooted in the biblical text, the preacher organizes his message appropriately. Richard evaluated the organization of the textual evangelistic

¹⁰Ibid., 104-10.

sermon based upon its introduction, central proposition, development, and conclusion. In the introduction, Richard encouraged the preacher to express the need for the sermon and to gain the hearer's attention. Additionally, the evangelist states his purpose while orienting the sermon to his theme. At times, the preacher might include even a subintroduction (background and context).¹¹

Richard felt that a good introduction is important to the sermon, but he determined that a relevant central proposition of the sermon was equally significant. The central proposition of the sermon, according to Richard, includes the theme and the thrust of the sermon. He held that this purpose statement needs to be framed in a way that would connect with the unbelieving listener, and in a deductive sermon it should be stated in the subintroduction.¹²

A relevant, well-stated central proposition of the sermon helps the preacher transition from the introduction to the body of the message. From there the evangelist advances his purpose by systematically developing the body

¹¹Ibid., 204.

¹²Ibid., 128, 234.

of the sermon. As Richard related an effective development of the body entails the inclusion of an outline. While alliteration is helpful, Richard did not believe it essential. Instead, he endorsed simple, memorable outlines that are structured clearly and proportionately.¹³ He also directed the preacher to summarize his main points in full sentences in an effort to advance clarity.

At the conclusion of the sermon, the preacher reminds the audience of the sermon's purpose and theme, and he provides a summary. Also, Richard believed that the conclusion includes the invitation. The preacher clearly communicates his intentions and calls for a response. In particular, the evangelist provides an opportunity for the hearer to place his or her personal trust in Christ. With a clear invitation, the sermonic structure is complete.¹⁴

Style and Delivery

Besides the issues of organization, Richard was concerned also with the style and delivery of the evangelistic sermon. He felt that style and delivery aid in the preacher's communication of the evangelistic message.

¹³Ibid., 234.

¹⁴Ibid.

In particular, he evaluated subjects like the preacher's use of voice, gestures, and presence. With regard to voice, Richard noted the speed, volume, pitch, and expressiveness. As to delivery and style, he examined a comprehensive list of elements: grammar, word choice, articulation, straightforwardness, facial expressions, gestures, bodily movement, rapport, eye contact, personality, and mood.¹⁵

Richard included the use of support materials in this section as well. By support materials, he meant primarily illustrations. These illustrations could encompass personal experience, humor, or simple explanation of biblical terms. Whatever form they assume, all support material is to be adequate, appropriate, and credible.¹⁶

Relevance

In Richard's short section on relevance, he simply stated the necessity of a presentation that creates interest within the hearer. In particular, Richard concluded that the evangelistic sermon contains a "concrete understanding of the relevance of Jesus' salvation and how

¹⁵Ibid., 234-5.

¹⁶Ibid.

this truth may be appropriate."¹⁷ To the measure that the sermon reflects such an understanding, the evangelistic preacher is successful. Therefore, Hamblin's sermons were examined to see whether the evangelist provided a relevant understanding of Christ's work of salvation.

Through the use of Richard's textual evangelistic sermon evaluation form, Hamblin's sermons were evaluated for their structure and delivery. In fact, a litany of elements that relate to organization and style were considered. Along with the research tool associated with Richard's theological framework, the evaluation form provided an instrument aimed at discerning Hamblin's preaching practice.

An Analysis of Selected Sermons

Hamblin's Theological Content

The Evangelistic Stance of the Trinity

Using the research instrument based upon Richard's theological approach to evangelistic preaching, the researcher analyzed fifty selected sermons from Hamblin's preaching. The first major theological question raised was,

¹⁷Ibid., 235.

"Does the preacher highlight God's basic attributes of holiness and love?" To answer this general question, four sub-questions were asked of each sermon.

First, the sub-question posed, "Does the preacher indicate that God's holiness keeps sinners from Him?" In every reviewed sermon, the answer was yes. Hamblin consistently declared the holiness of God. For example, in his sermon entitled "Living in Wisdom," he stated, "We do not speak of Him as human. . . . He is a holy God, sinless, perfect."¹⁸ God's holiness, his moral separation from humanity, creates a barrier between the divine and the human. Hamblin was conscious of this truth and proclaimed it throughout all of the selected sermons.

Second, the sub-question asked involved the concept of God's judgment: "Does the preacher remind listeners that God will judge all humanity?" The answers to the question were generally positive. In thirty-five of the fifty sermons, Hamblin explicitly mentioned God's pending judgment upon all humanity. Often he reminded his audience that sin brings physical and spiritual consequences, and he occasionally employed vivid language to describe the

¹⁸Robert L. Hamblin, "Living in Wisdom," sermon based on Eph. 5:15-33, videocassette.

punishment. In one instance, Hamblin warned his hearers that spiritual death results in the punishment of hell, while in another message he exhorted them to avoid "the flames of hell."¹⁹

Third, a sub-question addressed God's love for all humanity. As mentioned, Richard contended that God is holy and loving. Therefore, he held that the evangelistic sermon captures both attributes. Within the selected sermons, the preacher proclaimed God's love of salvation in every message. Hamblin determined that God loves sinners, even those who commit the "ugliest of perversions."²⁰ He also knew that such love translated into action as the Father sent his Son for the salvation of the world.²¹ That demonstrative love has a transformative effect upon the life of the believer at salvation and beyond. Through the Son, an individual experienced authentic life.²²

¹⁹See Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 6:15-23, videocassette; and sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21, videocassette.

²⁰Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32, videocassette.

²¹Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on 2 Thess. 2:1-12, videocassette.

²²Hamblin, sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21.

Fourth, a sub-question concerning the Father's relationship to salvation was framed in the following way: "Does the preacher point out the unbeliever's spiritual distance from God and how God has bridged the eternal distance?" Again, Hamblin highlighted this distance and how it was bridged through Jesus Christ in all of his sermons. He contended that the gap between God and humanity occurred in the very beginning of time with the sin of Adam and Eve.²³ In that act of rebellion, every human sinned against God, and humanity as whole turned away from him.²⁴ The ruptured relationship was repaired thus in the work of Christ.

Hamblin asserted that unbelievers are reconciled to the Father through the Son.²⁵ He appealed to his hearers by saying to them, "You are a sinner, and you have to come to God."²⁶ Throughout his sermons, Hamblin emphasized the

²³Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:1-7, videocassette.

²⁴Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 13:13-25, videocassette.

²⁵Robert L. Hamblin, "The Era of Grace," sermon based on Eph. 3:1-6, videocassette.

²⁶Robert L. Hamblin, "Are You Faking It?" sermon based on Gal. 6:1-10, videocassette.

distance between God and his human subjects while also stressing how Jesus bridged that gap.

Based upon these findings, Hamblin did highlight God's basic attributes of holiness and love. In three out of the four sub-questions, Hamblin followed Richard's practice of presenting the Father's relationship to salvation. In the second sub-question, the evangelist presented God's judgment in 70 percent of his sermons. Considered together, these results indicate that Hamblin made a practice of communicating the Father's holy-love attribute to his audience.

The second major theological question which concerned Jesus' role in redemption was, "Does the preacher explain the Son's relationship to salvation?" Again, four sub-questions were probed in order to determine Hamblin's practice: (1) Does the preacher underscore the divine-human personhood of Christ? (2) Does the preacher present salvation as exclusive to those individuals who believe on the Son? (3) Does the preacher highlight the necessity and sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross? (4) Does the preacher demonstrate the universality of Christ's invitation to salvation?

With regard to the first sub-question, Hamblin always underscored both the divine and the human nature of Christ. At times, he explicitly cited the divine and human nature of the Son. He reminded the hearers that Jesus was "God with us" and that the Lord had taken on human flesh.²⁷ In other sermons, Hamblin implicitly described Christ's nature. For example, he might not use the term *divine*, but he would suggest that Jesus be worshipped or would designate him as the "Son of God."²⁸ Despite the manner, he spoke of Jesus' divine-human nature in every message.

Moreover, Hamblin proclaimed that salvation came exclusively through Christ (an issue addressed in the second sub-question). In all of the selected sermons, the evangelist declared that people are saved by trusting in Jesus alone. Hamblin resolved, "Life is in the Lord Jesus Christ. No one else can save you . . . but the crucified Christ. . . . Only he can take us to heaven."²⁹ This

²⁷For examples, see Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Luke 1:26-38, videocassette; sermon based on Acts 6:8-15, videocassette; and sermon based on Acts 13:13-25.

²⁸Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on 2 Thess. 3:6-18, videocassette.

²⁹Hamblin, "Are You Faking It?"

exclusive stance characterized Hamblin's preaching practice.

Analysis of Hamblin's selected sermons revealed that Hamblin constantly highlighted the necessity and sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross. Hamblin labeled the crucifixion as the center of Christianity and claimed that Jesus came to die on the cross, to be crucified.³⁰ Even when the major theme of the sermon revolved around issues like living in the Spirit and prayer, the preacher included the subject of Christ and his work on the cross.³¹ Accordingly, the third sub-question was answered yes in every sermon.

Concerning the fourth sub-question in this section, Hamblin overwhelmingly demonstrated the universality of Christ's invitation to salvation. Repeatedly, the preacher declared that God's salvation is open to "anyone at any

³⁰Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 5:27-42, videocassette; and Robert L. Hamblin, "Real Salvation," sermon based on Gal. 3:1-14, videocassette.

³¹For examples, see Robert L. Hamblin, "Living in God's Spirit," sermon based upon Gal. 5:16-26, videocassette; and Robert L. Hamblin, "A Prayer for God's People," sermon based upon Eph. 3:14-21, videocassette.

time in any place."³² He understood God's plan to encompass the taking of the gospel to the whole world.³³ Hamblin believed that the Lord personally testified, "My salvation is for every person."³⁴ In each of the selected sermons, he encapsulated this testimony.

Through his sermons, Hamblin consistently explained the Son's relationship to human salvation. In fact, he made a practice of underscoring Christ's redemptive task in his evangelistic preaching. Every sermon examined exhibited the same characteristic message of Jesus' work of salvation and sacrifice.

The third major theological question developed from Richard's work involved the third person of the Trinity. The question posed was, "Does the preacher explain (implicitly or explicitly) the Holy Spirit's ministry in

³²This statement is echoed in the following sermons by Hamblin: "Era of Grace"; sermon based on Acts 15:1-21, videocassette; "A Prayer for God's People"; sermon based on Acts 2:14-41, videocassette; "John: The Prophetic Predecessor," sermon based on Luke 1:6, 14, 66, 76-79, et al., videocassette; and "The Master's Revelation," sermon based on Matthew 24 and 25, videocassette.

³³Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 13:13-25.

³⁴Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 2:1-13, videocassette.

salvation?" Three theological sub-questions were developed in order to probe the larger question.

The initial sub-question dealt with the Holy Spirit's work in convicting the unbeliever of his or her sin. An examination of the selected sermons demonstrated that every message either explicitly or implicitly pointed to the Holy Spirit's convicting power. According to Hamblin, people do not turn to faith by human effort alone.³⁵ Instead, the Holy Spirit calls individuals to God; he tenderizes their hearts through conviction.³⁶ Hamblin explained throughout his sermons that the Holy Spirit is responsible for convicting the unbeliever of his or her sins.

In Hamblin's opinion, the Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever and converts him or her to salvation. The second sub-question connected the concept of conviction with the Spirit. Because Richard suggested that the Holy Spirit works in the actual conversion of the unbeliever, Hamblin's sermons were analyzed for evidence of similar beliefs. Again, in every sermon, Hamblin mentioned the converting work of the Spirit. The preacher argued that the unbeliever

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Hamblin, "John: The Prophetic Predecessor."

experiences a spiritual birth and that he or she becomes immersed in the Holy Spirit.³⁷

The third sub-question related to the work of the Spirit after he births the new believer and specifically concerned the confirming ministry of the Holy Spirit. In each message, Hamblin exhibited sensitivity to the continuing work of the Spirit in the believer's life. Hamblin highlighted the Spirit's empowering activity in every selected sermon. For instance, he stated that the Holy Spirit strengthens the believer and enables him or her to perform the Lord's work.³⁸ As Hamblin related, the Spirit is the pledge and assurance of salvation.³⁹

These observations about the theological sub-questions concerning the Holy Spirit confirmed that Hamblin explained the Holy Spirit's ministry in salvation. The affirmative answers to every sub-question communicate a positive response to the major theological question. In other words, Hamblin's expression of the convicting, converting, and

³⁷Hamblin, sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21.

³⁸Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10, videocassette; "A Prayer for God's People"; and sermon based on Acts 2:1-13.

³⁹Robert L. Hamblin, "Strength in the Lord," sermon based on Eph. 6:10-24.

confirming work of the Spirit indicates that he explained the full ministry of the Spirit in his preaching.

With the foregoing evidence as his basis, the researcher determined that Hamblin's preaching practice exemplified Richard's "evangelistic stance of the Trinity." In his evangelistic proclamation, Hamblin announced the roles of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in human salvation. He explained the Father's holy-love attribute, the Son's person and mission, and the Spirit's ministry. Indeed, Hamblin portrayed Richard's Trinitarian perspective.

*The Evangelistic Situation
of Humanity*

Closely associated with the Trinity's work in salvation is the human situation that requires salvation. As previously stated, Richard identified the evangelistic situation of humanity as a component of evangelistic preaching. From Richard's discussion of the subject, three major theological questions were developed and used to analyze Hamblin's selected sermons for his explanation of the human condition.

The first question was, "Does the preacher proclaim that people are eternally and perpetually lost without the

salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ?" With reference to the question, Hamblin did declare all individuals hopelessly lost. Every sermon contained an aspect of this truth, exemplified by Hamblin's sermon on Rom. 1:18-32. In the message, Hamblin claimed that all people face the consequences of their sin and deserve punishment.⁴⁰ Apart from Christ, every person is eternally and perpetually lost.

Despite the grim scenario, Hamblin explained that humanity is savable. He remarked that salvation comes to all who believe.⁴¹ This reality was the subject of the second major theological question: "Does the preacher convey the truth that people are 'savable' but unwilling to be saved?" In the selected sermons, Hamblin consistently described not only the "savable" character of humanity but also humanity's unwillingness to be saved. Hamblin described humanity's refusal in various ways. In one instance he related to his audience, "Sinners don't want to have a Lord."⁴² In another he maintained, "People of the

⁴⁰Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

⁴¹Hamblin, "Real Salvation."

⁴²Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

world have always lived in the darkness and are satisfied living there."⁴³ According to Hamblin, people are savable but are generally unwilling to come to salvation.

In the third major theological question concerning the human situation, Richard emphasized a solution to the sin problem. The question was, Does the preacher declare that people must embrace the Lord Jesus as the only God who saves them from their lostness? The analysis generated responses similar to the answers of the previous two inquiries. Hamblin proclaimed deliverance from sin through Christ in every sermon. He reminded his listeners that Jesus died on the cross in order to deal with humanity's sin.⁴⁴ Humanity was forgiven through Christ alone.⁴⁵

Considering the data collected from the analysis of Hamblin's sermons, Hamblin evidenced the evangelistic situation of humanity in his preaching. In each case, Hamblin demonstrated an appreciation for the sinful state of humanity and for Christ's solution to the problem.

⁴³Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 13:13-25.

⁴⁴For examples, see Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 4:23-31 videocassette; and "Understanding Jesus," sermon based on Matt. 12:22-45, videocassette.

⁴⁵Robert L. Hamblin, "The Master's Church," sermon based on Matt. 16:13-23, videocassette.

Therefore, the researcher determined that Hamblin's preaching practice reflected Richard's theological stance toward humanity.

