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EXCEPT YOU BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN

AN EXPLORATORY PROJECT IN PREPARING PASTORS TO PREACH TO CHILDREN

APPROVED:

Fred B. Craddock

M. Eugene Boring

by John L. Sayre

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EXCEPT YOU BECOME AS LITTLE CHILDREN

AN EXPLORATORY PROJECT IN PREPARING PASTORS TO PREACH TO CHILDREN

by

Daniel B. Pecota, 1928-

A Field Project Report

Submitted to the Faculty of

The Graduate Seminary of Phillips University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

In D. Min. 900

Field Project

Phillips University

Enid, Oklahoma

April 13, 1973

PREFACE

Two primary personal reasons have become the springboard for the particular project described in this paper. The author has a deep love and appreciation for children, attitudes that were fostered and encouraged by the fact that he was reared in a family of eleven children and among many nieces and nephews. In spite of the usual--and unusual--difficulties and problems the dominant note in the home was love, and it left its mark. In addition, there is the keen desire to be "child-like," one who has a sense of excitement over every new experience and who has a dependence that cuts off at the root the pernicious autonomy that sometimes pollutes the human spirit.

The study is appropriate both to the education the author received and to the areas of present ministry, i.e., teaching New Testament and preaching. It has been possible to combine both personal and academic considerations in a project that has focused on an area of ministry neglected almost entirely by Assemblies of God pastors.

Carrying out the project was not without its difficulties. The pastors who felt they had both the time and the inclination to become involved were not easy to find, in spite of the fact that there are about twenty Assemblies of God churches in the greater Seattle area that are large enough to have a sufficient number of children with which to work. It was necessary to go some distance from Seattle to obtain one of the pastors. There was some resistance on the part of the pastors to ideas discussed in the training sessions, particularly new concepts in biblical interpretation. On the whole, however, they were quite

receptive. On occasion parents allowed other activities to take precedence over total involvement in the project. In such cases the child was not considered in evaluating the results of the project.

In spite of the difficulties, however, only appreciation is expressed to the many people who have made the project possible: to Pastor Floyd Tate and the people of the First Assembly of God, Enid, Oklahoma, with whose permission the author conducted a ministry with the children which was a pre-test of the present project; to the participating pastors, Pastor Walter Buck of Evangel Temple, Seattle, Pastor Rollin Carlson of Arlington, and Pastor John Tappero of the First Assembly of God, Renton; to all the "beautiful" children and their parents who cooperated so well; to the professional teachers who assisted by meeting with the children, Mrs. Ruby Emry, Miss Doris Marsh, and Mr. Cliff Sundin; to the board and administration of Northwest College who granted a leave and financial assistance; to faculty colleagues who gave encouragement and especially to Professor Dwayne Turner whose expertise in understanding children became a vital part of one of the pastoral training sessions; to the faculty and fellow doctoral students at Phillips Graduate Seminary for their encouragement and guidance; and to my wife and sons who weathered the long separation so well.

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CHAPTER I

A DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

The Birth of an Idea

A number of years ago, the author read in a book on preaching a chapter dealing with preaching to children. He became interested in such ministry and there followed a period of reflection on what the book said and a time of observing the services in Assemblies of God churches, of which denomination he is a member. Observation of the structure and content of the services in light of the needs of children became a part of participation. It was not long until the conclusion was reached that our ministers do not plan the services with the children in mind. Though the children may have sensed something of the intangible "spirit" of the service, they remained on the whole untouched by its content and form. Many of our churches do conduct a junior or children's church program during the morning service where they hear the gospel on their level. However, many of our churches are small and unable to provide facilities for such services.

The author gave particular attention to the content and the delivery of the sermon. It became obvious that in the preaching the children were the forgotten minority (and in some of the churches, the forgotten majority). The style of delivery was totally unsuited to them. It was a monologue from a man at some distance from them and elevated above them. There were no visuals or demonstrations, only words, words,

words, and many of them abstractions at that. The content was beyond their comprehension. Biblical characters became more than human and Jesus Christ became almost docetic. The elevated and distant preacher became symbolic to the author of the distance between the pastor and the children and between the gospel he preached and the children's understanding of it.

As a result of these observations questions began to emerge: What can the pastor do in the most practical way to bridge the gap between the children and himself and as well the gospel he proclaims? How can he more adequately convey a living and yet human Christ to them? As a representative of God to the children how can he become interior to them to bring about a significant relationship? As they develop their theology what is the pastor doing in a meaningful and direct way to guide that development? This project is an attempt to find at least a partial solution to problems raised by the questions.

A Hypothesis

The hypothesis which underlies this project is that a measurable change in the relationship between the pastor and the children of his congregation and in the children's understanding of Jesus will result from training the pastor to preach to children as part of the morning service in a way that takes into account (1) an informed exegesis and interpretation of the New Testament with a view to helping the children come to a greater understanding of Jesus; (2) the skills needed to preach children's sermons, including all the dynamics of preaching, such as the modes of delivery, the use of imageable words and of visuals, and the dynamic of the pastor as a person; (3) an understanding of the development of the children with a particular focus on the six through eight year old and

his experiences, feelings, and understanding of the world; and, (4) "feedback," dialogue, and reflection.

There is no implication that a positive relationship is altogether lacking, though that may be in some instances, nor that the children have no understanding of Jesus. However, a measurable change is expected. The pastor will feel differently toward the children as he comes to know them better and will begin to see them as persons rather than as numbers on a Sunday school register. The children will feel differently toward the pastor, and, seeing him as a friend and concerned shepherd, will find it easier to relate to him in other contexts. They will together come to a greater understanding of Jesus. There are obviously certain variables which are beyond control, such as the attitude of the parents toward the pastor, which might affect the attitude of the children. In addition, the individual style and philosophy of preaching of each pastor will have a bearing on how he will approach preaching to children. But by the training given to the pastors, it is expected that positive changes will result.

It is understood that this is only one of several ways to effect such changes,[1] but it is the most practical way. The pastor will have the children in one place at one time, and in that place where he may feel less threatened and more at home than any other for ministering to children. During the morning service more children are in church than at any other time except the Sunday school hour. In an old, but

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[1]The pastor may preach in the children's churches, visit the children in their Sunday school classes, invite them into his office for more intimate association, or visit in the home for direct ministry to them. The ways of establishing and maintaining such a relationship are limited only by the imagination of the pastor.

interesting book of children's sermons, the author says:

> Again, it may be asked why it is well to have the children's sermon in the church service at all. Is it not better, some will think, to speak to the children in Sunday-school, and leave the regular church service undisturbed by the children's sermon? The answer is that the children's sermon in the church itself constitutes a very real means of making the children feel that they are expected in church, and that they are remembered when the service is planned.[2]

The adult mind-set in that statement should not go unnoticed. Why must it be suggested that a children's sermon will "disturb" the regular church service? Was this not the attitude of the disciples that Jesus took pains to rebuke so severely?[3] Is the loving Father less disturbed by the failure of the pastor to consider a personal ministry to His children? The answer to the question is not that it is 'a very real means of making the children feel expected and remembered.' The answer really is: Should we not be disturbed by the idea that we might be disturbed in "holy worship" by a sermon to children?

It is practical in that the pastor will be doing what he is accustomed to doing, i.e., preaching. His style may have to change, and perhaps even the physical setting in which the preaching takes place. But Assemblies of God pastors face a special problem in such ministry. They are expected to preach at least twice or perhaps three times each week. In some cases they also teach an adult Sunday School class. All this adds up to a monumental task indeed. The tendency in preaching

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[2]Walter R. Bowie, The Children's Year (New York: Revell, 1916), p. 7. It is certainly preferable to say that the children are "wanted" in church rather than "expected." However, they will begin to realize that they have not been forgotten by the pastor.