Hamblin's Sermon Structure

Textual Faithfulness

As suggested earlier, Richard held that a textual evangelistic sermon must find origin in the text of Scripture. In an effort to examine the textual faithfulness of the sermon, he presented three questions: "(1) Does it [the sermon] accurately reflect the subject, proposition, and context intent of the original author in the text or context? (2) Is it exegetically, theologically, and logically appropriate? (3) Does the speaker direct you to where he is in the text?" These questions were employed in determining the textual faithfulness of Hamblin's sermons.⁴⁶

As to the first two questions, Hamblin's sermons always reflected the original intent of the text and appropriately mirrored the context exegetically, theologically, and logically. The preacher gave serious consideration to every facet of the text's context. Throughout the selected sermons, Hamblin provided careful

⁴⁶Richard, 234.

exposition of the chosen passage, often relating specific background and setting the pericope in context. For instance, when he preached from 2 Thess. 3:6-18, Hamblin discussed the background of the church at Thessalonica as recorded in the Book of Acts.⁴⁷

Another example occurred in Hamblin's sermon on Jesus' baptism when the preacher cast the Lord's baptism against the Jewish background of the practice.⁴⁸ Yet another case of the practice took place in Hamblin's exposition of the Sermon on the Mount. In the message, Hamblin explained the "second mile concept" by referring to the practice of Roman soldiers pressing individuals into carrying their backpack for a mile.⁴⁹ Within all of the selected sermons, Hamblin demonstrated his resolve to present the sermon based upon sound exegetical and theological principles.

Hamblin also exhibited his textual faithfulness by directing his listener to the text from which he preached.

⁴⁷Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on 2 Thess. 3:6-18, videocassette.

⁴⁸Robert L. Hamblin, "Baptism: The Beginning of the Messianic Ministry," sermon based on Mark 1:9, Matt. 3:13, and Luke 3:21, videocassette.

⁴⁹Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Matthew 5-7, videocassette.

In every sermon analyzed, he clearly announced his text for the sermon and invited his audience to turn to the passage. Sometimes he simply said, "Today, we will be studying from," or "Our text for today is."⁵⁰ Repeatedly, Hamblin was intentional in directing his hearers to the selected text of the day.

The positive answers to Richard's questions led the determination that Hamblin was faithful to Scripture. Hamblin indicated his concern for the context of the passage, anchored his message in the text, and provided a foundation upon which the structure was built.

Content and Organization

Setting his sermon firmly within the text, Hamblin introduced his message to his audience. In all of Hamblin's sermons the practice was observed, and each introduction was evaluated by considering Richard's issues of need, attention, purpose, orientation, and subintroduction. The analysis of these five areas of Hamblin's introduction revealed some characteristic features of the preacher's practice.

⁵⁰Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 7:1-8, videocassette.

In all of his introductions, Hamblin presented his text by placing it in the context of the preaching series. In fact, every selected sermon was part of an overall sermon series.⁵¹ Each time he preached his message, Hamblin noted how his text fit into the general study in which he engaged.⁵² Perhaps he reminded his audience of the overarching theme of the book or related the passage's connection to the verses preceding or following it. Regardless of the method, he always showed his concern for the canonical context of the pericope from which he preached.

For the most part, Hamblin relied upon his explanation of the text to establish the need for the message, to gain the audience's attention, and to state the purpose. Only three times did he include an illustration in his

⁵¹Of the selected sermons, Hamblin preached series on the Books of Acts, Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Peter, and 1 John. In addition, he preached one series on the life of Jesus Christ.

⁵²Hamblin's typical opening included, "We are studying from." He then would identify the book or the subject from which he had been preaching and provide a recap of the verses he covered the previous week. For examples, see sermon based on Gal. 4:12, videocassette; "The Messiah's Transfiguration," sermon based on Matt. 17:1-8, videocassette; and "Strength in the Lord."

introduction.⁵³ Generally, Hamblin simply stated his need and purpose as he gave background to the passage and as he introduced it to his hearers. He placed the sermon's necessity in the midst of the passage's context.

To illustrate the need of the sermon, Hamblin sometimes spoke of topics like forgiveness, happiness, idleness, and assurance in the introduction.⁵⁴ In referring to these issues, Hamblin not only provided the need and purpose of the sermon, but he also oriented the theme to the text. For instance, when the preacher spoke of happiness, he talked about how to be a happy kingdom citizen based upon the Lord's Sermon on the Mount.⁵⁵ Through these efforts, Hamblin fulfilled the elements Richard identified as need, attention, purpose, and orientation necessary in the introduction.

⁵³Hamblin gave an illustration about his leaving a church as pastor ("Fading Opportunities," sermon based on Luke 10, videocassette), about the events of the Middle East (sermon based on 2 Thess. 2:1-12), and about some responses to newspaper articles ("Victorious Attitude," sermon based on 1 Pet. 4:1-11, videocassette).

⁵⁴Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32; Hamblin, sermon based upon Matthew 5-7; sermon based on 2 Thess. 3:6-18; and sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21.

⁵⁵Hamblin, sermon based on Matthew 5-7.

As already indicated, Hamblin set the context and provided background to the passage in his introduction, reflecting Richard's use of a subintroduction. Although Richard did not require the element in every instance, Hamblin always included it in his introductions. For example, in his sermons from the Pauline epistles, Hamblin often explained the location from which Paul was writing, the audience to whom he was writing, and the purpose for the writing.⁵⁶ Every introduction given by Hamblin contained a discussion of the background of the text, thus fulfilling Richard's basic idea of a subintroduction.

Besides examining the introduction of the sermon, the researcher also sought to discern the central proposition of the sermon (the theme and thrust of the sermon). While it was difficult to frame the exact wording of Hamblin's central proposition of the sermon,⁵⁷ the theme of the sermon was observed in the preacher's subintroduction. A clear

⁵⁶In a message from Ephesians, Hamblin reminded his hearers that Paul was imprisoned when he wrote and that he had written to the church at Ephesus with the purpose of calling for their continued faith ("Living in Wisdom").

⁵⁷Obviously, Hamblin did not tell the listener that he was about to state his central proposition of the sermon. Thus, the proposition was distinguished through careful observation.

illustration occurred in Hamblin's message from Acts 12:1-19. Within the subintroduction to the sermon, Hamblin proclaimed God's deliverance from the sense of imprisonment individuals experienced. He declared that God delivers people from the bondage of circumstances and sin as they trust in Christ as their Savior and Lord.⁵⁸

In each of the selected sermons, Hamblin presented his central proposition within the subintroduction, and as displayed by the illustration above, he connected it to the unbeliever's experience. Whether he spoke of the unbeliever's sense of imprisonment, lack of assurance, or guilt from sin, Hamblin communicated his sermonic theme in the language of the unbeliever.⁵⁹ He certainly exhibited Richard's concern that the central proposition of the sermon be relevant to the unbeliever's understanding.

After examining the central proposition of the sermon, Hamblin's development of the body was considered. In particular, the analysis focused on whether or not the preacher used an outline sketch and, if so, whether or not

⁵⁸Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 12:1-19, videocassette.

⁵⁹Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 12:1-19; sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21; and sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

the outline was compatible with Richard's theory. The results of this analysis were mixed.

First, Hamblin used no discernible outline at all in the majority of the selected sermons. In 62 percent of the messages, Hamblin taught through the text without setting forth a formal outline. His actual sermonic pattern might be described as a homily, a verse-by-verse explanation of the passage. Methodically, Hamblin expounded the text and applied it to his hearers. The verse-by-verse approach dominated Hamblin's preaching in the selected sermons.⁶⁰

Despite this fact, Hamblin did use an outline in nineteen of the fifty selected sermons.⁶¹ In these instances, he structured his sermon into main divisions that expressed specific aspects of the message. The main points captured some reality of the passage that was explained to the audience. When he chose to utilize an outline, Hamblin drew each major division of the sketch

⁶⁰The messages that included no discernible outline belonged to Hamblin's series on the life of Christ, the Book of Acts, the Book of Romans, the Book of 1 Thessalonians, the Book of 2 Thessalonians, and the Book of 1 John.

⁶¹The sermons in which Hamblin used an outline sketch came from his series on the life of Christ, his study of Galatians, his series on Ephesians, and his preaching from 1 Peter.

directly from the text and naturally developed the structure based upon the movement of the passage. He allowed the outline to mirror the text in its clear arrangement.

Additionally, Hamblin did not embrace an elaborate system to outline his sermon. Instead, he developed his sermons in an uncomplicated manner, giving all of the sketches a simple, straightforward character.

Although simple, Hamblin's outlines were memorable for the most part. At times, the preacher employed techniques that appealed to the hearer's memory. For example, Hamblin sometimes used alliteration and symmetry to construct his outline. These methods aided retention and helped the preacher communicate his message. Examples follow:

Outline Sketch #1

- I. The Basis of Attitude
- II. The Bad Attitude
- III. The Best Attitude⁶²

Outline Sketch #2

- I. The Master of Human Life
- II. The Master of the Human Mind⁶³

⁶²Hamblin, "Victorious Attitudes."

⁶³Robert L. Hamblin, "The Master of Human Life and Mind," sermon based on Mark 3:1-6, Luke 14:1-6, et al., videocassette.

Outline Sketch #3

- I. Are You Faking Christian Love?
- II. Are You Faking Dedication?
- III. Are You Faking Salvation?⁶⁴

Outline Sketch #4

- I. Personality
- II. Purpose
- III. Projection⁶⁵

Through rhetorical techniques, Hamblin occasionally advanced his evangelistic message. However, not all of Hamblin's outlines were balanced as clearly as those shown above. In fact, many sketches lacked grammatical parallelism and alliteration in their arrangement. Hamblin simply stated his points in different forms as indicated below:

Outline Sketch #1

- I. Using Opportunities
- II. Be Filled with the Spirit
- III. Spiritual Fullness⁶⁶

Outline Sketch #2

- I. Rationale of the Christian Experience
- II. Real Salvation Illustrated⁶⁷

⁶⁴Hamblin, "Are You Faking It?"

⁶⁵Hamblin, "Baptism."

⁶⁶Hamblin, "Living in Wisdom."

⁶⁷Hamblin, "Real Salvation."

Outline Sketch #3

- I. The Family of God
- II. Purpose of Prayer
- III. Results of This Prayer
- IV. The Prayer of Praise⁶⁸

Outline Sketch #5

- I. The Strength of the Lord
- II. The Full Armor of God
- III. Praying in the Spirit⁶⁹

Outline Sketch #6

- I. The Lord's Church
- II. The Message of the Church
- III. The Fellowship of the Church⁷⁰

While outlines like these could be considered simple and memorable, they do not demonstrate the parallelism that Richard highlighted in his practice. Hamblin's outlines fall short in one of Richard's most critical practices: the statement of main points in full sentences. In only one case did Hamblin use complete sentences in his outline, and in that instance he used questions rather than statements.⁷¹

⁶⁸Hamblin, "A Prayer for God's People."

⁶⁹Hamblin, "Strength in the Lord."

⁷⁰Hamblin, "The Master's Church."

⁷¹In Hamblin's sermon entitled "Are You Faking It?" the preacher's outline consisted of three complete questions: (1) Are you faking Christian love? (2) Are you faking dedication? (3) Are you faking salvation?

The rest of Hamblin's outlines consisted of single words and incomplete phrases. Consequently, Hamblin's outlines did not exemplify the character of Richard's practice.

In addition to the body of Hamblin's sermons, the message's conclusion was analyzed. The conclusion was examined for a summary statement and for an invitation. With regard to the first issue, Hamblin summarized his sermon by underscoring its purpose and theme. He summarized his central theme and proposition in the closing moments of the sermon. Hamblin provided such a recap in every one of the selected sermons as he briefly reminded his audience of the message's basic thrust. For example, in his sermon entitled "Fading Opportunities," Hamblin highlighted the accepted and missed responsibilities about which he had preached and suggested that his hearers face similar opportunities.⁷² The preacher simply restated the thrust of his message and set the theme in the context of his audience's situation.

After his summary statements, Hamblin gave attention to the invitation component of the conclusion. Richard's three questions were utilized to evaluate the invitational

⁷²Hamblin, "Fading Opportunities."

element of the sermon: "What are you [the preacher] calling for? Are the terms clear? Is the response mechanism or process clear?"⁷³

Concerning the first question, Hamblin called for faith in Christ in the majority of the selected sermons. Indeed, the preacher explicitly invited his listeners to trust in Jesus and to submit to Christ as Lord and Savior in 80 percent of the sermon conclusions. Hamblin exhorted, "Trust him [Jesus] now as Savior and Lord of your life."⁷⁴ The evangelist further urged, "Submit yourself totally to Him [Christ]."⁷⁵ In most of his sermons, Hamblin challenged his audience to place their total faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

Occasionally the preacher focused on service in his concluding challenge. In 20 percent of his invitations, Hamblin primarily encouraged believers to be faithful in their service to the Lord. While this charge may assume an initial act of faith, the invitation merely encompassed a

⁷³Richard, 234.

⁷⁴Hamblin, "The Glorious Resurrection."

⁷⁵Hamblin, "First Encounters with Jesus," sermon based on Matt. 4:15-17, Mark 1:14-15, and Luke 4:31-32, videocassette.

call to fulfill God's work.⁷⁶ Within these selected conclusions, Hamblin did not issue a direct call to salvation.⁷⁷

Hamblin's invitations were investigated also for their clarity. The result of the analysis involved the discovery of the preacher's clear communication of invitational instructions. Hamblin used simple and straightforward terminology in all of his invitations. For instance, the preacher issued the following summons: "He [Christ] is inviting each one of us to accept Jesus as Savior. Have you done that? Will you trust him? You must say, 'Yes, I accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior.'"⁷⁸ In another sermon, he demanded, "Repent. He wants you to change your mind. He wants our trust in Christ, not trust

⁷⁶For examples, see Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 15:14-33, videocassette; sermon based on Acts 7:1-8; and "The Prophetic Predecessor."

⁷⁷The absence of a direct call did not indicate that Hamblin neglected the issue of salvation in these messages. On the contrary, Hamblin proclaimed the evangelistic work of God and humanity's response to that work. In the discussion above, the primary concern involved the statements made by Hamblin in the invitational element of the conclusion.

⁷⁸Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Luke 1:26-38, videocassette.

in ourselves. Put all your faith in Christ."⁷⁹ Hamblin's clear, up-front approach characterized every invitation.

The third aspect of the invitation involved the response mechanism. In the analysis of sermons, Hamblin did not include a response process in his presentation.⁸⁰

Hamblin did not extend an altar call or ask his television audience to dial a telephone number. He simply closed his messages by encouraging faith or service in Christ.

The lack of a physical response mechanism perhaps could be attributed to the medium of television. Hamblin did not have a live audience to whom to appeal, nor did he have individuals to answer phones. Because he preached the selected messages on television, he was limited in the way he could call for physical response.

Hamblin's Sermon Delivery

Style and Delivery

Generally speaking, Hamblin's sermon delivery displayed consistent characteristics. In the selected

⁷⁹Robert L. Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 3:1-26, videocassette.

⁸⁰In response to Richard's question relating to the clarity of the response mechanism and process, "not applicable" appeared to be the best answer.

sermons, Hamblin's approach was somewhat predictable. This constancy was especially apparent in the preacher's use of voice. In every sermon, Hamblin began in a deliberate, measured manner; his voice speed was basically slow and reserved. As the sermon advanced, the preacher's speed gradually increased.⁸¹ His gradual increase in speed created a sense of excitement as the sermon advanced.

Hamblin's adjustment in volume in many ways mirrored his transition in speed. He began his messages relatively low and progressively got louder throughout the sermon. Hamblin never screamed or shouted, but he raised his volume to emphasize specific terms and subjects.⁸² Additionally, he adjusted his pitch to underscore his message.

The effective use of speed, volume, and pitch aided Hamblin's delivery and played into his expressiveness of voice. In fact, Hamblin employed his voice in an expressive manner to communicate the emotion of the sermon to his

⁸¹For examples, see Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 5:27-42; and sermon based on Rom. 1:1-7.

⁸²An example was when Hamblin spoke of the "Word of God" in his sermon on 1 Thess. 1:1-10, and another instance was Hamblin's raising his voice to emphasize the word *gives* in the statement "He gives repentance" in his message on Acts 5:27-42 (sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10, and sermon based on Acts 5:27-42 respectively).

hearers. When he spoke of judgment, he assumed a disappointed tone; and when he spoke of the gospel, he demonstrated excitement in his voice.⁸³ Whatever he was speaking about, Hamblin assumed the appropriate tone. He portrayed his subject naturally in voice's expressiveness.

Hamblin's verbal expressiveness was complemented by his facial expressions. Through his countenance, Hamblin naturally portrayed his message and his view of certain subjects. He smiled when he spoke about such matters as thanksgiving, eternal victory, and salvation.⁸⁴ In contrast, he adopted a stern look when he discussed sin and disobedience.⁸⁵ The subject being addressed determined Hamblin's facial expressions, and those expressions advanced the overall message.

The preacher also employed gestures in the delivery of the sermon. In the analysis of hand gestures, Hamblin's characteristic mannerisms were noted. The first observation dealt with his physical handling of the Bible. As a

⁸³Hamblin, "Fading Opportunities."

⁸⁴Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 2:1-13; sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10; and sermon based on Acts 15:1-21.

⁸⁵Hamblin, sermon based upon Rom. 6:15-23; and sermon based upon Acts 7:1-8.

practice, Hamblin held the Scripture in one hand for most of his sermon.⁸⁶ With the other hand, he frequently gestured freely. A characteristic move was the extension of his hand toward the audience. As he explained his message, Hamblin extended his hand back and forth from his body to his hearers.⁸⁷

The preacher's hand gestures comprised the bulk of his movement during the sermon with the only other significant bodily movement encompassing his posture. Hamblin often leaned slightly forward toward his audience as he preached his sermon.⁸⁸ Beyond that motion, he demonstrated restraint in his movement. Hamblin did not walk about in any sermon analyzed; instead, he remained essentially stationary.

As to Richard's evaluation of style, Hamblin displayed aspects of appropriate grammar, word choice, articulation, and straightforwardness in his sermons. With regard to grammar, Hamblin consistently demonstrated quality speech.

⁸⁶In twenty-nine of the fifty selected sermons, Hamblin held the Bible in one hand throughout the entire sermon, while he held it for most of the message in seven other sermons.

⁸⁷For one example, see Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 2:1-13.

⁸⁸For instance, see Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 5:27-42; and sermon based on Acts 17:1-9.

The selected sermons contained no discernible grammatical errors.

Hamblin's polished grammar was not an indication that the preacher used technical jargon though. Quite the opposite, Hamblin generally chose simple words and refrained from using flowery and extravagant language. Although he possessed a noticeable Southern accent, the preacher articulated his words well. He spoke in a clear and straightforward fashion.

Like a gentle grandfather, Hamblin adopted a conversational style as he preached. He confronted his hearers with various issues addressed by the Scripture and called upon them to respond faithfully. No doubt, Hamblin was compassionate but direct in his preaching style.

The preacher's simple, straightforward approach extended to his use of support materials also. As noted in the study, the support materials utilized by Hamblin in the selected sermons entailed fundamental explanation rather than illustration. In fact, Hamblin included only a limited number of illustrations within his messages.⁸⁹ Of those

⁸⁹Approximately two illustrations were used in each sermon.

illustrations observed, most of them grew out of the preacher's own life and experience.

For example, Hamblin related how he lacked physical strength as a youth and how he coveted the might of Popeye.⁹⁰ In another instance, he began his illustration by stating, "One time I was on a mission trip."⁹¹ Throughout his sermons, he followed this pattern of recounting his experiences and relating them to his subject.

In an effort to examine these support materials, Richard's question was posed: "Are they [the support materials] appropriate to the experiences of the lost?" As indicated in the selected sermons, Hamblin's explanations and illustrations were appropriate. One way in which Hamblin connected with the lost involved his assertion and discussion of widely held views. Several times he illustrated his argument by referring to contemporary beliefs and stances. Repeatedly he commented, "I hear people say."⁹² He then stated a common position that

⁹⁰Hamblin, "Strength in the Lord."

⁹¹Hamblin, "A Prayer for God's People."

⁹²Hamblin, "Baptism"; "John: The Prophetic Predecessor"; sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21; and sermon based on 1 John 5:1-12.

appealed to the experiences of unbelievers and placed the stance in the context of God's truth.

Hamblin's support materials had a definite, straightforward character as well. The preacher did not attempt to cloud his message in any way; he did not even use humor.⁹³ Instead of presenting a string of humorous stories, Hamblin deliberately explained the biblical and theological terms of the passage. He practically defined words like *depravity* and described New Testament concepts such as slavery.⁹⁴ Whether he compared the Sanhedrin to the Supreme Court of the United States or detailed the composition of the Synagogue of Freeman, he clarified difficult terms so that the audience might understand the message of the text.⁹⁵ In so doing, the preacher demonstrated Richard's purpose for support materials.

With reference to Richard's final question concerning support materials, Hamblin consistently included adequate support material. Every sermon embodied clear explanation

⁹³No evidence was found of Hamblin employing humor in any of his sermons.

⁹⁴Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32; and sermon based on Rom. 6:15-23.

⁹⁵Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 6:8-15; and sermon based on Acts 5:12-20.

and illustration; however, support materials did not overwhelm any one message. Hamblin allowed his support materials to retain their supportive trait while emphasizing his central proposition.

The final area of style and delivery evaluated concerned Richard's concept of presence. In the study specific elements such as rapport, eye contact, personality, friendliness, and mood were considered. The analysis confirmed that Hamblin built a rapport with his audience largely through eye contact. Indeed, the preacher maintained direct eye contact with his hearers throughout the selected sermons. He looked directly at his audience in every message.

Hamblin maintained this vital eye contact primarily due to his limited use of notes. The preacher did not refer to notes at all in twenty-nine of the fifty selected sermons, and in the remaining messages he only occasionally glanced at his notes. The only time Hamblin consistently broke eye contact in his sermons involved his reading of the Scripture. Other than that moment, he maintained eye contact with his listeners, which in turn helped to develop rapport.

A friendly, personal approach marked Hamblin's presence in the pulpit. Throughout the sermons, the preacher exhibited the same characteristic style. Like a stately grandfather, he spoke to his audience about their relationship to the Lord, often including illustrations from his own experiences as he addressed their relationship. The nature of the illustrations demonstrated Hamblin's personal presence within the message itself. The preacher was indeed friendly and personal.

In addition, Hamblin portrayed an optimistic spirit in his sermons. He repeatedly declared that individuals experience forgiveness and strength through the Son.⁹⁶ He also pointed to the eventual return and triumph of Jesus Christ.⁹⁷ Within all of the sermons examined, Hamblin echoed these themes of hope and exhibited a positive mood as he proclaimed the gospel.

Relevance

Finally, the relevance of each sermon was analyzed briefly by probing the interest level of the message. The

⁹⁶For examples, see Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 6:15-23; and sermon based on 1 Thess. 3:6-13.

⁹⁷See Hamblin, sermon based on 1 Thess. 4:13-5:11; and sermon based on 2 Thess. 2:1-12.

study revealed that Hamblin created interest in a variety of ways. Whether his message of hope, his expressive use of voice, or his facial mannerisms, Hamblin drew his audience into the heart of his sermon.⁹⁸ Through his natural delivery, he personally connected with his hearers.

Certainly, Hamblin raised the interest level of each sermon by presenting a concrete understanding of the relevance of Jesus' salvation and how that truth may be appropriated to the lives of the hearers. The preacher addressed issues apparent in the contemporary context and related them to the reality of Christ.⁹⁹ As mentioned earlier, Hamblin's use of life experiences as illustrations helped him connect the truth to his audience as well. Overall, Hamblin's sermons displayed a relevant and practical trait.

Brief Summary of Analysis

After analyzing Hamblin's selected sermons, some characteristic features of the evangelist's preaching practice were observed. First, Hamblin consistently

⁹⁸See the previous analysis concerning structure as well as style and delivery.

⁹⁹Hamblin often observed, "I know people who." See Hamblin, "Baptism."

presented the theological foundations of salvation. As a practice, he described the Father's, Son's, and Holy Spirit's roles in the redemption of humanity. Hamblin outlined how the holy, loving God sent his Son to provide salvation for a lost world. He declared that salvation comes exclusively through Jesus' atoning sacrifice on the cross and through his powerful resurrection. The Holy Spirit, he claimed, convicts the unbeliever of this truth and converts him or her. The Spirit then ministers to the believer by continually confirming his or her salvation.

Hamblin not only proclaimed God's relationship to salvation, but he also highlighted humanity's need for redemption. He reminded listeners repeatedly that humanity is engrossed in its sin. Apart from the salvation of Jesus Christ, people are eternally and perpetually lost. Consequently, the preacher insisted that his audience embrace Christ as their Lord and Savior.

The second aspect of Hamblin's preaching noted related to his sermon structure. In the analysis, Hamblin organized his message into three basic components: introduction, body, and conclusion. Within the introduction, Hamblin stated his text and discussed its background. He both

connected the passage to the sermon's theme and related its import to the lives of his hearers.

The preacher proceeded then to expound the Scripture throughout the body of the sermon. In most cases, he developed his explanation in a verse-by-verse manner. Indeed, he used no discernible outline in the majority of the sermons. When he did employ an outline sketch, Hamblin chose a simple, straightforward form and used various techniques in his development such as alliteration and parallelism.

Hamblin drew his argument to a close in the conclusion by recapping his message and by inviting his hearers to respond. Always, he ended his sermon in this characteristic method. He restated his central proposition and related it to his audience's experience for a final time. Following that summary, Hamblin called for a decisive response. Most of the time, the response centered around the listeners' faith and trust in Christ. The preacher encouraged his hearers constantly to submit their lives to Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

Besides Hamblin's theological sermon content and his sermon structure, the analysis portrayed a distinctive style and delivery in Hamblin's preaching also. For

instance, the preacher usually began his speech in a slow, deliberate fashion, adopting a quicker pace as the sermon advanced. He never raised his voice to a shout though. Instead, he used a conversational style to connect with his audience.

In essence, Hamblin delivered his sermons in a natural, straightforward way. From his use of voice to his facial expressions, he communicated biblical truth in a genuine manner. He smiled naturally, and he frowned appropriately. Moreover, he gestured with his hands effortlessly.

The personal aspect of Hamblin's delivery manifested itself in other areas as well. In his sermons, Hamblin almost exclusively included illustrations from his own life experience. He related his own personal stories as he explained the primary text of the sermon. Furthermore, Hamblin exhibited an intimate connection with his hearers by looking directly at them. Because he seldom used notes, he was able to maintain consistent eye contact with his audience and build a rapport with the hearers. The practice reflected a personal facet of Hamblin's delivery.

Throughout his sermons, Hamblin related the gospel of Christ in a relevant, authentic way. In each sermon, he

explained the text in its context, illustrated it with his own personal experiences, and applied it directly to the lives of unbelievers. The preacher's personal delivery complemented his simple structure and added to the interest level of the sermon. In fact, Hamblin's overall communication of the truth encompassed sound theological content, simple sermonic structure, and natural delivery.

CHAPTER 4

AN EVANGELISTIC PREACHING MODEL BASED UPON HAMBLIN'S THEOLOGY, THEORY, AND PRACTICE

After surveying Hamblin's theology of evangelism, theory of evangelistic preaching, and evangelistic preaching practice, a contemporary evangelistic preaching model was constructed. In the effort, three primary elements that coalesce into a single holistic paradigm were presented. The components were theological, organizational, and practical. These aspects were synthesized into a unified vision for evangelistic preaching.¹

An Integrated Model of Evangelistic Preaching

The Theological Component

Within Hamblin's philosophy and practice of evangelistic preaching, a strong theological quality appears. Hamblin emphasized both the theological

¹For a visual depiction of the model, see appendix 4.

presuppositions that undergird evangelistic proclamation and the theological content that permeates evangelistic sermons. Together, the theological presuppositions and substance form a basic component of evangelistic preaching.

Theological Presuppositions

Twelve fundamental convictions predicate the art of evangelistic preaching. First, the evangelistic preacher understands that God's purpose always has concerned his fellowship with humanity.² The Lord indeed desires a mutual relationship of love and trust with his creation. His ultimate plan entails men and women conforming to the image of his Son, Jesus Christ. As they assume the appearance of Christ, humanity fulfills its purpose and relates to the Father in genuine fellowship.

Second, the minister presupposes that the Bible is the true, written record of God's redemptive plan and purpose. The Scripture contains the substance of evangelistic proclamation as well as the strategy for performing the evangelistic task.³ As such, the Bible provides the

²Hamblin, "Responsible Christian Leadership," 1.

³Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

preacher's message and his authoritative stance for evangelistic preaching.

Third, the evangelist holds that humanity's sin ruptures the relationship between God and his creation.⁴ Through Adam's moral failure, the whole human existence experiences alienation and separation from the Creator. Every individual inherits a sin nature which bends him or her toward sinful lifestyles. Humanity faces the consequences of their choices, consequences that ultimately include the punishment of hell.⁵

Fourth, the preacher observes that the nature of the one God incorporates the attributes of holiness and love.⁶ God embodies holiness and righteousness; he personifies truth and goodness. In his holiness, the Lord hates sin and deals with it accordingly. On the other hand, God is love. He cares for his creation and constantly demonstrates his compassion toward it. The supreme expression of his love

⁴Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

⁵Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 94.

⁶Hamblin, "Living in Wisdom"; and sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

was the sending of Christ to the world to provide eternal salvation.⁷

Fifth, the minister construes Jesus as both human and divine. Although seemingly impossible, Christ exhibits the dual natures in his personhood.⁸ The preacher correctly identifies Jesus as fully man and as fully God. No biblical inconsistencies are found in such a statement.⁹

Sixth, the evangelistic preacher believes that Christ came to provide redemption for humanity through his sacrifice on the cross and through his resurrection from death. At the cross, Jesus willingly died as a substitute for sinful humanity and provided an avenue of restored fellowship between God and humanity. In the resurrection, he proved his deity and demonstrated his power over death, hell, and the grave. Christ's redemptive work supplies the opportunity for humanity to experience salvation from their sins.¹⁰

⁷Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 67.

⁸Hamblin, sermon based on Luke 1:26-38; and sermon based on Acts 6:8-15.

⁹Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 93.

¹⁰Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

Seventh, the evangelist agrees that a person receives eternal life only through repentance and faith in Christ.¹¹ This exclusive claim marks the preacher's life and his approach to his work. In truth, the evangelistic preacher understands that the necessary response to Christ's work involves submission and surrender. In order to obtain salvation, the unbeliever turns from his or her sinful behavior and turns to life in Christ. He or she makes a conscious, willing choice to follow the Messiah.¹² By surrendering his or her life to the lordship of Christ, the unbeliever recognizes Jesus' sovereignty over every area of life.¹³

Eighth, the minister affirms that Christ's salvation is available to anyone who responds in faith. The gospel has a cosmic dimension, encompassing the whole world in its scope. God's love for all people translates into the reality that any person can receive salvation.¹⁴

¹¹Hamblin, "Are You Faking It?"

¹²Hamblin, *Doctrine of Lordship*, 63.

¹³Ibid., 69.

¹⁴Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1"; sermon based on Acts 15:1-21; sermon based on Matthew 24 and 25; and, "Era of Grace."

Ninth, the preacher realizes that evangelistic preaching continues God's work of redemption in proclaiming the good news of Christ. Throughout history, God moved forward with his redemptive plan. From the very beginning, he advanced his work of salvation, ultimately sending his Son to reckon with sin and its consequences. The evangelistic preacher interfaces with God's redemptive activity by becoming an instrument of the salvific proclamation.¹⁵ As a matter of fact, God's chosen method for reaching people with his salvation is evangelistic preaching.¹⁶ Through his proclamation, the preacher joins God in his redemptive work and becomes a part of a worldwide, spiritual enterprise.

Tenth, the evangelist perceives that God specifically calls preachers to declare the good news of Jesus Christ. Certainly, every believer assumes the responsibility of evangelism.¹⁷ Nevertheless, preachers receive a unique call

¹⁵See Hamblin's definition of evangelism and evangelistic preaching. Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 1; and "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 1.

¹⁶Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 2-3.

¹⁷Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 24.

from God to set aside their lives to proclaim the gospel.¹⁸ God anoints these messengers to serve him and his kingdom.