[3]All three Synoptics include the story: Mark 10:13-16; Matt. 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.

to children might be to push into the background the preparation of and for such sermons and to speak primarily impromptu. The problem is a serious one, but it is not insurmountable. In no case, however, should the pastor preach to children (or to anyone, for that matter) a sermon that is ill-prepared. To do so will minimize the possibility of establishing a more meaningful relationship[4] and of giving the children a better understanding of Jesus. His presentation must be clear and well thought out so that the children will not only understand but as well will not misunderstand.

In view of the positive potential of such pastoral ministry to children it was surprising to learn that so little has been written about it. Of the 'making of many books on preaching there has been no end,' but practically nothing has been said about preaching to children.[5] A review of the periodical literature produced little. For example, during the last twenty years of Pulpit there was not a single article on the subject. After 1959 there has been in the index no separate category of "children's sermons." The Pulpit Digest and Pulpit Preaching yielded nothing for the project. The former did contain sermons for children and children's prayers but nothing about how to preach to children. The latter contained even less. An important annotated bibliography of recent homiletical thought (1935-1965)[6] shows that the most recent article

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[4] It is granted that the relationship between pastor and children depends on more than the content of his sermon. The very fact that he is preaching to them as well as his attitude and general demeanor are also important. Content cannot be ignored, however.

[5] The author thoroughly investigated the homiletics sections in the library at The Graduate Seminary of Phillips University and at Northwest College, Kirkland, Washington.

[6] See Toohey and Thompson in the Bibliography.

on preaching to children appears in the June, 1956 issue of The Preacher's Quarterly.[7] The next latest is 1943. Of the hundreds of entries in the bibliography only four deal with the subject, and none speak directly to the idea that such ministry will affect positively the relationship between the pastor and the children.[8] It is the hope of the author that in part his project and the report of it will point up the need for more research and writing in this field.

The Procedure of the Project

To test the hypothesis an exploratory action-research project was conducted. It comprised several parts and involved a number of people. The author's first task was to recruit pastors who were willing to venture into a new ministry. The project was explained in detail to each potential volunteer and a copy of the project prospectus given to him for his study.[9] Recruiting pastors turned out to be more difficult than had at

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[7]The article, "The Preacher's Address to Children," was written by S. B. Frost, pp. 100-107.

[8]Why is it that so much has been written that is not relevant to the subject of this report? It is impossible to state conclusively, but perhaps one reason is that the spiritual nurture of children in the church has been relegated by the pastor to other people. If the pastors felt a responsibility to minister personally to the children they would soon be asking for help in learning how.

[9]The prospectus included copies of the particular forms to be completed by the pastor. See Appendix I, forms A, B, and C. They are as follows: (1) Pastoral Essay I and Pastoral Essay II. These instruments are intended to measure any changes they feel may have taken place in their feelings toward children and their ministry to them, in their relationship to the children, and in their views on biblical interpretation. (2) Self-Anchoring Scale--Personal Self-Understanding. Adapted from a scale developed by Dr. C. R. Stinnette, Jr., of Phillips University, it is intended to measure the change in the personal self-understanding of five areas related to ministry to children. (3) An Inter-Action Profile. Also adapted from a form developed by Dr. Stinnette, it has been prepared to allow the pastor to reflect on each preaching event and to evaluate the mutual affects of the participants.

first been anticipated. Their primary concern was the amount of time involved, but they also expressed some fear over the prospect of ministering to children.

After several false starts the pastors were recruited. It was felt that three would be adequate for an exploratory project of this kind. The basic criteria for selection were a church large enough to have a sufficient number of children with which to work and a pastor willing to be involved. No attempt was made to evaluate the pastor in any area with which the project is concerned. As it happened, the pastors recruited minister in an urban, a suburban, and a rural church.

The next step was to speak with the parents of the primary children. In a group meeting in each church the author informed them of the project and its implications for them and sought to solicit their cooperation. They were told of the necessity of their presence at each preaching time, as well as that of their children. The evaluation forms they would fill out were discussed.[10] They were informed that the children would be chosen by lot and that their child may not be involved in the project. The parents of each church indicated a keen interest in what was being proposed and pledged their cooperation.

After the parents became aware of the project a list was supplied giving the names of all the children whose parents regularly

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[10]See Appendix I, form E, Parents' Evaluation I and II. These forms are a secondary instrument intended to get feedback from the parents concerning the part they felt the sermon series contributed to any change they may have observed in the relationship between their child and the pastor and in the child's understanding of Jesus. It was administered both before and after the project.

attend church.[11] The attempt was made to choose by lot[12] at least ten children from each church with two extras to act as a cushion in the event some children did not complete the project. In only one church was there an insufficient number of children to have ten who were ages six through eight.

Before the sermon series began the author met with each group of children and had them draw two pictures,[13] one of themselves with one other person whom they would choose and one of Jesus. The purpose of the first drawing was to see whom they considered significant enough to them to be included in a picture with themselves and to see what kind of "Jesus" they portrayed. The same pictures were drawn at the end of the series to see if changes could be detected.[14]

In order to obtain a sense of how the children were understanding and responding to the sermons, to get an idea of how the pastor was communicating verbally and empathically with them, and to evaluate the

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[11]It was felt necessary to include only regular church-goers since they would have to hear the sermons in order more adequately to identify any changes and evaluate the results of the project. Perhaps it made for fewer visible changes, since children of parents who are regular in church attendance may perhaps already be more closely related to the pastor and have a clearer understanding of Jesus than children of parents who are not.

[12]Each child appearing on a list was given a number and then the numbers were "drawn from a hat." Choice by lot is a time-honored, biblical procedure, one that is not unsuited to a project of this kind.

[13]The procedure followed is outlined in the chapter by Karen Machover, "Drawing the Human Figure," An Introduction to Projective Techniques and Other Devices for Understanding the Dynamics of Human Behavior, edited by Harold H. and Gladys L. Anderson and the book Projective Techniques with Children, edited by Albert I. Rabin and Mary R. Haworth. See the Bibliography for the full citation.

[14]See Appendix III for sample drawings.

project as a whole a trained public school teacher was recruited in each church. Informed of the full scope of the project they, met with the children three times during the preaching series[15] and submitted a written report and evaluation for each meeting.[16] Their comments became an important part of the training sessions with the pastors and contributed to the overall evaluation of the project.

After recruiting the personnel for the project and obtaining the preliminary data the author met with the pastors for a series of seven training sessions, averaging about three hours each.[17] The first six took place before and during the sermon series; the last one was given to reflection on and evaluation of the project. In order to carry out the project the sessions were designed to instruct the pastors concerning interpreting the New Testament in view of a ministry with children, to instruct them concerning preaching, especially to children, to convey a greater understanding of children and to engage in dialogue about what was being done and how and why. One of the sessions included a meeting with Dr. Dale E. Turner, pastor of the University Congregational Church, Seattle, Washington. He has been preaching to children as part of the Sunday morning service for over thirty years, and his knowledge and experience contributed both information and inspiration.

The project was in part an attempt to help the children to a greater understanding of Jesus. For this reason a series of children's

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[15] They met with them after the second, fourth, and last sermons.

[16] See Appendix I, D for the Teacher's Evaluation Report forms.

[17] The dates of the meetings were October 3, October 10, October 19, October 26, November 2, November 7, and November 28, 1972.

sermons on "Jesus and People Who Met Him" was projected.[18] It was felt that through sermons that came from stories of Jesus and people He met the children would more readily achieve a clearer understanding of His person. The use of the New Testament throughout the training sessions and in the preaching events was governed by that hermeneutical end. Because the stories about Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels are more simple and far less didactic than those in the Gospel of John, and because their stories lend themselves more easily to preaching to children, the Synoptics were selected as the source for the sermons.[19]

After the pastors had selected the particular Gospel narratives they felt they would like to preach from,[20] the author made a critical study of the narrative in a particular Gospel and presented his findings in the succeeding training sessions. He attempted to be a "hermeneutical incarnation" of the critical scholar to show them what critical work

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[18]The series was as follows: (1) Jesus: A Man Children Trusted; (2) Jesus: A Man Who Was Always a Friend, involving Peter's denial; (3) Jesus: A Man More Important than Money, involving the rich man who refused to follow Him; (4) Jesus: A Man Who Liked Everybody, referring to the story of Zacchaeus; (5) Jesus: A Man to Love, speaking of the devotion of the woman who anointed Jesus with the ointment; and (6) Jesus: A Man Who Was Kind, referring to the penitent thief. Some radical critics may deny the historisch of some or all of the stories which form the background for the sermons. It is true that in the Gospels we do not have the ipssisima verba of Jesus and that it is not always possible to separate the church's interpretation of the events in the life of Jesus from the events themselves; but it does not seem impossible to see in these accounts set down by the church a reflective record of true incidents in the life of Jesus.

[19]Another reason for choosing the Synoptic Gospels is that there is in them a significant interest shown in the relationship between Jesus and "children." That relationship became a paradigm for the pastor's relation to the children of his church.

[20]The author selected the topic for the first sermon.

was[21] and why and how it should be done, even when preaching to children, and to give specific content and direction for the preaching.

Each of the training sessions included also instruction and dialogue concerning contemporary preaching[22] and its specific relevance to preaching to children. It had been at least ten years since any one of the pastors had had any formal training in homiletics and none of them had ever received instruction in preaching to children. In the first training session Professor Dwayne E. Turner of Northwest College of the Assemblies of God, Kirkland, Washington, gave instruction on the topic of "Understanding and Ministering to Children." In view of that training, his own research into the subject, and of his limited though personal experience of preaching to children, the author sought to act as a hermeneutic to bring together some modern concepts of communication and preaching and an understanding of children so that the pastors might be more effective in preaching to them.

In addition to meeting with the pastors in the training sessions the author twice observed each one as he preached, and he heard the others sermons by tape. The author prepared a written evaluation for every sermon[23] whether by means of the tape or in person or both. These evaluations were used in the instruction periods to point out both the strengths and the weaknesses of the sermons in content and delivery.

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[21]None of the pastors had had any significant exposure to critical study.

[22]All but the second session included such material.

[23]See Appendix I, F, Project Director's Evaluation.

Upon the completion of the sermon series on November 19, 1972, the process of collecting the data began. Some preliminary information had already been gathered before the sermons started, and all the materials were brought together, tabulated, evaluated and tentative conclusions drawn. The carrying out of the project, from the first recruiting efforts to the final collection of the data took about seven months.

CHAPTER II

THE HERMENEUTIC OF THE PROJECT

An Incarnational Hermeneutic

The Christian God is a God of the "Incarnation." The New Testament concept of the incarnation is the hermeneutical model which has guided the project. Through his own study and experience the author sought on the one hand to incarnate for the pastors a soundly critical and faithful approach to New Testament study and on the other to incarnate a "down-to-earth" yet biblically oriented study and practice of preaching to children. The objective was to help them become better interpreters and preachers of the New Testament in a ministry to children. The pastors in turn, in the hermeneutical preaching moments, attempted to incarnate the world of Jesus and the child's world through their experience in both to make more significant and more clear to the child the person of Jesus Christ.

A hermeneutic is the attempt to bring together a set of meanings in a coherent and understandable relationship. According to Mark 10:14 Jesus says, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." In that hermeneutical statement He brought together the phenomenal world of the children and the spiritual world of the kingdom of God. They are children and belong to this world; but they are children of God also and to such belongs the kingdom. Jesus was God's hermeneutic to bring the two together. The Gospel of John asserts, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was

God . . . . And the word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Incarnate Word interpreted the heavenly world to the earthly world. He showed men that faith in a loving Father could give meaning to all of human existence, and He died to make that meaning-full life a reality for all. The incarnational moment of Jesus Christ becomes determinative of all such moments when pastors seek to bring into meaningful relationship the New Testament world of Jesus and the world of children.

Hermeneutic is dynamic, yet static; it is moving and on-going, yet stationary, just as is the "Incarnate Word." It is true of the biblical hermeneutic and the faith of which it is the expression.[1] However, that it is dynamic does not mean that the noetic element in faith is to be limited to faith's knowledge of itself, an idea which seems to be characteristic of the "new hermeneutic."[2] The incarnational word is more than proclamation; it is more than creative or imperative; it has a conative function as well. There is more to hermeneutic than the "now" or the "present place" of the interpreter/believer. If it were not so it would really make little difference what happened in the first century A.D. and what was written about what happened. Whatever hermeneutical

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[1]In the biblical concept faith precedes understanding and knowing; therefore, a truly biblical hermeneutic proceeds from faith. In John 7: 16-17 Jesus says, "'My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me; if any man's will is to do his will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.'"

[2]The new hermeneutic seems to depend only on man's will for faith and not on his noetic side. It does not define the content of faith so that it might preserve the immediateness of faith. The New Testament, however, speaks not only of "whom" we believe (2 Tim. 1:12) but of "what" we believe (1 Cor. 15:1-11). See Amos N. Wilder, "The Word as Address and the Word as Meaning," The New Hermeneutic, edited by James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr. New Frontiers in Theology, Vol. II (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), pp. 198-218.

words we use today should be in agreement with the original words.[3] There is, after all, something unique about Jesus Christ and about the Bible, the Christian Scriptures. No hermeneutic can be called biblical which destroys the essential intent of the "Word" and the words. Thus, a truly biblical hermeneutic expresses a kind of static-dynamism. For example, taking marriage vows may permit one to express the marital relationship in a diversity of ways. However, one does not have the right to interpret them in such a way as to destroy their original intent and still claim to be true to those vows. In a similar way the Christian interpreter will proceed. Whether he wills or no he is wed to Jesus Christ and the Scriptures. He will utilize every tool available and which his ability permits him to use in order to interpret what God has said in Jesus Christ. But he will also be firmly anchored to that unique "word" which God has once given us. If not, he ceases to be a "Christian" interpreter.

At the same time, no hermeneutic is truly incarnational or Christian unless it takes human existence fully into account. The "word" has often been discussed as if it had no immediacy, almost as if it were phantasmal. Too often the interpreter has been satisfied to discover what the Bible meant and has failed to see that not saying what it means leaves him with a truncated biblical hermeneutic. It has been implied that what it "means" is derived from what it "meant," but interpretation does not

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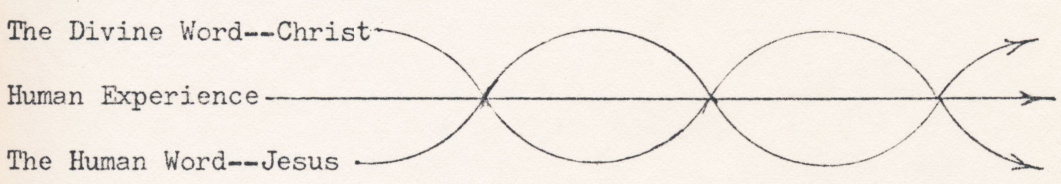
[3]Admittedly that is an article of my faith. By this I mean that the Christian Scriptures speak to me as the authoritative revelation of God. I believe that I as a Christian must speak in a way that is in keeping with the meaning of the Scriptures. It is granted that interpretations will differ because men approach the Scriptures from different perspectives. But the final arbiter in all disputes regarding the meaning of God and man and their relation is the Holy Scriptures.

end at past meaning. Interpretation has not taken place until the word has meaning for the man who lives today, not for the one who lived 2000 years ago. Most will grant that it is not a simple task to determine what it meant. The interpreter is hundreds of years removed and in a different culture that experiences so many things differently. But whatever conclusion he comes to concerning its past meaning, that meaning must be infused by present human experience if it is to have relevance for men today.