Eleventh, the minister grasps the Holy Spirit's role in empowering the preacher, convicting and converting the unbeliever, and confirming the believer. Each time the evangelistic preacher stands to declare God's message, the Spirit provides him divine strength and enables him to accomplish a task beyond his own human ability.¹⁹ Also, the Holy Spirit convicts the lost hearer of his or her sinful condition and transforms him or her in salvation.²⁰ At one's conversion, the Spirit begins his empowering ministry in the life of the believer and continues it throughout the individual's life.²¹

Twelfth, the evangelistic preacher holds that evangelistic preaching extends beyond verbal communication.

¹⁸Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 1."

¹⁹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 4.

²⁰Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 2"; sermon based on Acts 2:1-13; and sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21.

²¹Hamblin, "Evangelism: 550," 1; and sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10.

While the spoken word is important in evangelism, evangelistic preaching encompasses spirit and deed also.²² Genuine proclamation includes the entire existence of the evangelist's life.

Theological Content

The content of evangelistic preaching consists of more than shallow experiential statements. The declaration includes the theological substance of good news and gives expression to many doctrinal tenets displayed in the New Testament. Although not identical, much of the theological content of evangelistic preaching reflects the theological presuppositions discussed earlier. Seven theological themes comprise the overall content of evangelistic preaching.

The first theme focuses on God's purposeful plan for humanity. God always seeks fellowship with his human creation. From the very beginning, God planned for such a relationship and made provision for it. He even sent his one and only Son to earth with the purpose of reconciling

²²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 1; and "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 1.

humanity to himself. Every initiative he took was a part of his divine plan and purpose.²³

The second theme involves the sinful condition of humanity. Every individual sins, separating him or her from fellowship with God. Apart from Christ, the sinner is hopelessly lost and faces the consequences of his or her sin. Ultimately, punishment is an eternal hell.²⁴

The third theme concerns the nature of God. God is both holy and loving. As a holy being, God is sinless and perfect, morally separated from his creation.²⁵ Yet, in his love, the Father sent his Son to provide the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. God loves sinners so much that he allowed Christ to endure intense suffering on their behalf. Even those individuals guilty of the most heinous perversions find forgiveness in the sacrifice of the Lord.²⁶

²³Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 95; and sermon based on 2 Thess. 2:1-12.

²⁴Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 4; and sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

²⁵Hamblin, "Living in Wisdom"; and "Message of Evangelism," 94.

²⁶Hamblin, sermon based on Rom. 6:15-23; sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21; and sermon based on Rom. 1:18-32.

A fourth theme essential in evangelistic proclamation centers on the person of Jesus. In truth, Christ himself comprises the substance of the gospel.²⁷ Specifically, the preacher declares the dual natures of the Lord. Jesus is God in flesh; he is both fully God and fully man.²⁸

The fifth theme extends beyond Christ's identity and considers his redemptive work. Evangelistic preaching emphasizes the necessity and sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross.²⁹ Jesus came with the specific purpose of providing a substitution for sinners. His death fulfilled the penalty of sin, thus allowing believers to avoid eternal punishment. Christ's resurrection is as important as his crucifixion in the evangelistic message. The resurrection validated the Lord's life and teaching and opened the door to eternal life. The evangelistic preacher declares that through the resurrection Jesus demonstrated his authority over death and sin.³⁰

²⁷Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 88.

²⁸Hamblin, sermon based on Luke 1:26-38; and sermon based upon Acts 6:8-15.

²⁹Hamblin, sermon based on Gal. 3:1-14; and sermon based on Acts 5:27-42.

³⁰Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 1."

The sixth theme necessary within evangelistic preaching entails the response to Christ's work. The evangelist reminds each hearer that he or she has the responsibility to respond in faith to Christ and to surrender willingly to Jesus.³¹ In addition, he calls upon his audience to repent of their sins, which involves turning from sin and to God for salvation. Only through genuine repentance and faith does anyone experience forgiveness.³²

The seventh theme revolves around the Holy Spirit's role in the individual's salvation and service. The preacher stresses especially the Spirit's work in convicting the unbeliever of his or her sin. A person comes to an awareness of sinful lifestyles through God's conviction alone.³³ The conviction then leads the unbeliever to a moment of crisis. As the hearer responds in faith, the Holy Spirit brings conversion in his or her life. The unbeliever experiences a new birth through the Spirit's

³¹Hamblin, "Message of Evangelism," 95.

³²Hamblin, *Doctrine of Lordship*, 66; and sermon based on Acts 3:1-26.

³³Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 2"; and "John: The Prophetic Predecessor."

supernatural activity.³⁴ After the hearer's conversion, the Holy Spirit continues his ministry by enabling and assuring the believer daily.³⁵

The evangelist declares God's plan and nature, humanity's sinful condition, Christ's personhood and redemptive work, humanity's appropriate response to the Christ event, and the Holy Spirit's work in salvation. Authentic evangelistic proclamation embodies each of the doctrinal expressions above. Together, these seven themes comprise the theological content of evangelistic proclamation.

The Organizational Component

Besides the theological element, Hamblin emphasized an organizational component to evangelistic preaching. In both his theory and his preaching, he promoted a strong sense of organization. For example, he insisted that the preacher intentionally prepare himself and his message in an organized manner. In addition, Hamblin exhibited organization in his evangelistic sermon structure by giving

³⁴Hamblin, sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21.

³⁵Hamblin, "A Prayer for God's People"; and "Strength in the Lord."

attention to both the formal elements and the functional elements. From a survey of Hamblin's thoughts and practice, the researcher developed the following organizational component of the evangelistic preaching model.

*Organization in Sermon
Preparation*

Organization of the evangelistic sermon begins with the personal preparation of the preacher. For example, the evangelist prepares himself by reflecting upon his own salvation experience. Before he preaches any sermon, he recalls his own testimony with clarity.³⁶ Through the practice, the preacher gains confidence to speak passionately about the good news of Christ.

He also prepares to receive God's message by entering into the presence of God. The evangelistic preacher spends adequate time with the Lord before he discovers the specific message for the occasion.³⁷ He enters into the Lord's presence through various avenues such as prayer,

³⁶Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 3.

³⁷Ibid., 5.

confession, faith, and submission.³⁸ As to the exercise of submission, the evangelist surrenders his entire existence to the Holy Spirit. Whatever area of life, he submits himself to the Spirit's guidance and empowerment.

After preparing himself for the message, the preacher then moves to the beginning point of the evangelistic sermon: the text.³⁹ To be sure, every sermon is text-driven, underscoring the significance of text selection. He chooses the specific evangelistic text⁴⁰ by allowing the Holy Spirit to guide him. The Holy Spirit leads the evangelist in the selection and development of the passage.⁴¹

Following the selection of the text, the evangelistic preacher embarks upon its study. He applies hermeneutical principles that draw out the meaning of the passage and investigates the meaning in light of the contemporary

³⁸Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 2."

³⁹Hamblin, personal interview.

⁴⁰Ibid. Hamblin regarded an "evangelistic text" as one that reflected God's redemptive activity. The pericope could be a selection from the Old Testament or the New Testament.

⁴¹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 13-4.

context.⁴² Specifically, the preacher examines the text with regard to the original language and reads reliable commentaries.⁴³ In every case, he gives special attention to the background and to the context of the passage.⁴⁴

The study of the passage incorporates a subjective aspect as well. The preacher encounters the text personally as the Holy Spirit impresses it upon him. He allows the text to pass through his own life, transforming his thoughts and actions. Through the Holy Spirit's illumination, the evangelist interacts with the passage intimately.⁴⁵

Using both an objective and a subjective approach in his study, the preacher determines the essence of the text. He discerns the central idea promoted by the passage and develops the sermon's subject around it.⁴⁶ Clarifying the subject or theme of the evangelistic message helps unify

⁴²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 24-5.

⁴³Hamblin, personal interview.

⁴⁴Hamblin, sermon based on 2 Thess. 3:6-18; and sermon based on Matthew 5-7.

⁴⁵Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 15.

⁴⁶Ibid., 45-6.

the overall presentation and promotes understanding. Also, the evangelist fashions a clear, relevant subject so that he might communicate effectively with unbelievers in his audience.⁴⁷

With the subject in place, the evangelistic preacher moves to the structure of the sermon.⁴⁸ He decides whether or not to use an outline and plans the development of the body accordingly. He also considers appropriate illustrations and arranges them in the body.

The preacher then turns his attention to the introduction of the sermon. From there he writes his proposition, setting forth what he hopes to accomplish in the hearer's life. With the purpose in mind, the evangelist writes the conclusion of the sermon he plans to preach. Finally, he allows time to meditate upon his work and the sermon itself.

Before he actually delivers the sermon, the preacher bathes his finished sermon in prayer and submits to the Spirit's leadership as he anticipates the moment of

⁴⁷Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 12:1-19; and sermon based on 1 John 4:13-21.

⁴⁸The actual structure of the sermon will be discussed in detail in the following section.

delivery. He also prepares especially for the invitation by informing the appropriate support staff of his planned intentions.⁴⁹

Organization marks the evangelistic preacher's sermon preparation. Spiritually, the preacher readies himself by recalling his own salvation experience, confessing his failures, and submitting himself to the Holy Spirit's working. Academically, he prepares by studying the passage exegetically and developing the sermon methodically. Physically, he notifies the necessary individuals of his plans for the entire sermon and in particular for the invitation. The whole preparation effort is a systematic process aimed at developing a solid, relevant message. Through intentional planning, the preacher effectively communicates to his audience.

*Organization in Sermon
Structure*

In addition, an organizational character describes the structure of the sermon. The evangelistic preacher organizes his sermon primarily into the formal elements: introduction, body, and conclusion. Even in his inclusion

⁴⁹Hamblin, "The Gospel Invitation," 29.

of the three functional elements (application, argumentation, and illustration), the evangelist demonstrates an aspect of organization.

Formal Elements

The preacher structures his sermon into the basic elements of introduction, body, and conclusion. In the introduction, he clearly announces the primary text and directs his listeners to read along with him.⁵⁰ He then places the selected passage in its biblical context by providing meaningful background to the text. Furthermore, the evangelist states the theme of the sermon and relates it to the audience's perspective.⁵¹ He relates all of this information in a brief but natural manner.⁵²

The next part of the model deals with the development of the body. Within the process, the evangelist experiences some measure of flexibility. The model does not compel him to use a discernible outline in the body itself. In fact,

⁵⁰Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 17:1-8.

⁵¹Hamblin, sermon based on Gal. 4:12; "The Messiah's Transfiguration"; and "Strength in the Lord."

⁵²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 45.

the paradigm allows the preacher to use a simple verse-by-verse method in which he explains each verse in its context and makes application.⁵³

Of course, the model's flexibility also permits the evangelistic preacher to utilize various types of outline sketches. The outlines could differ in the number of divisions and the use of rhetorical techniques. Generally, the preacher separates his outline into two to four divisions to communicate his message. At times he employs alliteration and parallelism in his communication, and in most instances he states his main points in single words or incomplete phrases.⁵⁴ The only real guidelines for using outlines concern their simple and biblical nature. When using outlines, the preacher has to develop simple, straightforward divisions. Moreover, the preaching paradigm encourages the evangelist to obtain his main points from the text.⁵⁵

⁵³Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 5:27-42; and sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10.

⁵⁴Hamblin, "Victorious Attitudes"; "The Master of Human Life and Mind"; and "Baptism: The Beginning of the Messianic Ministry."

⁵⁵Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 45.

The final formal element, the conclusion, provides the preacher an opportunity to summarize his message and to invite his hearers to respond appropriately. The evangelist restates the subject of his sermon and sets it in the context of his audience.⁵⁶ The recap of the sermon leads directly into a moment of confrontation.

The evangelistic preacher challenges his audience to respond in faith. Almost exclusively, he invites his hearers to trust Christ as Savior and to submit to him as Lord.⁵⁷ Using a clear, direct approach, he methodically explains what he wants people to do and issues the most effective appeal for forgiveness.⁵⁸ The evangelist never employs manipulative tactics to achieve his desired response.⁵⁹ Instead, he relies upon the Holy Spirit to empower the invitation.

The response mechanism used in the invitation varies as well. Altar calls, standing, and raising hands are all

⁵⁶Hamblin, "Fading Opportunities."

⁵⁷Hamblin, "The Glorious Resurrection."

⁵⁸Hamblin, personal interview.

⁵⁹Hamblin, "The Gospel Invitation," 29-30.

acceptable invitational methods.⁶⁰ The invitation fits into the present model as long as the preacher avoids manipulation and emphasizes the positive reality of life in Christ.

Functional Elements

Organization is important in arranging the formal elements as well as the functional elements. The functional elements identified in the proposed evangelistic preaching model are application, argumentation, and illustration.⁶¹ The preacher structures these aspects of the sermon in a relevant way that communicates the message to the unbeliever.

The primary element in the message of evangelistic preaching is application.⁶² Within the sermon, the preacher applies the good news of Christ to the lives of the audience and declares its relationship to the contemporary context, specifically noting how the gospel informs present-day issues.

⁶⁰Ibid., 29.

⁶¹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 37.

⁶²Ibid., 36-7.

The evangelist applies the truth of his message personally and persuasively. He speaks in a direct fashion and underscores the gospel's reality for each listener. Often the preacher relates the subject matter to an event out of his own experience, connecting truth to life. He hopes to convince his audience to apply the message by repenting of its sins and by expressing absolute faith in Christ.⁶³

Another important functional element in the preaching model is argumentation. The evangelistic preacher deliberately presents an argument as he moves through the sermon. Point by point, he logically builds his case in an effort to convince his hearers to embrace the central proposition.⁶⁴ Primarily, he structures his message in a deductive form to state his view. The evangelist determines organization to be an essential facet in making the argument of the evangelistic sermon.

In its essence, argumentation requires explanation.⁶⁵ Part of the argumentation process is the explanation of a

⁶³Hamblin, "First Encounters with Jesus."

⁶⁴Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 40.

⁶⁵Hamblin, personal interview.

specific position. For the evangelistic preacher, that explanation centers on the thoughts of Scripture. The evangelist explains the meaning of the selected passage by citing its background and context. He details the principles located in the text and explains their relationship to one another. As he explains the meaning of each verse, he contributes to the overall argument of the message.⁶⁶

The final functional element noted in the integrated model of evangelistic preaching is illustration. The preacher uses illustration to clarify his subject and to heighten the sermon's interest level. As he organizes his message, he includes illustrations that complement his argumentation and application. Indeed, he utilizes his illustrations to advance the overall proclamation of the gospel.⁶⁷

The evangelist follows some general guidelines in using illustrations in the sermon. For example, he limits

⁶⁶Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 12:1-19; Rom. 1:18-32; and sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10.

⁶⁷Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 15.

the number of illustrations in each sermon. He is careful not to incorporate too many illustrations out of fear of overshadowing the gospel message. He desires to keep the illustrations subordinate to the truth of the scriptural witness so that the message can be communicated clearly to the audience.⁶⁸

In addition, the preacher selects illustrations appropriate to the context, factual in their nature, and clear in their relationship to the topic.⁶⁹ An effective illustration always resonates with the specific audience being addressed. The hearers relate to the illustration and understand it clearly. Illustrations themselves are representations of the truth rather than depictions of errors.⁷⁰

The evangelistic preacher might draw his illustrations from several sources, but the primary examples come from

⁶⁸Hamblin, "Fading Opportunities"; Hamblin, "Victorious Attitude"; and Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 15.

⁶⁹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 42-3.

⁷⁰Ibid.

his daily life.⁷¹ In his sermons, he cites appropriate instances from his life experiences, his surroundings, and his personal observations. The evangelist consistently presents specific illustrations that relate to his own experiences.⁷²

Together with application and argumentation, illustration plays an integral role in communicating the good news of Christ. The preacher employs illustrations to enhance the other two elements and to advance the message. Clearly, the preacher's organization of the three functional elements within the evangelistic sermon furthers the proclamation of God's redemptive purpose and plan for the world.

The Practical Component

The final component of the proposed evangelistic preaching model is practical. Evangelistic preaching is both theological and organizational in nature. However, the enterprise encompasses more than those two characteristics.

⁷¹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16.

⁷²Hamblin, "A Prayer for God's People"; and "Strength in the Lord."

The final component identifies the practical aspect of evangelistic preaching.