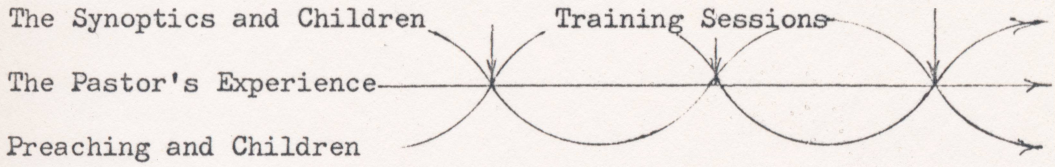
A model may help to picture the kind of incarnational hermeneutic that is in view. It is applied to the incarnational moment as well as the incarnational moments that have occurred as a part of the project. The straight line represents the dynamic but constant factor of human experience in different modes. The curving lines, also moving, represent at each intersection the hermeneutical coming together of a set of meanings in a coherent relationship. The intersection takes place at the level of human experience and relationships. If it did not no hermeneutic would be possible. In each model the goal in view is a specific change.

The Hermeneutical Moment



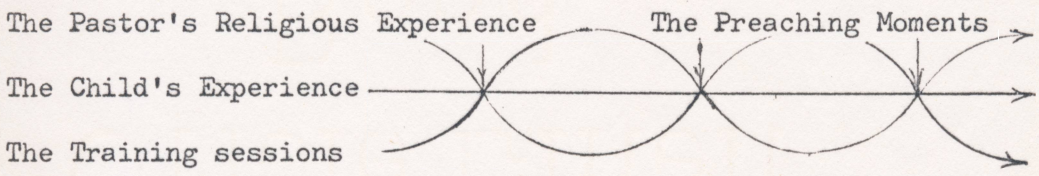
In Jesus Christ are brought together the words of God in the words of men so that at the moments of need man may have an understanding of God and himself in relation to God. The life of Jesus Christ may be considered as a single hermeneutical moment, but each time He made God known to man a hermeneutic occurred. His purpose was to lead us to God and a greater understanding of Him.

The Hermeneutic of the Training Sessions



In the teaching sessions the hermeneutical materials, the Synoptics and children and preaching and children, were brought together (incarnated) by the author on the level of the pastors' experiences. The goal was to make them more effective in their ministry to children in order to bring about the desired changes.

The Hermeneutic of the Preaching



In his preaching the pastor, the "man of God," brought together his own religious experience and the materials of the training sessions and interpreted them to the children in their world as the pastor relived and rethought his experiences. He sought to change the relationship between them and help them to a better understanding of Jesus.

The Pastor as the Children's Hermeneutic

In the incarnation God interpreted Himself to the world of men. It stands as the prototype of the incarnation of God's word in the minister who both experiences and proclaims the "Word." In a very real sense, the pastor becomes to the children the word incarnate. It is he who can become, if he will, that interpretative light to bring the real world of the children into meaningful relationship with the unreal world they are asking about. He is able to concretize for them in his person and in his words their own world-view. If he is willing to take the risk, he can stand in loco parentis to the Father who desires that all men should know Him--including little children.

The pastor must see that whether he likes it or not the children will to some extent identify with him. In his excellent discussion of child development, in the section on Jean Piaget, Maier says, "investing a model with unusual desirability and/or power leads to identification."[4] It is a question whether the child will invest the pastor with unusual desirability,[5] but it is quite in keeping with the relationship between them that the children will invest the model with unusual power. "Identification on the present level," says Maier, "emerges from a combination of imitation and a sense of awe for the model. This sense of awe flows from the child's continuous experience with his model . . ."[6] That idea becomes quite important for the pastor. If he has no continuous experience with the children there will be little or no opportunity for them to identify with him and indirectly to identify with his God. Through the project and a continuation of the preaching when the project ends the pastor can build a bridge of continuous experience over which each one can cross to the other.

In this incarnational hermeneutic words are crucial. Had Jesus never said anything, the significance of His person and word would have been unclear. Symbolic action is significant, but words also are essential. Words can curse or bless, cut or heal, destroy or upbuild. Words

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[4]Henry W. Maier, Three Theories of Child Development: The Contributions of Erik H. Erikson, Jean Piaget, and Robert R. Sears and Their Application (New York: Harper, 1965), p. 113.

[5]The pictures the children drew appear to verify the idea that they do not look upon the pastor with special desirability.

[6]Maier, Three Theories of Child Development, p. 114. In this section in Maier the subject under discussion centers on children who are three to four years of age, but the principle of identification is still the same.

can transform the common into the sacred, as the words of Jesus did when He said, "This is my body. This is my blood." In using words, concrete, imageable words, the pastor will help the child say in words what he believes. In his person and his words he gives them the word (the name for something) and the children will be able to call to mind what the pastor is attempting to convey; he will have a "handle" for his developing ideas. In words, understanding will come. In Hosea the prophet says, "Take with you words . . ."[7] He is speaking of returning to God with words of repentance and petition, but the important consideration is that words become the medium by which the people are able to express their feelings and ideas to God. The words will carry the people as the people carry the words. The pastor and his God will be carried to the children on the living words at the time of proclamation.

A Hermeneutical Metaphor

It should be clear that the author regards the sermon as a viable means of ministry with children. He sees the pastor in the preaching event as a kind of "prophetic Pied Piper." He is prophetic because he stands as the representative of God to the children, his words carrying and interpreting the Word in the light of their experiences. In his preaching he is a "proclaimer" speaking with divine answers to, as well as from the human situation. It may be that the preacher has taken too much to himself and has sometimes given an impression of omniscience. In his book, As One Without Authority, Dr. Fred B. Craddock[8]

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[7]Hosea 14:2.

[8]Fred B. Craddock, As One Without Authority (Enid: Phillips University Press, 1971).

makes a strong and convincing plea for a preaching that does not have a ready answer for every human experience. Men must be given the opportunity to resolve personally some of the crucial issues they face. However, it would be a mistake to lose altogether the prophetic spirit in which a man speaks for God with a divine solution to human problems.

As the "Pied Piper" the pastor must have certain skills in playing his flute. Some of these he already possesses. He will perhaps be somewhat threatened by the thought of placing to his lips, rather than the brazen trumpet, the flute with its light, airy, and penetrating sounds, but he knows that he will only learn by trying and so he takes courage and begins.

The "piper" must also have knowledge of the children and of the melodies they dance to. His playing will be in keeping with where the children are in their development, with the things that are of interest to them, and with the experiences most meaningful to them. If he plays in an empathic manner and with dynamic skill, he will soon set the children to dancing and following him.

CHAPTER III

THE MATERIALS OF THE HERMENEUTIC[1]

Understanding Children[2]

It is probable that most Assemblies of God pastors have no significant direct ministry with the children in the church. One wonders why. Part of the answer may lie in the fact that understanding a child's development is a prerequisite to effective work with children, and most of our pastors have received little exposure to this field of study.[3] Others have no interest in such ministry even though there is emphasis on children and youth in their churches. Again, one wonders, why? Why is there no emphasis on training pastors to minister to children? Why

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[1]The material in this chapter is a summation of what was presented and discussed in the pastoral training sessions. The purpose is to inform the reader of the substantive work of the author in seeking to incarnate to the pastors both scholar and "piper." See Appendix II for an outline summary of all the sessions.

[2]Though neither psychology nor Christian education is one of the required fields involved in the project, it was necessary to emphasize the matter of understanding children so that the pastors might be better able to interpret and preach from the Synoptic Gospels on the level of the children's understanding.

[3]An examination of the catalogs of Assemblies of God colleges will reveal that in most theological and pastorally oriented curricula relatively little if any Christian education is required let alone child psychology and related areas. The Assemblies of God does not presently operate a seminary, but judging by my seminary experience I donot forsee that there would be a significant difference if they did. However, in defense of the curricular structure of the colleges it must be said: (1) In a four year program not everything can be covered in ministerial training. (2) The colleges do offer specific preparation for those who will work with children. (3) Elective hours may be taken in psychology and Christian education.

do some pastors have no personal interest in such ministry? Let it be granted that some lack the temperament and the personality characteristics necessary to make them effective in ministering to children. But any pastor can learn to do better than he does. Perhaps some are fearful, but the fear can be alleviated if the pastor understood children and their development. Then what is the reason for neglecting such ministry?

There are others, no doubt, but perhaps a primary reason is that the pastor may not regard the children as persons. If it is difficult at times to regard even adults in a way that does not dehumanize them, how much easier it is with children. Their very size and dependence tend to make adults view them as less than persons or at best little persons who are too small to be important enough to require a pastoral ministry directed especially to them. Recently the author had the privilege of working for a period of time at the Enid State School for the retarded. The contact with the residents was on a very personal basis. It was not long until he concluded that even though they may be quite mentally deficient they are still persons, real persons, and could not and should not be dehumanized by treating them as objects or things.[4] It was when the interpersonal relation became a reality that the new attitude began to emerge. "Every interpersonal relation," says Maier, "holds the beginning of a personal promise of mutual significance,"[5] and those associations become mutually satisfying.

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[4]It is at the same time true that where the retardation was so severe that the child or adult was essentially a "vegetable" it was difficult not to regard him as a "thing."

[5]Henry W. Maier, Three Theories of Child Development (New York: Harper, 1965), p. 279.

Children are real people and the pastor has the unequalled opportunity to influence them toward their highest fulfillment in life. He can contribute meaningfully to what they will be as adults, for what we experience and know today does not depend only on what is now given us nor simply on what we select of what is given by imagination and attention; it depends also on past experience out of which has emerged the persons that we are. Thus, the relation between pastor and children is one of great significance. A primary and fundamental duty of the pastor is to know the child, and only then will he know the man.

In seeking to give the children a greater understanding of Jesus Christ and to change the relationship between them and himself, the "piper" plays to a six-year old "storm," a seven-year old "calm," and an eight-year old "dynamo." These children are beginning to think more abstractly, but abstractions are far less important than concrete learning situations. They are developing an ethical sense, but it tends to be moralistic and situational. They are interested in doing, and industry characterizes them. A sense of inferiority is the constant threat to them, and therefore, they need to be praised for their achievements. These children can profit from teachers and tend to emulate ideal prototypes. They like biblical stories about strong, courageous people. Realistic identification occurs, based on a spirit of equality experienced in doing things together. It becomes increasingly important for the pastor to enter gently into their lives that the children may identify with him in positive and life-changing ways.

In addition to seeing some of the characteristics of each age

the pastor will seek to understand the development of the child.[6] The child develops in every aspect of his nature: physical, mental, social, moral. The most obvious development is his bodily growth. It is rapid but uneven. He has boundless energy and finds it difficult to be still for very long. Mentally he is primarily an observer. His attention span is quite brief and he is capable of concentrating on only one idea at a time. He thinks literally, in specific ideas, and not in abstractions. In a Th.M. thesis, "Preaching to Children," prepared in 1938, the author says,

> Children are unable to make distinctions between the word and the thing. Up to about the age of eight children have no conception of words unless they have experienced the thing which is meant by the word. For instance, if one speaks of a horse to a child, he immediately thinks of a particular horse he has seen. Or if by chance he has never seen an object of the class mentioned, the word used then refers to nothing within his experience, and consequently has little or no meaning for him. It may be that these children realize what a word is, but have

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[6] In speaking of the development of children it is recognized that they are individuals and cannot be put into a neat statistical chart of behavior. The charting of the developmental stages is based on certain assumptions, but to do so can be helpful. Erikson says, "The underlying assumptions for such charting are (1) that the human personality in principle develops according to steps predetermined in the growing person's readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with, a widening social radius; and (2) that society, in principle, tends to be so constituted as to meet and invite this succession of potentialities for interaction and attempts to safeguard and to encourage the proper rate and the proper sequence of their enfolding. This is the 'maintenance of the human world.' But a chart is only a tool to think with, and cannot aspire to be a prescription to abide by, whether in the practice of childtraining, in psychotherapy, or in the methodology of child study." Erik Erikson. Childhood and Society (2nd ed. rev.: New York: W. W. Norton, 1963), p. 270. Without becoming involved in the refinements of Erikson's ideas or of any other 'developmentalist' (which is in fact beyond the scope of this paper), the principles he enunciates are sound.

> no means of expressing the idea, for the word "word" implies for them the presence of the thing itself.[7]

Thus, his powers of reasoning and discrimination are awakening, but he cannot yet think of the meaning of "hot" without thinking of a "hot stove" or a "hot lightbulb." Concepts of time and space are very hazy. It is sometimes easy for adults to overestimate his intellectual progress.

Erik Erikson has contributed greatly to an understanding of the child's social development. One of his major contributions was to point out that it takes place in the child's "relationship to his parents within the context of the family, and in relation to a wider social setting, within the framework of the family's historical-cultural heritage."[8] In this he replaces the classical but rather narrow Freudian matrix of the child-mother-father triangle. He says, "A human being, then, is at all times an organism, an ego, and a member of society and is involved in all three processes of organization."[9] The pastor then, in this view, can become quite important to the over-all social development of the child.

Not the least important is the child's moral/religious development. The young child has not yet learned to internalize morality, i.e., "learning to conform to rules in situations that arouse impulses to transgress and that lack surveillance and sanctions."[10] The "internalization

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[7] J. Russell Cross, "Preaching to Children" (unpublished Th.M. thesis, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, 1938), pp. 19-20. A child may cry when he is called "dumb" for he feels that being called "dumb" makes him so.

[8] Maier, Three Theories of Child Development, p. 17.

[9] Erikson, Childhood and Society, p. 21.

[10] Lawrence Kohlberg, "Moral Development," in International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences, ed. by David Sills (New York: Macmillan, 1968), X, p. 483.

of a standard implies the capacity to make judgments in terms of that standard and to justify maintaining them to oneself and to others."[11] The child cannot do that; therefore his sense of ethics is anchored first in adherence to adult authority. Disobedience to him is "an interruption of adult authority rather than a violation of moral obligation."[12] To the child rules are external absolutes, but he feels that the adults, who represent the rules, are all-knowing, perfect, and sacred. It is wise then not to make too rigid moral demands. The knowing pastor will seek to avoid anything that will make the child "so aware of the gap between his accomplishments and those of someone older that he becomes discouraged at his own limited achievements."[13] One of the developmental tasks the child seeks (unconsciously) to accomplish is to "hold the affection and support of adults without surrendering the felt need for independence."[14] By understanding the child in the various phases of his development coupled with his sound biblical interpretation and relevant preaching the pastor can help the child come to a more meaningful understanding of the significance of Jesus Christ.