The practical component of the model addresses the preacher's lifestyle and his actual sermon delivery. Indeed, the element focuses on the evangelist's practice outside and inside the pulpit. The practical aspect adds the final dimension to the proposed evangelistic preaching model.

*The Lifestyle of
the Preacher*

In the proposed preaching paradigm, the preacher practices what he preaches. After all, evangelistic preaching is the proclamation "in word, spirit, and deed of the good news about Christ."⁷³ The evangelist's verbal expression of the gospel is not sufficient alone; the preacher also has to provide physical expression. Through a godly lifestyle, he testifies of the gospel and prepares for the actual sermon.

The minister demonstrates several qualities in his daily witness. For instance, he exhibits a lifestyle of

⁷³Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World,"
1.

faith in God. He consistently relies upon the Lord in his decisions and his activities. Although he recognizes he sins, the preacher constantly seeks to be faithful in his service.⁷⁴ Additionally, the evangelist displays genuine humility as he submits to the Holy Spirit. He daily yields to the Spirit's work in his life and receives the Spirit's empowerment.⁷⁵ Finally, the preacher exemplifies evangelism in his own lifestyle. He personally witnesses, trains others in evangelism, and regularly preaches the gospel.⁷⁶

*The Delivery of
the Preacher*

The practical component of the proposed paradigm involves not only the preacher's lifestyle but also his delivery of the sermon. In the delivery, the evangelist actually puts into practice the theological and organizational components of the model. Out of his own convictions and preparation, he proclaims theological substance in an organized manner and challenges the audience to submit to Christ.

⁷⁴Ibid., 5.

⁷⁵Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 1."

⁷⁶Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 37.

According to the model, the preacher emphasizes individuality in his delivery style. God calls people with their own distinct personalities to serve him.⁷⁷ Therefore, each evangelist proclaims the gospel in his own unique way.

Despite the obvious flexibility inherent in this approach, the integrated model outlines specific delivery traits that prove effective. First, the paradigm encourages the preacher to adopt a personal style in his delivery. The evangelist conveys a friendly, compassionate disposition as he speaks to his audience in a conversational fashion. He communicates to the hearers by avoiding complicated jargon and employing simple terminology. In this non-technical manner, he establishes a personal rapport with his audience.⁷⁸

The inclusion of personal illustrations advances the relationship between preacher and listener also. The evangelist uses illustrations from his own experiences to relate the gospel to the contemporary context.⁷⁹ Through the

⁷⁷Hamblin, personal interview.

⁷⁸Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 17:1-9; and "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16-7.

⁷⁹Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16.

practice, he portrays a portion of himself to his audience demonstrating some transparency. This openness creates a sense of interest within the audience and establishes a rapport.

Second, the proposed model endorses a direct style in evangelistic preaching. The preacher's delivery reveals a straightforward, candid quality. The evangelist generally refrains from using humor and amusing stories in his sermons.⁸⁰ Instead, he chooses to explain the biblical message and relates it to the lives of his audience in a frank manner. He directly applies the text and challenges the hearers by clearly instructing them on how to respond appropriately.⁸¹

Eye contact also plays a role in the evangelist's direct posture. The preacher maintains eye contact with his audience throughout the sermon. He accomplishes the task primarily by limiting his use of notes. Ideally, he delivers his message extemporaneously without notes so that he can look straight at his hearers. The only time the model allows the evangelist to break eye contact involves

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Hamblin, sermon based on Luke 1:26-38.

the reading of the text. Outside of that single instance, the preacher sustains eye contact with his audience throughout the message.⁸²

Third, the integrated model calls upon the minister to be expressive in his use of voice, facial expressions, and hand gestures. The preacher varies his voice speed, volume, pitch, and tone in order to convey his expressiveness. He usually begins slowly and increases the speed of his speech as the sermon progresses. He also adjusts his volume to provide emphasis upon certain terms and themes. On the whole, the preacher's voice mirrors the content of the sermon. Whether the evangelist speaks of troublesome issues or exciting opportunities, he adopts an appropriate tone to express his message.⁸³

The facial expressions of the preacher complement his verbal expressions. Often he smiles when discussing positive subjects such as forgiveness and salvation, while at other times he gives a stern look as he addresses sin

⁸²Hamblin, personal interview.

⁸³Hamblin, "Fading Opportunities."

and disobedience.⁸⁴ Through his facial expressions, he reveals his perspective on a range of biblical themes.

Besides expressiveness in his voice and his countenance, the preacher includes gestures in the communication of the gospel. Most of the time, he motions with his hand, extending it back and forth in a measured manner, while he sometimes holds the Bible in one hand in an attempt to promote the sense of authority behind the message. The proposed model raises a caution about too much movement though. The evangelist moves in a limited fashion so he does not draw attention away from the message unto himself.⁸⁵

The practical element of evangelistic preaching completes the overall paradigm of gospel proclamation. The theological, organizational, and practical components together compose a holistic approach to evangelistic preaching in the present context. Taking all three elements into account, the integrated paradigm discussed above was offered as a contemporary model of evangelistic preaching.

⁸⁴Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 15:1-21; sermon based on Rom. 6:15-23; and sermon based on Acts 7:1-8.

⁸⁵Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 17:1-9, and sermon based on 2 Thess. 3:6-18.

A Brief Comparison with Two Other Models

To observe the integrated model further, a comparison was made between it and two other evangelistic preaching paradigms. The first was Perry and Strubhar's theory while the second concerned Richard's system. In this comparison, the researcher specifically observed similarities and distinctions between the integrated model and Perry and Strubhar's paradigm as well as Richard's theory. Particular emphasis was given to the unique features possessed by the proposed integrated model of evangelistic preaching.

"The Integrated Model" Versus
"The Perry-Strubhar Model"

In their preaching theory,⁸⁶ Perry and Strubhar began by underscoring the Holy Spirit's role in evangelistic preaching. They then turned their attention to the preparation and structure of evangelistic sermons and outlined the methods for effective presentation of those messages. According to their summary of principles for evangelistic preaching, Perry and Strubhar organized their model into four sections: invention, arrangement, style,

⁸⁶When the researcher refers to Perry and Strubhar's preaching theory, he speaks of the evangelistic preaching theory espoused in their book *Evangelistic Preaching*.

and delivery.⁸⁷ Invention deals with preparation, arrangement concerns organization, style involves methods, and delivery includes presentation.⁸⁸ Generally, Perry and Strubhar's incorporation of these components indicates a sequential aspect of their theory.

Basically, the homileticians moved from the conception of the sermon through the whole process of planning and eventual delivery. The sequential nature of the paradigm contrasts with the holistic character of the proposed model. In the integrated model of evangelistic preaching, the theological, organizational, and practical components blend into each other. For example, the personal preparation of the preacher enters into each of the components in some way. The elements of the proposed theory overlap in specific areas and together form one eclectic approach to evangelistic preaching.

An individual could not separate the components of the integrated model into specific stages of sermon construction and delivery. Although it contains facets of a

⁸⁷Clearly, Perry and Strubhar utilized four out of the five canons of rhetoric. They omitted the canon of memory. See Perry and Strubhar, 9.

⁸⁸Ibid., 162-7.

practice, the integrated model focuses more on a comprehensive perspective than an actual process. The proposed paradigm exemplifies a more expansive approach to evangelistic preaching than Perry and Strubhar's process-oriented philosophy.

In the following paragraphs, other differences and similarities will be highlighted. The two schemes can be compared and contrasted by considering Perry and Strubhar's theory in context of the theological, organizational, and practical components of the integrated model. While Perry and Strubhar did not arrange their work in such a way, the divisions are helpful in investigating the resemblances and discrepancies between the two theories.

The Theological Component

Perry and Strubhar's model of evangelistic preaching concentrates primarily upon the how-to aspect of preparing and delivering evangelistic sermons instead of the theological underpinnings of the practice. The homileticians devoted only one chapter of their work to the theological facet of evangelistic preaching.⁸⁹ Other than

⁸⁹This chapter represented a mere eight pages out of a work more than two hundred pages in length.

that brief instance, they occasionally revealed theological stances as they advanced the explanation of their model.

In their lone chapter on theology, Perry and Strubhar gave a strong place to the Holy Spirit's work in evangelistic preaching. The Holy Spirit, in their view, brings spiritual life to the unbeliever by producing conviction of sin. Furthermore, the Spirit calls the evangelist and equips him to proclaim the good news of Christ. The preacher relies upon the Spirit in his prayer life and in his sermon preparation to provide illumination and authority. Without the Holy Spirit's involvement, evangelistic preaching proves meaningless and irrelevant.⁹⁰

Perry and Strubhar's emphasis upon the Holy Spirit's ministry in the life of the evangelistic preacher and in the actual preaching event echoes the emphasis found in the integrated model. The integrated paradigm stresses the Holy Spirit's role in preparing and empowering the preacher for his task. The model also highlights the conviction, conversion, and confirmation brought upon the unbeliever by

⁹⁰Perry and Strubhar, 17-24.

the Spirit's work.⁹¹ Theologically, Perry and Strubhar's theory of evangelistic preaching most clearly intersects with the integrated model in its emphasis upon the Holy Spirit.

While there may be other areas of doctrinal agreement, the absence of a systematic theological presentation in Perry and Strubhar's model largely obscures them. The homileticians did not address the theological presuppositions or the theological content of evangelistic preaching as the integrated model does. Occasionally, they exposed their beliefs in their discussions of particular definitions and strategies; but outside of their comments on the Holy Spirit, they refrained from detailing other theological positions. Perry and Strubhar's limited attention to the theological aspect of evangelistic preaching contrasts with the integrated model's inclusion of a substantial theological component.⁹²

⁹¹Hamblin, "Gurney Lectures, Part 2"; "A Prayer for God's People"; and "Strength in the Lord."

⁹²For example, the researcher assumed Perry and Strubhar believed in repentance and faith because they called for such a response in their definition of evangelistic preaching. The writers did not chronicle their theological convictions surrounding the subjects. See Perry and Strubhar, 13.

The Organizational Component

Besides their acceptance of a theological element, Perry and Strubhar embraced an organized approach to evangelistic sermon preparation. They argued that the preparation process begins with a preacher who maintains a vibrant prayer life, a systematic study of the Bible, a disciplined reading of available source material, and a daily exchange with people from all walks of life.⁹³

In some way, the homileticians' emphasis upon the personal preparation of the evangelist reflects that of the integrated model. For example, Hamblin gave prominence to the preacher's personal preparation by emphasizing prayer and humility.⁹⁴ He also called upon the preacher to engage the Scripture honestly and thoughtfully. Through his own preparation, the preacher readies himself to structure the sermon.

Overall, the integrated model echoes Perry and Strubhar's model in the actual arrangement of the evangelistic sermon. According to Perry and Strubhar, the

⁹³Ibid., 84-5.

⁹⁴Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 2."

preacher prepares himself as well as his actual sermon. He selects the appropriate material needed to communicate the evangelistic message: the text, the subject, the theme, the form, and the functional elements. Like Hamblin, Perry and Strubhar especially underscored the foundational import of Scripture and its study. Basically, the integrated model follows Perry and Strubhar's practice of selecting the materials before structuring the sermon.

Besides organization in preparation, Perry and Strubhar embraced structure within the sermon itself. They arranged the sermon into four parts: the introduction, the body, the conclusion, and the invitation. While Hamblin used this terminology to refer to his sermon structure, he maintained that the conclusion and the invitation are essentially the same.⁹⁵ He argued against placing any artificial separation between the two. Hamblin also demonstrated Perry and Strubhar's process of developing the sermon's body first, the introduction second, and the conclusion/invitation third.

A notable difference between the models concerns the use of main divisions within the body of the sermon. Perry

⁹⁵Hamblin, personal interview.

and Strubhar held to a rather rigid practice of developing the body around two to five main points.⁹⁶ They also called for the logical and symmetrical statement of the main divisions. Almost without exception, Perry and Strubhar felt that alliteration advanced the message of the sermon and encouraged the preacher to utilize the literary device.⁹⁷

Within the integrated model, the preacher experiences more flexibility. He might use an outline of main divisions, or he might adopt a homily pattern. When he does choose to employ an outline, the preacher focuses upon simple divisions most often stated in incomplete phrases. At times, he uses literary devices such as parallelism and alliteration, although the flexibility of the model allows him the freedom to refrain from the practices.⁹⁸ No doubt, the integrated model rejects the strict, definite approach advocated by Perry and Strubhar and encourages the use of a variety of forms.

⁹⁶Perry and Strubhar, 99.

⁹⁷Ibid., 100.

⁹⁸Hamblin, sermon based on Acts 5:27-42; sermon based on 1 Thess. 1:1-10; "Victorious Attitudes"; and "The Master of Human Life and Mind."

Even though the integrated model grants the preacher a measure of freedom in regard to sermonic form, the paradigm basically concurs with Perry and Strubhar's use of the functional elements. Both models indicate that the evangelistic sermon involves application, argumentation, and illustration. They also call for a deductive, logical methodology. Systematically, the preacher develops his argument through the use of outlines or simple explanation.⁹⁹

One final distinction between the integrated model and Perry and Strubhar's model concerns the element of illustration. The integrated model calls for the use of only a few illustrations in the evangelistic sermon and for those illustrations to be drawn almost exclusively from the preacher's own personal experience.¹⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Perry and Strubhar stressed variety in sermon illustrations: "Variety of illustration is also a characteristic of great evangelistic preaching. To overuse one form of illustration

⁹⁹Perry and Strubhar, 77-9; and "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 40.

¹⁰⁰Hamblin, "A Prayer for God's People"; and "Strength in the Lord."

and exclude other meaningful ones is to render a sermon ineffective."¹⁰¹

The Practical Component

The proposed model of evangelistic preaching places great emphasis upon the practical side of the field. In particular, the model specifies that evangelistic proclamation occurs "in word, spirit, and deed."¹⁰² The evangelistic preacher demonstrates faith in his daily life and personally practices evangelism. Perry and Strubhar gave little attention to this practical aspect of evangelistic preaching. In their discussion on the Holy Spirit, they encouraged the preacher to submit to the Spirit's activity.¹⁰³ Later, they also stated the need for the minister to engage in person-to-person evangelism.¹⁰⁴ Outside of these two brief insights, Perry and Strubhar largely ignored the practical life of the preacher in their evangelistic preaching theory.

¹⁰¹Perry and Strubhar, 81-2.

¹⁰²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 1.

¹⁰³Perry and Strubhar, 19-20.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., 75.

The integrated paradigm intersects with Perry and Strubhar's model in the delivery of the evangelistic sermon. Each theory emphasizes a natural, direct, and conversational delivery style in evangelistic preaching. Whether in gestures or vocal expressions, the preacher establishes a positive mood in which he declares the gospel. In addition, both models endorse the extemporaneous approach to delivery as the most effective.¹⁰⁵

The only significant difference in the two models' presentation of delivery involves the unique personality of each preacher. The integrated model places great importance upon the individuality of the evangelist, much more significance than Perry and Strubhar did.¹⁰⁶ Perry and Strubhar insisted on a rather uniform method of delivery. Hamblin also suggested the preacher display transparency to his audience by relating his own personal experiences.¹⁰⁷ The integrated model's emphasis upon such openness differentiates it from Perry and Strubhar's theory.

¹⁰⁵Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16-7; Perry and Strubhar, 131-67.

¹⁰⁶Hamblin, personal interview.

¹⁰⁷Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16.

"The Integrated Model" Versus
"The Richard Model"

In contrast to Perry and Strubhar, Richard arranged his preaching theory into four parts: (1) foundation; (2) framework; (3) method; and (4) special issues.¹⁰⁸ He developed his model by highlighting the calling of the preacher as well as the theological framework and definition of evangelistic preaching. After presenting these issues, he presented a "seven-step method for preaching salvation."¹⁰⁹ Like Perry and Strubhar's theory, Richard's model obviously exhibits a strong sequential trait.

Again, the process approach of Richard's theory contrasts with the holistic character of the integrated model. As already mentioned, the components of the integrated model coalesce into one eclectic paradigm. Instead of centering on a process, the integrated model presents a holistic overview of evangelistic preaching.

¹⁰⁸The integrated model of evangelistic preaching was compared with Richard's evangelistic preaching theory as presented in his work *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons*.