Preaching and Children

In the unpublished thesis, Preaching to Children, by J. Russell Cross, there appears the following quotation:

> "Few subjects are of more vital importance in the preaching work of the ministry, and at the same time more neglected, than that

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Maier, Three Theories of Child Development, p. 123.

[13] Elizabeth M. Manwell and Sophia L. Fahs, Consider the Children, How They Grow (Boston: Beacon Press, 1951), p. 26.

[14] Ibid., p. 18.

> of the preacher's relation to the children of his congregation. When a man's best thinking is put into such form that children will understand it and be interested, he has the whole world at his feet. And when he forgets the children and preaches for the grown-up world only he often misses both. A familiar illustration of this is found in the children's stories; as, for instance, Rudyard Kipling's 'Jungle Book'. A prominent reviewer said of those jungle stories, they were Kipling's best bid for immortality. The jungle stories were preeminently children's stories, but they were not second-class matter, trite and commonplace, drest up and palmed off because 'anything is good enough for children'."[15]

The emphasis in the project and in this presentation has been and is that preaching to children is one of the high privileges of the pastor. In this regard the pastoral training sessions included both inspiration and information.

Inspiration was supplied by the author in the light of his experiences in preaching to children at the Enid State School in Enid, Oklahoma, and in various churches. He is coming to believe such preaching puts him in touch with the kind of greatness Jesus described. But the primary source of inspiration came from Dr. Dale E. Turner of the University Congregational Church, Seattle.[16] He has been preaching to children each Sunday morning for thirty years. He explained that he has made it his practice because he loved children and because he considered that children are people. Although he feels that preaching to children is an end in itself, he considers it one of the best ways to reach adults. "Lay your hand on the head of a child and you lay it on the heart of the parents," he said.

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[15] James M. Farrar, A Junior Congregation (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1908), p. 15, quoted in Cross, "Preaching to Children," pp. 1-2. See footnote 7, p. 25.

[16] A one hour meeting was held at Dr. Turner's church on Thursday, October 19, 1972, at 2:00 p.m. His graciousness was warming, and though he denied expertise in preaching to children he gave ample evidence of it.

He confirmed the author's observations expressed also by Reuel L. Howe in Partners in Preaching:

> Adults frequently say the sermons they really like are those prepared and delivered to children because they are simple, vivid, employ ordinary language, and are concerned about life. They find themselves thinking about these sermons for weeks afterwards, whereas, come Sunday evening they cannot even remember the sermon that was prepared for and delivered to them in the morning.[17]

Dr. Turner stated that he was still learning and felt inadequate even yet, characteristics essential to preaching to children, and that many of his colleagues considered such ministry a waste of time. He said that if he had his ministry to do over again preaching to children would continue to be a part of it. He pointed out that he gives each person a printed quote, saying, poem, or Bible verse to go along with the sermon.[18] He believes that it fixes in the mind even more firmly what he has said. He strengthened the growing conviction of the pastors that preaching to children is a high privilege.

The question with which we were concerned in the training sessions was, however, what preaching is and how better to preach to children. Preachers and preaching have had their share of detractors, and much of the criticism has been justified.[19] Preachers have felt that

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[17] Reuel L. Howe, Partners in Preaching (New York: Seabury Press, 1967), p. 27.

[18] He distributes such things as:
Often we are not what we think we are,
But what we think--we are.
or Expect great things from God
Attempt great things for God.--William Carey.
He noted that it was a rather high budget item and thus may not be possible for every church.

[19] See a brief but fine discussion of the contemporary problem in Fred B. Craddock, As One Without Authority, "The Pulpit in the Shadows," pp. 1-23.

their preaching alone can support the burden of communication. One of the reasons for an "empty pulpit," empty in the sense of void of power and meaning, is that people have not had "the opportunity to hear the personal and spoken witness of those who have experienced the realities of their faith or who have unusual insight."[20] The preacher is not the community. In addition, preachers have had an almost idolatrous attitude toward the sermon and sermon form. Charles L. Rice in his excellent book, Interpretation and Imagination, pointedly criticizes such idolatry. He says,

> The homiletical form of dogmatic idolatry is irreligious sermonizing, that is preoccupation with the sermon as such and with traditional forms rather than with the present situation in which persons might be met with a moving word. The sermon becomes a symbol turned toward itself. Such conventional preaching, bent upon giving sermons, rather than meeting people now, upon filling the time rather than fulfilling it, actually becomes opaque rather than transparent to the Word of God.[21]

In such preaching the sermon itself, apart from its content, conveys a message not intended by the preacher,[22] i.e., his ability as a homiletician is more important than his compassion as a pastor.

Another reason for the problem is that preachers, for whatever reasons, have not allowed their true humanity to come through. Even

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[20]Clyde Reid, The Empty Pulpit (New York: Harper, 1967), p. 101.

[21]Charles L. Rice, Interpretation and Imagination, The Preachers' Paperback Library (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), p. 5.

[22]The pulpit itself in most sanctuaries conveys a message. What does it say? "It says that the clergy are different from laymen . . . . This stands in direct contradiction to the words spoken from many of those pulpits today--that all Christians are God's servants and ministers. This new emphasis on the ministry of the laity may be puzzling to those who hear the message of the pulpit, which proclaims that the church's ministry is centered and focused in one man." (Reid, The Empty Pulpit, pp. 76-77.)

though they may have intuitively felt that the "medium is the message" they have failed to recognize its significance for and in preaching. Rice says,

> The particular vehicle of the Word is a man whose humanity is the medium of the message. As such a medium, the greatest responsibility the preacher has is to reveal his humanity. The promise of preaching depends for its realization not upon the minister's conventional saintliness or even his talents, but upon his personhood.[23]

When the children and adults as well, can see and hear a man that is like themselves they will have eyes that see and ears that hear. Until then it is as if they were looking "into a glass darkly" and hearing piping of "an uncertain sound."

Fortunately, however, preaching that is truly biblical and truly human is experiencing a renewal.[24] It is the kind of preaching that sees itself as a concern to be shared rather than a topic to be discussed. It seeks the building of the community as the context for the proclamation of the gospel.[25] Such preaching, a human action sanctified by God, finds its basis in a demand made by God.[26] It directs its message to children and adults at the point of their basic needs. It sheds the light of the gospel on the matter of human need, and challenges people "to live the life that Jesus offers us--to follow the light and realize

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[23]Rice, Interpretation and Imagination, p. 76. He goes on to say that "the man becomes the message when it becomes clear to his hearers that the man of faith is a man like themselves." (p. 79).

[24]See Craddock, As One Without Authority, chapter II, pp. 24-50.

[25]Thomas J. Mullen, The Renewal of the Ministry (New York: Abingdon Press, 1963), p. 68.

[26]Karl Barth, The Preaching of the Gospel, trans. by B. E. Hooke (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 41.)

the hope of the gospel."[27] One author says, "The genius of /such/ preaching is its eventfulness. What is crucial for homiletics is not so much what a sermon 'is' as what the sermon 'does.'"[28] The goal of renewed preaching is renewed men not renewed homiletic form.