¹⁰⁹Richard, 88-9.

Besides this overall distinction, other similarities and differences were noted.¹¹⁰

The Theological Component

Richard gave much more effort to explaining the theological aspect of evangelistic preaching than Perry and Strubhar. He dealt with some of the convictions behind evangelistic preaching such as the exclusivity of salvation through Christ, the sinfulness of humanity, and the Holy Spirit's work in evangelism. These conservative premises mirror many of those set forth in the integrated model of preaching.

Yet, Richard did not deal with the theological component of evangelism as extensively as Hamblin did. The integrated model specifically outlines the theological presuppositions and content of evangelistic preaching. While Richard encapsulated some of the same presuppositions, he failed to entail all of Hamblin's theological beliefs in his theory.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰For a more thorough comparison between the models, refer to chapter 2.

¹¹¹For example, Richard did not emphasize the issue of God's purposeful plan for salvation as did Hamblin.

Furthermore, Richard opposed the integrated model's insistence that evangelistic preaching goes beyond verbal proclamation to include spirit and deed.¹¹² He believed that evangelistic preaching is distinct from evangelism. While evangelism includes the wider dimension of word and deed, Richard held that evangelistic preaching encompasses only the area of speech.¹¹³

The Organizational Component

Clearly, Richard promoted organization within the preparation process of evangelistic preaching. After all, he presented a seven-step method for preaching salvation: "(1) study the text; (2) structure the text; (3) central proposition of the text; (4) purpose of the sermon; (5) central proposition of the sermon; (6) structure the sermon; and (7) preach the sermon."¹¹⁴ The integrated model incorporates all of these steps into its system of preparing evangelistic sermons, although the proposed paradigm moves beyond a simple process.

¹¹²Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 1.

¹¹³Richard, 66-9.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 88-9.

Richard's discussion of sermon preparation also differed from that of the integrated model in the subject of the preacher's personal preparation. The integrated model stresses the evangelist's own spiritual preparation for the message, while Richard's theory gives minimal attention to the issue.¹¹⁵ Richard essentially addressed the preacher's call to evangelism and mentioned the need for prayer in the evangelist's life.¹¹⁶ Apart from these limited instances, Richard's model ignores the personal preparation of the evangelistic preacher.

Organization characterizes Richard's sermon structure as well as his preparation process. Like Hamblin, Richard organized each sermon into the basic formal elements: introduction, body, and conclusion. Also, he embraced a variety of sermon forms in evangelistic preaching. He believed that both textual and topical sermons are viable options for evangelistic preaching.¹¹⁷ Evangelistic

¹¹⁵Hamblin, "Stanfield Lectures, Part 2."

¹¹⁶Richard, 19, 63.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 85-135.

proclamation, according to both Richard and Hamblin, does not require one specific sermon form.¹¹⁸

Despite some similarities, the models demonstrate several differences in the actual sermon structure. For example, Richard insisted that the preacher summarize his main points in full sentences: "Unless you write out your main points in full sentences, you'll never know how unclear statements are!"¹¹⁹ The integrated model, on the other hand, allows the preacher to state his main divisions in several ways. Most often, the paradigm adopts single words or phrases to express the major concepts of the sermon.¹²⁰

In addition, Richard permitted the evangelist to structure his message around something other than the biblical text. He described the practice: "Instead of beginning with the biblical text (you always begin with a biblical worldview), you begin with a human 'text,' which provides the questions people are asking, the issues people

¹¹⁸Hamblin, personal interview.

¹¹⁹Richard, 108.

¹²⁰Hamblin, "Victorious Attitudes"; "The Master of Human Life and Mind"; and "Baptism."

are facing, the premises people are assuming, and the consciences people are ignoring, to provide the topic you will turn into a theme and thrust (the central proposition of the topic)."¹²¹ This exercise is distant from Hamblin's declaration: "I started with the text."¹²² The proposed model of evangelistic preaching demands that the biblical text be the basis for the sermon structure.

With reference to sermon structure, a final distinction between the integrated model and Richard's model involves functional elements. The proposed theory identifies three functional elements: application, argumentation, and illustration.¹²³ While Richard may have embraced these same elements, he did not address them in a similar methodical manner. Richard actually identified one functional element clearly and explained its use. He outlined the purpose and the practice of including illustrations in the sermon. In particular, he promoted the use of a variety of illustrations. For Richard, the use of different kinds of illustrations marks an effective

¹²¹Richard, 146.

¹²²Hamblin, personal interview.

¹²³Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching: P607," 37.

evangelistic sermon.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Richard believed that the preacher has to include an illustration in each of the formal elements (introduction, body, and conclusion) of the sermon.¹²⁵ The integrated model differs from Richard's paradigm by proposing the use of a small number of illustrations that primarily relates to the preacher's personal experience.¹²⁶

The Practical Component

Richard virtually ignored the practical component of evangelistic preaching. For instance, he failed to address the evangelist's lifestyle and its importance in the overall theory of evangelistic preaching. Besides his comments on the calling of the preacher, he remained silent on the daily example of the evangelist. As already demonstrated, the integrated model entails proclamation of the gospel "in word, spirit, and deed."¹²⁷

¹²⁴Richard, 153.

¹²⁵Ibid., 165.

¹²⁶Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 16; "A Prayer for God's People"; and "Strength in the Lord."

¹²⁷Hamblin, "Evangelistic Preaching in Today's World," 1.

Moreover, Richard wrote very little about the delivery of the evangelistic sermon. He determined that the last step in preaching the sermon includes its delivery. He also suggested that the evangelist deliver his message without notes (a practice endorsed by Hamblin).¹²⁸ Other than these observations, Richard provided no guidelines for delivering the actual evangelistic sermon.

General Observations

Based upon the preceding comparisons, the following conclusions were drawn about the uniqueness of the integrated model. First, the integrated paradigm of evangelistic preaching reveals a balanced approach to evangelistic preaching. The model displays the theological, organizational, and practical components of evangelism. The other two theological theories only focus upon certain aspects of the components.¹²⁹ The integrated model alone includes all three components of evangelistic preaching in a somewhat proportionate manner.

¹²⁸Richard, 101.

¹²⁹As indicated, Perry and Strubhar emphasized the organizational and practical components, while Richard centered on some of the theological and organizational components.

Second, the integrated model provides a more holistic approach to evangelistic preaching than the other two theories. Both Perry and Strubhar's model and Richard's model present a sequential method of evangelistic preaching. Perhaps Richard's effort to outline a "seven-step method for preaching salvation" best exemplifies this process approach.¹³⁰ Meanwhile, the integrated paradigm emphasizes a more holistic stance to evangelistic preaching. The three components overlap and share specific features.¹³¹ Although it suggests a methodology in the organizational component, the integrated model is not a mere process for developing sermons. The proposed theory encompasses the whole aspect of evangelistic preaching: theological, organizational, and practical.

Third, the integrated model provides a clearer connection between the theology of evangelism and the evangelistic preaching practice. As observed above, Perry and Strubhar included only a brief section on the Holy

¹³⁰Richard, 88-9.

¹³¹For example, the concept of evangelistic preaching as the proclamation of the gospel in "spirit, word, and deed" plays a role in the theological, organizational, and practical components of the integrated model.

Spirit's role in evangelism, while Richard explained more of the theological characteristics of evangelistic preaching. Still, neither theory provides the exhaustive list of theological presuppositions and sermonic content that the integrated model does. This list generally reflects Hamblin's theology of evangelism and informed the preaching practice of the evangelist.¹³²

Fourth, the integrated model stresses the personal preparation of the preacher in a much greater way than Perry and Strubhar's theory and Richard's model. Hamblin emphasized the theological convictions of the preacher, the submission of the preacher to the Holy Spirit in sermon preparation, and the evangelistic lifestyle of the preacher. In each case, the proposed paradigm highlights the evangelist's personhood in a more comprehensive manner than the other models.

Fifth, the integrated model allows more flexibility in sermon structure than its two counterparts. Hamblin used

¹³²An illustration of this assertion concerns the evangelist's presupposition that the Bible is the substance of evangelistic preaching. If the preacher truly affirms such a conviction, then he roots his message firmly within the biblical witness. Practically, he starts his preparation with the text.

outlines that differed in the numbers of main divisions and in the development of each division. He even utilized a homily approach as he explained his message verse by verse. The liberty within the integrated model's approach to sermon structure contrasts with the rigid, formulaic style of Perry and Strubhar and of Richard.

Sixth, the integrated paradigm of evangelistic preaching embraces a more personal aspect to the practice. Specifically, the proposed theory calls upon the preacher to include illustrations primarily from his own life experience. While the other two models allow personal illustrations, they embrace more variety. The integrated model emphasizes the use of personal experiences to communicate the gospel message.

These few observations demonstrate the uniqueness of the integrated model. Compared to two other respected theories, the integrated model of evangelistic preaching displays a distinctive character. Indeed, the proposed paradigm offers a holistic model for contemporary evangelistic preaching.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the research was to examine Hamblin's theology of evangelism, his evangelistic preaching theory, and his actual preaching in order to construct a contemporary evangelistic preaching model. After constructing the preacher's theology of evangelism and theory of evangelistic preaching from primary sources, an analysis of Hamblin's preaching practice was completed through the use of research instruments. From these considerations, a model of evangelistic preaching emerged that demonstrated both similarities and distinctions regarding other theories. The conclusion of the research will focus on a summary of the overall findings, observations from the study, and recommendations for further research.

Summary of Findings

For the most part, previous evangelistic preaching models centered on theoretical conjecture rather than

practical examples. Also, the models focused on specific aspects of evangelistic preaching such preaching theory, practice, or theology. Virtually none of the existing studies incorporated all three of these components into one comprehensive model. While the previous chapters entail summaries of Hamblin's theology, theory, and practice as well as a synopsis of Hamblin's unique approach, a summary of general findings will be presented by considering the hypotheses of the research project.

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis was that Hamblin's preaching practice would reflect his theology of evangelism as well as his evangelistic preaching theory. This hypothesis was accepted after a close examination of Hamblin's preaching. By using research instruments based upon Richard's theory of evangelistic preaching, the researcher noted characteristics of the evangelist's practice, which does in fact reflect aspects of his theology and theory. Within his content and delivery, Hamblin exhibited his theology.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis was that Hamblin's theology of evangelism, preaching theory, and preaching practice would

exhibit a holistic perspective on his approach to evangelistic preaching. This hypothesis proved true also. Hamblin's posture toward evangelistic preaching encompasses theological, organizational, and practical components. Hamblin viewed evangelistic preaching as more than a mere process; the effort involves a holistic approach that crosses theological, theoretical, and practical spectrums.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis was that an examination of Hamblin's holistic approach would produce a contemporary model for evangelistic preaching. As demonstrated in the fourth chapter, an analysis of Hamblin's views and practices yielded an integrated model for evangelistic preaching. The paradigm includes theological, organizational, and practical components that intersect with one another.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis was that Hamblin's model not only would exhibit features similar to other prevailing models in the field of evangelistic preaching, but it also would demonstrate differences unique to Hamblin. After comparing the integrated model to Perry and Strubhar's

theory and Richard's paradigm, some similarities and differences were noted at the close of the fourth chapter. In particular, the integrated model displays unique aspects of evangelistic preaching.

Observations from the Study

Several observations were made concerning the study. First, the work demonstrates that a holistic approach to evangelistic preaching is possible. Perry and Strubhar's model and Richard's model revealed a sequential method to evangelistic preaching. They focused upon the process of evangelistic preaching, whereas the integrated model emphasizes how different components coalesce into a synthesized paradigm. An individual cannot separate the components of the integrated model into a step-by-step method. Rather, the components interlock to form one comprehensive model of evangelistic preaching.

Second, a holistic model allows for a balance in evangelistic preaching. Instead of focusing upon one or two aspects of the practice (as did Perry and Strubhar as well as Richard), the integrated model gives attention to all three components of evangelistic preaching equally. The theological, organizational, and practical aspects comprise a balanced approach to evangelistic preaching.

Third, the integrated model emphasizes the comprehensive character of evangelistic preaching. As the paradigm points out, evangelistic preaching involves the proclamation of the gospel in word, spirit, and deed. The practice entails more than mere verbal expression; it extends to the lifestyle and attitude of the evangelistic preacher.

Fourth, the preacher's theology of evangelism impacts his evangelistic preaching theory and practice. For example, Hamblin's belief in the convicting, converting, and confirming ministry of the Holy Spirit affected his preparation and delivery of the sermon. The preacher relies upon the Spirit for illumination as he prepares and for empowerment as he preaches. Likewise, other theological presuppositions motivate the preacher in areas of organization and practice.

Fifth, the integrated model demonstrates that evangelistic preaching is not defined by one sermon form. In both the Richard model and the Perry and Strubhar model, the homileticians emphasized specific forms for evangelistic preaching. Although Richard allowed more flexibility than Perry and Strubhar, he still insisted upon the use of a discernible outline. The integrated model

grants the evangelist even more liberty in his presentation. While it was important to Hamblin, sermon structure could assume various appearances. The preacher is free to utilize an outline or to use a homily approach in his sermon. Consequently, one exclusive form is not synonymous with evangelistic preaching.

Sixth, the study of an individual evangelist produces valuable insight into evangelistic preaching, possibly providing the basis for a contemporary model. Hamblin's theology, theory, and practice inform the overall discussion regarding evangelistic preaching and offer a holistic approach to the endeavor; therefore, such studies of evangelistic preachers can advance the discourse surrounding evangelistic preaching.

Recommendations for Further Research

After completing the study, several recommendations for further research were identified. First, an obvious area of future research involves other prominent evangelists. Although several research projects concerned evangelists in the past, most of them address either the evangelist's theology or his theory and preaching. Future research needs to follow this study's example of contemplating theology, theory, and preaching practice.

Through such considerations, the researcher will gain a more holistic view of evangelistic preaching.

Researching contemporary evangelists may be especially helpful. By examining a preacher before he ends his ministry, the researcher is able to glean information from the minister personally. From personal interviews, the individual can supplement the information he or she finds in other sources and better construct the evangelist's perspective of evangelistic preaching.

Second, further research might focus on earlier sermons in Hamblin's ministry in order to see whether he was consistent in his evangelistic preaching. Through an analysis of such sermons, the researcher could determine whether the evangelist evolved in his actual preaching over the years. Determining whether or not Hamblin made a transition in his preaching practice might provide insight into the overall model.

Third, future research may utilize the components of the proposed model to analyze other evangelistic preaching schemes. The researcher can develop a research instrument based on the integrated model of evangelistic preaching and use it as a lens to examine various preaching paradigms. By

extending the study, the individual can gain greater understanding of evangelistic preaching.

Fourth, a final recommendation for future study encompasses the integrated model's relationship to other models in the field. A more in-depth comparison between the integrated model and other models is needed to ascertain the uniqueness of the paradigm and its continuing contribution to the conversation concerning evangelistic preaching. Through a more thorough comparison, the researcher could synthesize the findings of the study into helpful summaries of evangelistic preaching. For example, contrasting the integrated model with the contemporary model presented in Jonggil Lee's research could further the understanding of preaching evangelistically today.

APPENDIX 1

A RESEARCH TOOL BASED UPON RICHARD'S
THEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO
EVANGELISTIC PREACHING

Sermon Title: _____

Sermon Text: _____

Preacher: _____

Objective: Answer the following questions as fully as possible in order to determine whether or not the preacher reflects Richard's theological approach to evangelistic preaching.

*The Evangelistic Stance
of the Trinity*

1. Major Question: Does the preacher highlight God's basic attributes of holiness and love?

Theological Sub-Questions:

- Does the preacher indicate that God's holiness keeps sinners from Him?
- Does the preacher remind listeners that God will judge all humanity?
- Does the preacher suggest that God in His love wishes all to be saved?
- Does the preacher point out the unbeliever's spiritual distance from God and how God has bridged the eternal distance?

2. Major Question: Does the preacher explain the Son's relationship to human salvation?

Theological Sub-Questions:

- Does the preacher underscore the divine-human personhood of Christ?
- Does the preacher present salvation as exclusive to those who believe on the Son?
- Does the preacher highlight the necessity and sufficiency of Christ's work on the cross?
- Does the preacher demonstrate the universality of Christ's invitation to salvation?