In the training sessions the author attempted to show that the pastor who seeks to communicate with children, and is fearful to begin has an important ally to his verbal symbols, even though he may not be always aware of it, and that is the significance of non-verbal communication. He communicates with a friendly tap on the shoulder or loving pat on the head or a warm shake of the hand. He communicates with his pointing finger, his winking eye, his shrugging shoulders, his smiling face. His silences communicate, as do the color of his clothes and the distance, spatially, between him and the children. Communication is first of all relational; it is "language . . . embedded in action."[29] It seems evident that "long before children can talk, they understand language. Long before they understand language they appear responsive to moods, emotions, and feelings that are current in their surroundings."[30] Though that is said of the infant the principle that we respond to non-verbal communication is true regardless of age. The pastor first seeks a relation with the children, then he can offer them religious symbols in terms

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[27]William L. Malcomson, The Preaching Event (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1968), p. 118.

[28]David James Randolph, The Renewal of Preaching (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. vii.

[29]Charles R. Stinnette, Jr., Learning in Theological Perspective, Monographs in Christian Education (New York: Association Press, 1965), p. 15.

[30]Manwell and Fahs, Consider the Children, p. 119.

of their experience. For example, when the child has experienced a feeling of confidence and trust in his relationship with the pastor, then the pastor knows that the religious symbol of faith can be meaningful to him. As he seeks to relate to children he knows that there is "always something else to be explained, but it is surely not true that we understand nothing until we understand everything."[31]

The pastor, however, cannot be content to let his life speak; non-verbal communication is an ally to speaking and does not replace it. In preaching, words are crucial, and particularly so in speaking with children. Some protest that the church is glutted with words. Howe states,

> The weakness of preaching stems from its wordiness and monological character. The centuries have been filled with words about Christ. When one stops to think about the volume of words one develops a sense of horror--words, words, words; words about words; words undoing words; words for the sake of words; words slashing like a blinding blizzard into the face of the world. And at last the world is beginning to cry, 'Stop! We can't stand more words.'[32]

The problem stems, however, more from what we do with the words than from the quantity of words we use, and the context of Howe's statement indicates that. There is a certain "prophetic dignity"[33] that is involved in all speaking. But in communicating the gospel the spoken word is the best weapon and is superior to all other forms of communication. "The spoken word . . . is an instrument especially suited to the promulgation of a gospel; it is the form into which an urgent message most

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[31]Abraham Kaplan, The Conduct of Inquiry (Scranton, Pennsylvania: Chandler Press, 1964), p. 340.

[32]Howe, Partners in Preaching, p. 5.

[33]Georges Gusdorf, Speaking, trans. by Paul T. Brockelman (n.p.: Northwestern University Press, 1965), p. 123.

naturally flows."[34] Verbal communication need not be deadening; it can be and is creative; it is the externalization of the human spirit, giving a self-awareness in reciprocal relations. The scientific view of personality has sustained what the pulpit has always felt to be true, that words are "tools to operate on souls that are affected. Words are the medicine that can start at work the spiritual chemistry that can bring about a new balance within the personality . . . . Words have gained new status as a means of saving life."[35] The project sought to encourage the pastors to remember the children in their use of "saving" words.

What is preaching? It is interpretation through communication. Though the "new hermeneutic" minimizes noetic elements in communicating "the faith once delivered to the saints" its call for a shift in emphasis from "explaining" to "understanding" is welcome. Language itself is regarded as "event-ful." "The primary phenomenon in the realm of understanding is not understanding OF language, but understanding THROUGH language."[36] For example, one speaks at home not so much that people may understand but because they do understand. The new hermeneutic has helped to lift language from the dull and commonplace, from black symbols on a white page, and to restore to it its original creative and interpretative function. To children language is always something new, fresh and creative,

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[34]Kyle Haselden, The Urgency of Preaching (New York: Harper, 1963), p. 28.

[35]Edgar N. Jackson, A Psychology for Preaching (Great Neck, New York: Channel Press, 1961), p. 177.

[36]Gerhard Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," The New Hermeneutic, p. 93. Italics have been omitted. A danger of the "new hermeneutic" is that it can and sometimes does lead to a kind of mystical, subjective interpretation.

opening new worlds to them. Seeing language from the viewpoint of the new hermeneutic enables one to 'enter the kingdom of language as a little child' and thus regain its vitality in and for preaching to children.

Preaching is interpretation. In a sense the Bible has no meaning of its own in isolation from our living. When it is proclaimed and thus illumines our lives it then takes on "meaning." Preaching to be true must keep close to history and the preacher is dependent on the scholarly interpreter. "But what is equally true but much less frequently recognized is that there are depths of meaning in the text of Scripture which remain hidden from the scholar until the text is preached."[37] As in the incarnation God speaks to man, so in preaching that concerns Jesus Christ and us we have a kind of incarnation. H. M. Kuitert says that the "real interpretation of the Bible is preaching Jesus. Wherever that happens, the Scriptures are opened."[38] In the preaching which has been the concern of this project the focus has been on Jesus and people who met Him.

There is more to preaching, however, than knowing what it is. The pastor must know how to preach to children, and in that regard several things called for consideration in the sessions. The man himself is important. The "piper" will help to bring about the change he desires by being open, empathic, loving, undisturbed by seeming indifference on the part of the children, and willing to learn from them and change. But equally important is the hard work he puts into preparing to preach to children. Msgr. H. T. Henry says, "To preach properly to children is a

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[37] James D. Smart, The Strange Silence of the Bible in the Church (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1970), p. 33.

[38] H. M. Kuitert, Do You Understand What You Read? (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 22.

more difficult task than to preach appropriately to the older folk."[39] He asserts that if it is advisable for the pastor to write out in full the sermons he intends to preach to mature adults, "it could well be argued that a still more thorough preparation should be given to a sermon intended for children."[40]

It is the choice of words to which the pastor will give special attention. Words are the chief medium by which he makes known his message; therefore, they must be chosen with care. "Complicated, vague, indefinite words will not do. The language must be simple, clear, and accurate."[41] One has only to listen carefully and with the ear of a child to realize that so much that is said or sung in church is almost totally incomprehensible to them. Saying to the children the right word at the right time is no easy task, but it is the goal the pastor will seek to attain in all his preaching. Gerhard Ebeling in The New Hermeneutic calls attention to the importance of choosing the right word.

> Man fails toward man, and so for that very reason also toward God, in the right use of words. This fact lends urgency to the search for that word which is a true, necessary, salutary, remedial, and therefore unequivocal and crystal-clear word, for the word which, because it accords with man's destiny, corresponds to God, that is the search for the word by means of which one man can speak God to another so that God comes to man and man to God.[42]

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[39] Msgr. H. T. Henry, "Preaching to Children," Homiletic and Pastoral Review, XLII (March, 1942), 515.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Batsell Barrett Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures (New York: Macmillan, 1947), p. 173.

[42] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," The New Hermeneutic, p. 104.

So that he may "speak God" to the children the "piper's piping" will be action oriented, employing concrete rather than abstract words and focusing on people and what they do. His words are to make the sermon so interesting that the children, "so far from having to make an effort to think of what /he is/ saying, shall have to make an effort to think of anything else."[43]

In preaching to children there is a great need for flexibility of style. Traditional patterns are not sacrosanct. There needs to be an openness to experiment. In seeking new patterns fear of disturbing the supposed sanctity of the sanctuary is hardly worth considering. The pastor will want to come down to the level of the children, even to sit with them. In the sanctuary, demonstration, dialogue, projection, drama, are all legitimate means of communicating with children. Perhaps one of the best ways is Jesus' apparent method, i.e., the telling of stories. In fact, such a procedure might be appropriately called the homiletical methodology of the New Testament. It seems evident that the oral traditions were for the most part "circulating in a more or less fixed, definite form and even arrangement, for purposes of memorization and transmission, perhaps even for use in public worship."[44] What better way to memorize and transmit than by stories? It is made all the more probable in that the early church may have been more aware of children than we

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[43] R. W. Dale, Nine Lectures on Preaching (n.p.: 1890), quoted in Baxter, The Heart of the Yale Lectures, p. 138.