3. Major Question: Does the preacher explain (implicitly or explicitly) the Holy Spirit's ministry in salvation?

Theological Sub-Questions:

- Does the preacher mention the Holy Spirit's work in convicting the unbeliever of his or her sin?
- Does the preacher speak of the Holy Spirit's work in the unbeliever's actual conversion?
- Does the preacher relate the confirming ministry of the Holy Spirit after one is saved?

*The Evangelistic Situation
of Humanity*

1. Does the preacher proclaim that people are eternally and perpetually lost without the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ?

2. Does the preacher convey the truth that people are "savable" but unwilling to be saved?

3. Does the preacher declare that people must embrace the Lord Jesus as the only God who saves them from their lostness?

(Adapted from Ramesh Richard's *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons*, 60-2.)

APPENDIX 2

TEXTUAL EVANGELISTIC SERMON EVALUATION FORM

Sermon Title: _____

Sermon Text: _____

Preacher: _____

I. Textual Faithfulness

- A. Central Proposition: Does it accurately reflect the subject, proposition, and context intent of the original author in the text or context?
- B. Validation: Is it exegetically, theologically, and logically appropriate?
- C. Anchor: Does the speaker direct you to where he is in the text?

II. Content and Organization

- A. Introduction
 - 1. Need
 - 2. Attention
 - 3. Purpose
 - 4. Orientation
 - 5. Subintroduction
- B. The Central Proposition of the Sermon
 - 1. Relevance to unbeliever's understanding
 - 2. Connection to unbeliever's language
- C. Development
 - 1. Outline Sketch: simple and memorable?
 - 2. Effectiveness of rhetorical strategy
- D. Conclusion
 - 1. Summary: connection to sermon's purpose and theme
 - 2. Invitation
 - a. What are you calling for?

- b. Are the terms clear?
- c. Is the response mechanism or process clear?

III. Style and Delivery

- A. Voice: speed, volume, pitch, expressiveness
- B. Delivery: facial expressions, gestures, bodily movement
- C. Style: grammar, word choice, articulation, straightforwardness
- D. Support Materials: adequate, appropriate, credible
 - 1. Appropriate to the experiences of the lost?
 - 2. Use of humor
 - 3. Explanation of biblical and theological terms
 - 4. Is the support material adequate?
- E. Presence: rapport, eye contact, personality, friendliness, mood

IV. Relevance

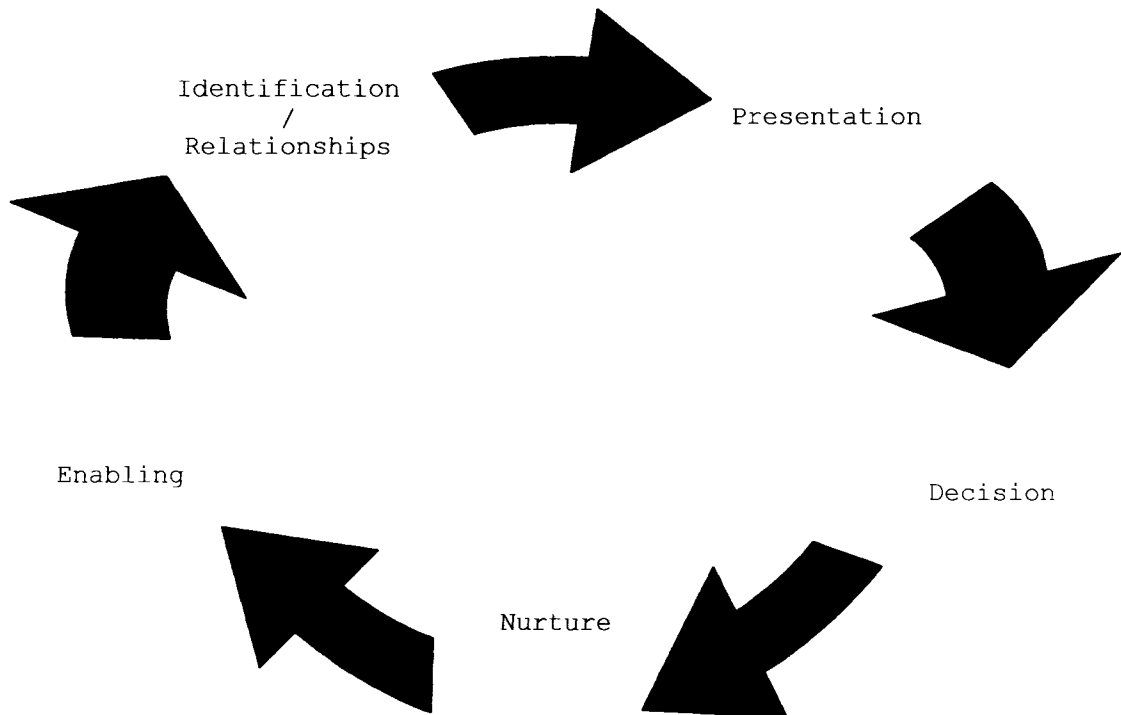
- A. Interest level
- B. Concrete understanding of the relevance of Jesus' salvation and how this truth may be appropriate

(Taken directly from Ramesh Richard's *Preparing Evangelistic Sermons*, 234-5.)

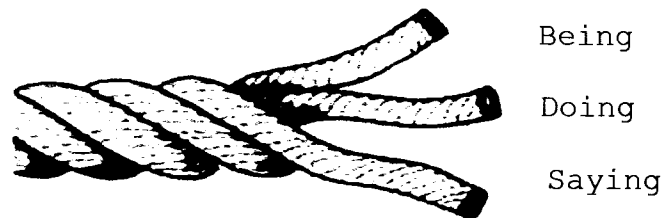
APPENDIX 3

NEW TESTAMENT "CONCEPTS" OF EVANGELISM

The Cycle of Evangelism

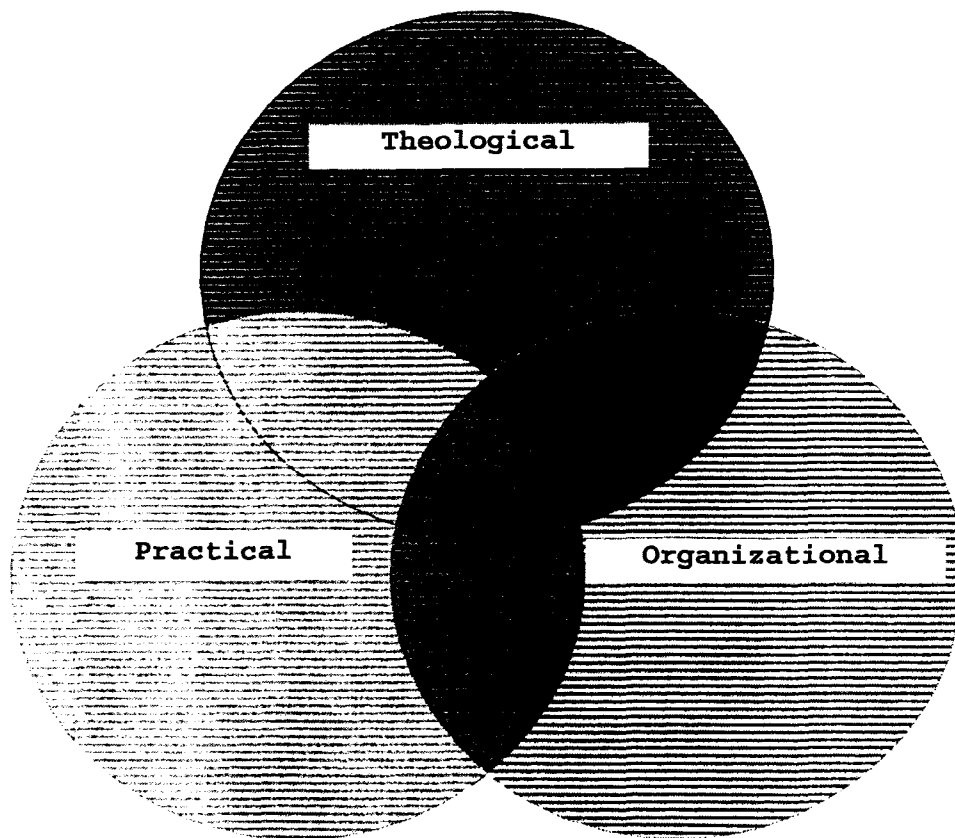


The Threads of Evangelism



APPENDIX 4

AN INTEGRATED EVANGELISTIC PREACHING MODEL



APPENDIX 5

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT L. HAMBLIN

(The following is an excerpt from an interview with Robert L. Hamblin at his home in Huntersville, North Carolina on May 17, 2007.)

Question: Please outline your life and background growing up, especially with regard to your salvation experience and call to the ministry.

Robert Hamblin: I was actually born in Ohio. My parents moved there right after they married. Momma and Daddy had nine children. I was the ninth one, the last one. My dad worked at Proctor and Gamble. He was an engineer. They transferred him to Memphis when I was three years old in 1930. We lived in the Memphis area all during my childhood until I graduated from high school. We actually, most of the time, lived out in the country. My dad believed that boys ought to be on the farm because that was the way he grew up. So we had a farm, and I worked like all kids do on the farm. We had crops. We raised a huge garden to feed the huge family, and we also had dairy cows which we milked morning and night.

While we were living in the rural area, we started going to a Presbyterian church. This was really the only church in the community. My dad belonged to the Church of Christ, and my mother belonged to the Methodist Church. When I was very little, we went to the Christian Church. I think this was a compromise for the two of them. Later, we began to go to the Presbyterian Church. I really liked going to the Presbyterian Church. I went to Sunday School and Boy Scouts. The scout leader was my Sunday School teacher. He never was an overt witness but always implied that we needed God in our lives. When I was twelve, all of the kids in my Sunday School class were memorizing the shorter catechism. When we were able to say it, we would

say it to the preacher and join the church. Well, there was a revival at the church. A very strong preacher, I don't remember his name, was preaching. Listening to him, I came under conviction about my sins, and I didn't know what to do about it. With the religious background I had, I didn't know the answer. I talked to my dad about it. He told me basically to think about it more and when I was old enough I could get baptized. I then talked to my Sunday School teacher, and he told me that I knew the catechism and I could join the church at any time. I wasn't interested in joining the church. I was interested in getting forgiveness.

My brother, who was four years older than I, had always been my hero, so I decided to talk to him. He didn't know anything about it; he wasn't saved. I had a sister who was married and lived away from home. She was a strong Christian. I went to see her and told her how I felt that God needed to forgive me of my sins. She got the Bible down and turned to the second chapter of Ephesians and read the first ten verses to me. She said the only way you can be saved is by grace, and grace means God will forgive you whether you deserve it or not. She told me that I had to ask him to do it, trust him, and commit my life to him. I asked how to do that, and she said you get down on your knees right here and tell God how you feel. I asked her if she thought he would hear me. She assured me he would. So, I did exactly what she said and knew immediately that the Lord had come into my life and saved me. At the age of twelve, I joined the Baptist church because that was where she went to church.

Soon after that, we moved away from the farm, and I began attending a Baptist church, Hollywood Baptist Church, located behind our new home. This church had a very dynamic preacher who loved the Word of God and taught it. He and two or three of the lay people of the church really taught me and mentored me. When I was sixteen years old, I started teaching Sunday School class because all of the men were gone off to war. I got to win every boy in the class to the Lord. As I said, my preacher was a mentor to me. He taught me to witness. He was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. When I was called to preach, he wanted me to go there, but I prayed about it and decided the best place I could serve the Lord was at a Southern Baptist school. So, I went to Union University and The Southwestern Seminary.

Question: How old were you when you came to Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo, Mississippi?

Robert Hamblin: I was thirty years old.

Question: You stayed there twenty-two years, is that correct?

Robert Hamblin: That is correct.

Question: When you left Tupelo, you went to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary to teach in evangelism?

Robert Hamblin: That is correct. I also taught preaching. Basically, I taught evangelism. They called me the evangelism professor.

Question: When you went to the Home Mission Board, was your title Vice President for Evangelism?

Robert Hamblin: That's correct. The board was divided into four parts. There was a president and four vice presidents for each division. My job was to assist the president of the evangelism department. Basically at that time, the evangelism division was considered the program for evangelism for Southern Baptists. I enjoyed being a part of the Home Mission Board.

Question: How long were you there?

Robert Hamblin: Seven years.

Question: Did you return to New Orleans after that?

Robert Hamblin: Actually, when I left the Home Mission Board I went back to Tupelo and was the director of the Hancock Foundation for about five years. Then I went to New Orleans.

Question: As I was looking at your theology of evangelism, you had a definition of evangelism that you used. Evangelism is the proclamation of the gospel in word, deed, and spirit. What were some influences on your theology of evangelism or on your perspective of

evangelism? Were there specific influences such as professors and pastors in your life?

Robert Hamblin: Yes, my own salvation experience was a tremendous interpretive influence. This is a little tract that was compiled by my pastor, Lawrence Riley. He gave it to me, and I memorized it as a teenager. I would memorize those Scriptures while I was going to school in the morning. The biblical principles taught in that tract became a great influence on my life. My pastor also taught me how to use the New Testament to witness to people. The first person I ever won to the Lord was one of my buddies in school. He had been attending church, and the pastor told me that the Lord laid it on his heart that I should witness to him. I thought he had lost his mind, but that's how I got started. Brother Riley and that little tract had a great influence on my life.

There was also a director of missions named Jonas Stuart. He was interested in all the young pastors and college students being evangelistic. During revival, he got me started going to every prospect in the church. In 1949 or 1950 he preached a revival in our church, and there were seventeen people saved. We had been to see all of them in their home. His influence got me on track with visitation. In seminary, a director of missions came to see me when I became a pastor in his association. He talked to me about winning people to the Lord. He had a great influence in getting me praying for people that were lost.

Someone else who had as much influence on me as anyone in the area of evangelism was Leonard Sanderson, Vice President of the Home Mission Board and Director of Evangelism. When he was a young pastor, he was mentored by a man named Matthews. I got all of his materials when I went to Harrisburg and tried to pattern a program of evangelism like Matthews invited Southern Baptists to do. This pattern included having an evangelism council, which later became the church council. I did two or three services a year following his outline. I became friends with Dr. Sanderson. He was a tremendous soul winner and knew how to teach others to be soul winners. I tried to do those same things. He also taught me to expect somebody to be saved every time you preach.

Question: In your view of evangelism, I can see an overall emphasis of not just proclamation, but implied evangelism. You speak of "word, deed and spirit" showing

forth the gospel. I can see Old Testament and New Testament background in some of the concepts in your writing. Did you draw your comprehensive definition from the Old Testament and New Testament background?

Robert Hamblin: That's the Pauline concept. Paul's idea of evangelism was proclamation of the good news, but he also said, "I must be all things to all men that I might indeed win some." This means deed and lifestyle. Evangelism is the kind of thing that saturates your life. It has to become basically the structure of your life. There has to be the telling. There is never complete evangelism unless you tell, but it comes out of what you are and who you are. Those things are demonstrative. If they don't see it in you, they aren't going to listen. So it is deed and lifestyle. If you're successful, it is everything that you are.

Question: From my reading, I pulled out a few doctrines I thought were important to you in your theology of evangelism. I wanted to mention them, get your feedback, and let you expand on them. The first one is the person of Christ. It is Christ-centered. Another is the Bible. Next is the nature of God. You mention this one specifically in one of your articles. The next doctrines were the sinful condition of humanity, the plan and the purpose of God, and the initiative of God. Finally, there was the doctrine of election, the idea that people were elected to share and that God chose them as instruments to share the good news.

Robert Hamblin: My concept of election is that God is completely sovereign. Therefore, God does all of the saving. We respond to God by an act of faith. The concept of election and salvation is not predestination, but that God has elected us to a Christian life as well as a salvation experience. The Christian life demonstrates itself in witness. Ephesians 2 is very clear on that. I believe some things that Calvin did. I would rather say that I am Pauline as opposed to Calvinist. There are things about election that I don't understand. So what I always told my students was believe God does everything there is to do about it. Believe that God wants you to take the good news to every person in the world and ask them to put their trust in Christ.

Question: You cite the pre-gospel of the Old Testament in several of your articles and state that it demonstrates the plan and purpose of God.

Robert Hamblin: I believe that it does.

Question: The person of Christ was the utmost doctrine in your theology. You also mention the redemptive work of Christ as part of your theology. As I looked at your works, you talked about faith and repentance both being necessary for the respond to salvation. You also talked about the lordship of Christ and the belief that you cannot accept Jesus just as Savior. You have to also accept him as Lord if you are to experience true salvation in your life.

Robert Hamblin: You have to accept Jesus as he is. He is Savior, and he is Lord. They are not separated qualities. It is a simple thing. We try to divide our theology into compartments, which you can't really do. These things are abstract. We have an eternal, creating, loving God of salvation who is our own. It finally occurred to me that even though we are trying to show what God is doing in different areas, it is the same God and he is doing the same thing all of the time. My concept of the theology of evangelism is summarized as follows: Our God loves us, he provided for us out of his love, and his desire is to save every person and then to be the Lord of that life into eternity.

Question: The last doctrine is the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The role of the Holy Spirit is bringing salvation and empowering the witness. Please speak to your view of the Holy Spirit and the role that he has in evangelism.

Robert Hamblin: The Holy Spirit brings about the new birth. God enters our life as Spirit at the time of our salvation. The Spirit never leaves. We ignore the Spirit sometimes and feel a lacking of the power of the Spirit; but as we empty ourselves of our selfishness and offer ourselves totally to God, the Spirit fills us again and again. It is that power of the Holy Spirit in our lives that makes us effective in evangelism.

Question: You say that never is a person in more need of the Spirit than when he is witnessing.

Robert Hamblin: That's correct.

Question: I want to talk about your theory of evangelistic preaching. Your definition of preaching is the "God-called person going into the presence of God, finding out what God wants said, and saying it." Do you still subscribe to this basic definition of preaching? Is that a definition you came to over the years and brought together, or was it one you established early in your ministry?

Robert Hamblin: Yes, I still hold to that definition. I established it early on. Those might not have been my exact words, but I discovered as a preacher that when I succeeded as an evangelistic preacher it was when I had gone into the presence of God, discovered what God wanted, and then did it. I did all of this under the assumption that this is what I'm supposed to do because God called me to do this. The most effective preachers are those who are called by God and picked out by him. There is a power in the gospel that will sometimes bring success in evangelism even though it is not a God-called preacher doing it, but the most effective preaching is done by those who have a calling by the Lord. Biblical evangelistic preaching is done by God-called preachers.

Question: Your definition of evangelistic preaching was almost verbatim of your definition of evangelism with a few minor modifications. Please speak to those minor changes.

Robert Hamblin: The concept is the same for both instances.

Question: The definitions show the link between what you define as evangelism and the actual act of evangelistic preaching. How does your theology of evangelism affect your theory of evangelistic preaching? Be specific in the areas of construction and delivery of sermons.

Robert Hamblin: My theology is Christ centered and is delivered to me through the Word of God. My preaching therefore has to be related in a very direct way to that theology. My preaching must be Christ centered and biblical. It must inform people of their nature and their need for God. It must inform them of the nature and

personality of God. Evangelistic preaching is demonstrative and interpretive of the theology of God.

Question: Other than being God-called, the evangelistic preacher must demonstrate humility, the presence of the Spirit, and be called first to the experience and knowledge of salvation. Are there any other qualities of the evangelistic preacher?

Robert Hamblin: There are so many overlapping qualities. He must be convinced completely of the power of God to save. He needs to demonstrate the activity of the gospel in his life. This is closely related with our submission to the lordship of Christ in our lives. We are messengers for God, and we need to demonstrate that we are his messengers.

Question: The message of evangelistic preaching should be Christ centered. In your notes, you mentioned different areas that need to be included in the evangelistic proclamation. These include the redemptive work of Christ, person of Christ, doctrine of salvation, and conversion. Are there any additions when thinking about an evangelistic preaching message? What else would it include?

Robert Hamblin: The changed life, the changed lifestyle is included in those things.

Question: I would like to move to the evangelistic text. When you talk about the evangelistic text, you say this is a text that must present the good news. What do you mean by that? Could you expand on that?

Robert Hamblin: I mean by that who Christ is, what Christ did, and what Christ does for us.

Question: When looking at a text, even an Old Testament text, what kind of Old Testament text would you consider to be evangelistic?

Robert Hamblin: All Old Testament texts can be evangelistic because the purpose of the Old Testament is to reveal God. It is not history; it is to reveal God. In most texts you can go straight to who God is and what God does through Christ. The Old Testament is pointing to what Christ is doing, not just what he was going to do. In preaching, I always tell people what Christ has done and

ask them to respond to him. There are certain biblical texts that are more overt.

Question: In your own preparation, how would you deal with a text? Can you basically give an outline of the process?

Robert Hamblin: When I was a pastor I would start with the text after prayer. I did a lot of verse-by-verse preaching. I always started with the text. I try to thoroughly analyze the text. I always translated it from the Greek in the New Testament or the Hebrew in the Old Testament. I tried to use good commentaries. Every student has to surround himself with good things to study. I usually diagrammed the text and found a theme in the text. I always tried to make the subject of the sermon out of the theme of the text. After I finished all of this, I usually had a subject, a theme, and an outline. I would try to find the arrow of the text and make sure every point came off of that arrow. Every point presents Christ if it is an evangelistic sermon. At the end, a response is asked for. I think that the development of the text is the most important part of the preparation of the preacher, assuming he is prayed up and filled with God's Spirit.

Question: There was a place in your notes where you warn individuals of using a "stock" text. What did you mean by that?

Robert Hamblin: "Stock" text is the idea that you look for a text to support what you have to say. One starts with his own idea instead of first looking to the Bible.

Question: You mentioned three types of sermons that come from the text. Basically these are topical, textual, and expository. Would you please give me your take on each one?

Robert Hamblin: A topical sermon, of course, is one where God has put an idea or theme on your heart that you want to preach on, and you develop that theme into the parts of the sermon and find texts to support that theme. A textual sermon is not very different. You get a theme out of a text and then develop it with your ideas. An expository sermon is an exposition of a passage of

Scripture where the theme and all of the ideas of the sermon come out of the text.

Question: What is your understanding of the evangelistic subject?

Robert Hamblin: The subject of the sermon is about the saving work of Christ or the need of a Savior. You possibly could preach an evangelistic sermon on the subject of hell.

Question: How important to you is application of the evangelistic sermon?

Robert Hamblin: It is very important because the context in which people are going to be saved is today. Therefore you have to apply the meaning of the message and Christ's salvation in today's words and today's circumstances. My biblical commentaries all have to do with interpreting the message in a contemporary setting.

Question: When applying the message, what aided you in the process of application?

Robert Hamblin: I would go to the sanctuary and pray where they would be standing. Application requires you to care about your people and know your people. God can use sermons where the pastor does not know the people. It also requires a sensitivity to what you know to be the needs of the people, a sensitivity to their need for salvation. You can't walk out of the sanctuary when no one got saved and feel okay about it. Application is applying the message of God to the people who are listening to it. That takes prayer, following the leadership of the Holy Spirit, knowing people, and understanding people.

Question: Is application ultimately moving people to action?

Robert Hamblin: That is the desire of evangelism.

Question: Please discuss for a few moments the element of argumentation, the importance of it, and how you think it should be done.

Robert Hamblin: It's like taking one side of a debate. You are for Christ. You have to consider who would be on

the other side. You need to present Christ in such a way that they are convinced. The argumentation in the case of evangelism is proof. You are logically building your case.

Question: In your evangelistic preaching were you more deductive or inductive?

Robert Hamblin: I was deductive.

Question: You give several sources for illustration for an evangelistic sermon, including the Bible, history, literature, science, art, nature, and daily life. You say daily life is the best way. Why is that?

Robert Hamblin: Yes, because it makes the gospel contemporary. Illustration in preaching is the opening of a window, giving people something to hang on to. I have discovered that humor used in the right way can be very effective in illustration. In addition to bringing in light, it also keeps them alive, awake, and listening.

Question: Would you say that you used personal experience more than anything?

Robert Hamblin: I still do.

Question: In the structure of the sermon you said to study your text, decide on the essence of the text, draw the subject, develop the subject under two or more subtitles or points, develop each subtitle as much as possible, find and arrange illustrations, outline your introduction, write your proposition, write your conclusion, and let it gel. Is that still your formula?

Robert Hamblin: I have been doing that for about sixty years. That will work.

Question: In the structure, do you always have two points?

Robert Hamblin: No, I think it is better if you can develop into more than one point because you can analyze better and your argumentation will be better. You could have a one-point sermon.

Question: In the process of arranging the sermon elements, you wait until after you have your main points and subtitles before you outline your introduction. Is this correct?

Robert Hamblin: Yes, you have to know what you are introducing to introduce it.

Question: You say to "let it gel." How long in advance did you have your sermon prepared?

Robert Hamblin: That's relative, but I always tried to be finished with my sermons at least twenty-four hours before I preached them. In my early days when I went to the seminary, I pastored a small church and also had a job in a grocery store. I worked on Saturdays from five o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night. I would get finished with my sermon by Friday, and then I would let that sermon work on my mind, my heart, and my spirit while I was working on Saturday. I think you need some time to think through and talk through that sermon without your notes. You need to be ready to stand up in front of God's people and do what God has put on your heart to do. That's what I mean by "let it gel."

Question: You say the points should be drawn from the text if possible. In that are you saying there could be some points that do not necessarily come straight from the text?

Robert Hamblin: Yes, the sermon might become a textual sermon. That is alright. You do not always have to have a definition of what kind of sermon it is for people to get saved.

Question: Let's use some terminology Bryson used, "the major objective of the text." In that, when you look at the major objective of the text, do you think there can be more than one objective to a specific text, or do you believe there is an overarching objective? •

Robert Hamblin: There are at least eight, maybe more, objects that you can use for sermons. When I was a pastor, I planned a year of preaching by objective, not by text or subject. What do I want this sermon to accomplish in people? People have different objectives. I am closer to

Stanfield's method than Bryson is, and Stanfield was his teacher. There is no person who can sit down and write "these are the objectives to preaching" and be comprehensive about it. One can say from my perspective these are the objectives of preaching. Each pastor has a different congregation and may have a different perspective. God is going to lead you to what your church needs. A rule I made was I might preach a supportive sermon, but while I'm in there plowing that ground, I am going to make sure that they hear the gospel.

My major preaching professor said that you have a single objective in a sermon and you hammer it home successfully. I said to him many times that I have some side objectives that have to be presented, and evangelism is one of them. He would say that there is always time for that. My reply would be that every time is for that.

Question: As we look at the invitation, what do you believe the evangelistic preacher must ask his audience to do?

Robert Hamblin: He must ask them to repent and believe. That's his objective. I remember preaching in Uzbekistan, and the pastor was eighty-three years old. He was pretty much noncommunicative with me. Just before I got up to preach, he leaned over to me and said through an interpreter, "Make sure they hear about Jesus and call them to repentance." One hundred and twenty-five people answered that call.

There are a lot of principles about how to give an invitation. It must be not different from the sermon. There should not even be a break in it. The way I try to do it is when we are going into the music, I do not want any break. I do not want someone announcing hymn numbers and such. People know the songs and they can sing them, but they must be asked to return to Christ and come forward confessing Christ.

Question: You mention methods that will motivate people. In your years, what method or appeal has been most effective?

Robert Hamblin: Forgiveness. Dr. [R. G.] Lee told me one time when I asked him that very question, judgment. He said he had had more response in preaching on judgment than anything else. Forgiveness and judgment are related in a

different kind of appeal. It is not that I am going to escape hell, but I am going to have the forgiveness of God, and I am going to be in the presence of God. Forgiveness is what has been most successful for me in my ministry.

Question: To close this on theory, I wanted to ask you about delivery. Basically, your approach was extemporaneous. Was it preaching without notes most of the time, and do you believe that this is what the evangelistic preacher should do always?

Robert Hamblin: I do believe that. I believe that for several reasons. Number one, he will be more prepared to preach if he learns to preach without notes. Secondly, he will establish better contact with his congregation. When I was a young preacher, I had a deacon or somebody walk up to me and say that he had heard someone preach a message in the last week that he said was from his heart. Then he opened up his notes and read the sermon. The deacon commented that he did not think it was from his heart. It could have been. God could have laid it on his heart, and he wrote it down. The person listening to you is going to believe that it is coming from the heart if you establish some eye contact.

Question: So, eye contact would be one of those imperatives?

Robert Hamblin: Yes. I don't know that this is related to delivery, but for example when you preach on hell, don't talk like you are glad they are going there. Your delivery reflects you. I don't know how to tell people how to deliver a sermon. I had a hard time with that when I was teaching preaching. The delivery is part of your personality. God called you because he wanted you. I grew up close to R. G. Lee. I was very influenced by him, and he knew how to deliver a sermon. But God did not call me to be R. G. Lee. He told me one time that if I wanted to preach like him I could. I said I didn't want to. God called me to preach in my time and to use my personality. I think your delivery develops out of that. I do think that you can help yourself some. Don't be boring is the bottom line in delivery. Don't be boring! Be excited about God, about who God is, and about what he wants to do. Let that excitement show. I have people tell me all the time it is obvious that

you really enjoy preaching. I would hate for it not to be obvious, and delivery is a big part of that.

Question: You mentioned voice. You used your voice well, often using inflection. As to the actual words that you used, you chose terms that connected with the audience. As you made those decisions in the wording, were you afraid of the theological words?

Robert Hamblin: I learned a lesson on that. When I came out of the seminary, I had all of these theological words that I knew, and sometimes I used them. But sometime after I went to Harrisburg and we began growing a lot, we had to divide services. In one service I had the youth and their Sunday School teachers. After about a month in there, one of the teachers came up to me and said she was enjoying my preaching in that service more than she had ever enjoyed it. So I started reflecting on what I was doing differently. I was making sure I did not use any big theological terms because they would not understand it. It finally occurred to me that nobody was probably understanding it. From that time on I made an intentional effort to preach at about an eighth-grade level, and I still do. I know some of the scholarly preachers think that I am dumb, but it is not dumb. My objective is not what they are going to think of me, but what are they going to do with Jesus.

Question: In your delivery, are you somewhat confrontational? I do not mean by that overbearing with people. For example, when you hear one of Billy Graham's sermons from years back, you might hear him use the second person *you* over and over. In that sense, do you feel like the evangelistic preacher needs to confront in such a way?

Robert Hamblin: Yes, I do. I didn't always do it. I have a friend who constantly says that I don't say *you* enough. I say *we*. Yes I believe in that principle, but I haven't practiced it as well as I probably should.

Question: Is there anything else that you would like to say about delivery?

Robert Hamblin: We are all gifted with physical abilities to talk. There are some with a voice like God, and that is great. But God calls some people who do not

have a great voice like me. If God calls you, be thankful for what you have and use it for the glory of God. God will open the ears of the people to hear the gospel. One thing that has helped me throughout the years with my delivery is my wife. We decided that she would watch my habits and my grammar and whether or not people were listening. We would talk about it, and we still do that. That is helpful. You have to be careful, I think, as a preacher of whom you would ask to do that kind of thing because it is very personal. I think it is good to have someone.

As you get older, things change. For example, I don't want to get to the point where people are going to be bored by an old, hanging-on preacher. I want to do what God tells me to do about that. I think we need to look at the changes in the congregation and make sure the preaching is still what God wants it to be. It is important for us to understand that our circumstances sometime dictate opportunities we have to preach. Often we are not asked to preach on certain occasions because of our ability but because of our current position. You just have to say, "I am where I am now, and this is what God wants to do with me now." It affects the way we preach. If you're happy being where God has put you and wants you to be, then you are happy with what God wants you to do there. You are happy with that place to preach. You are happy with winning people to the Lord in that community. Your preaching is going to be affected by that.

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