[44] Frederick C. Grant, The Gospels: Their Origin and Their Growth (New York: Harper, 1947), pp. vii-viii.

are today since the churches were in homes and children would more likely be present.[45]

The New Testament and Children

The New Testament, the Synoptic Gospels specifically, constituted the biblical base for the project. The New Testament is an "adult" book and there is a great deal more involved in understanding it than is apparent to some believers. There are parts of the New Testament which are impossible for children to comprehend; but at the same time there are those that are appropriate to their level of understanding. Thus the "schoolboy" as well as the scholar can achieve a meaningful understanding of the New Testament. The importance of the scholar and the necessity of his work must not be underestimated, but there is a difference between being able to explain something and being able to understand it. In the former, one observes; in the latter, one participates.

These ideas are quite in keeping with the modern theories of understanding and with the biblical concept of knowing. The Bible refers to the act of intercourse between husband and wife as "knowing" one's wife. The assertion that 'real knowledge must ultimately be sexual' certainly says more than reality will substantiate, but it is "important to remember that for the Hebrew mind, there is a close relation between the

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[45] The pastor must not be afraid of original stories. Their freshness will compel attention as nothing else can do. One of the pastors, the Rev. Walter Buck, did prepare an original story based on the account of Peter's denial in the Gospel of Luke. He gave it a setting familiar to the children. It was after the session in which we discussed the possibility of such stories. He testified to the personal pleasure he received in originating and telling it and its effectiveness with the children.

act of knowing and the sexual act."[46] In our "sex-saturated" society the biblical idea may be grossly misrepresented, as if it referred exclusively to the biological act. But the Scriptures show that the element of "covenant responsibility, the dimension of mutual relation in depth and the note of transcending love . . . must be kept in mind if we are to understand the biblical use of this analogy."[47] The Bible also makes clear that to trust and to act ethically is a primary mode of the knowledge of God. Dr. Stinnette says,

> For the Hebrew, knowledge is not concerned with abstract concepts but with action and event, with what God has done, is doing and will do in human lives. Karl Barth has given it sharp expression when he proclaims: 'Only the doer of the word is the real hearer.'[48]

Such concepts are significant as they relate to the ability of a child meaningfully to understand the Scriptures. He can have a real, though certainly incomplete understanding of God as he comes to "know" Him. God speaks to him in and through the Bible as he encounters the God of whom it speaks.

Children reared in Assemblies of God homes and schooled in Assemblies of God churches are taught to accept the authority of the Bible by faith. In this respect their commitment is essentially not different from that which the critical scholar may make. Both depend on faith and on experiencing the God to which the Bible leads. That does not imply that the Scriptures have no inherent authority, for most Christians believe in some kind of "divine inspiration" of the Bible. The question

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[46] Stinnette, Learning in Theological Perspective, pp. 22-23.

[47] Ibid., p. 23.

[48] Ibid., p. 22.

is not "shall I have one" but "which authority will be supreme."[49] In faith the child says, "The Bible is!" and the Christian scholar says the same.

A question had to be answered: If the final goal of the project involved an attempt to change the relationship between the pastor and the children and to convey a greater understanding of Jesus, could not that goal be accomplished regardless of the basic content of the sermon? Why choose people from the Synoptic Gospels? From the standpoint of the psychology of preaching and the personality of the preacher, it probably would make little difference whether one preached from the New Testament or church history or "Peanuts." But along with the author's personal interest in the study of the Synoptic Gospels and the frequency in them of stories of people encountering Jesus, the significance of the person of Jesus Christ to Assemblies of God people and the authority ascribed to the Scriptures by them constituted the rationale for using them as the substantive base for the project.

However, in seeking to interpret the "score" in a "tune" to which the children will "dance," the "piper" meets with a rather formidable task. He faces the Synoptic Gospels themselves. He seeks to discover what they "meant," but because of differences in time and culture he

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[49] I speak here of written authority. It is granted that the supreme authority is God himself, and nothing can replace that, not even the Christian Scriptures. It is also granted that we can achieve no place of absolute certainty, since man does not have unconditioned knowledge as he reads the Bible. There is, in addition, the ever-present possibility that because of his perverseness--his sin--man may tamper with truth for the sake of his ego or other reasons. No interpreter is without theological, philosophical, or personal presuppositions. For this reason there are various options that one may take in interpreting the Bible and the options in various forms have been current since the early Christian centuries.

soon realizes that the meaning does not lie on the surface. He cannot go behind the biblical documents; to attempt to do so is to try to put himself in a better position with regard to the recorded events than were the New Testament writers, for the meaning today is derived from what the events meant to them. But even if the pastor were to discover what it "meant" that does not complete his task. Interpretation does not end at finding the past meaning but only when the children today know what it "means."

When he sets about to do both the pastor finds himself almost buried under a constant flow of books and an avalanche of ideas. It has led some Assemblies of God pastors either to despairing of ever trying to keep up or to taking an anti-intellectual stance. But neither despair nor anti-intellectualism is necessary. It was pointed out in the training sessions that without despairing because he is not an expert, the pastor can utilize the results of biblical criticism in a way that will enable him more meaningfully to interpret the Scriptures to children. The author attempted to show that rather than hindering his ministry to children critical study would enhance it. When he has worked with the ideas in interpreting the Bible he can speak from assured conviction rather than uncertainty. The emotional and psychological climate of assurance is in itself a plus factor in all preaching.

The thing the pastors feared is that radically critical scholarship has led to quite negative conclusions concerning the authority of the Bible and its historicity.[50] No attempt was made to deny that in

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[50]See the excellent discussions of the contemporary situations in Reginald H. Fuller, The New Testament in Current Study, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971, and in Harvey K. McArthur, ed., In Search of the Historical Jesus, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969.

some cases their fears were not unfounded. But in view of their feeling the author tried to point out that in principle biblical criticism is neutral[51] and "can neither destroy nor support faith,"[52] but rather can eventually "confirm or at least broaden the base of our faith."[53] The word "criticism" was used with the original root meaning in view, i.e., "to judge" or "to make distinctions between." Thus "the text of the Bible throughout all the centuries of its transmission, the literary integrity of its component parts, and the historical persons, places, and events they record are the proper objects of biblical criticism."[54] These tools, essentially neutral, can help the pastor to have a scholarly approach to the Scriptures that does not destroy its authority or muffle its proclamation. The alternative of "either faith-evoking proclamation or factual information" is a false alternative.[55] It is a matter

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[51]Though it must be granted that critics have not always been willing to acknowledge their underlying presuppositions. See Edmund P. Clowney, Preaching and Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), pp. 12-13. No man approaches the criticism and interpretation of the Bible as a tabula rasa.

[52]Roy A. Harrisville, His Hidden Grace: An Essay on Biblical Criticism (New York: Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 47.

[53]Ibid., p. 20.

[54]Ibid., p. 22.

[55]Harvey K. McArthur, ed., In Search of the Historical Jesus (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p. 256. "The Good News was not the clever anticipation by the carpenter of Nazareth of the most up-to-date philosophical ideas." (Ibid.) The testimony of the early church witnesses "is worthy of our acceptance, even when there are divergences, provided that we look at them not with the mentality of today but with the patient effort of one who seeks to transfer himself to the time of the authors, to their mentality, and to their way of speaking." (Cardinal Augustin Bea, The Study of the Synoptic Gospels: New Approaches and Outlooks, English version edited by Joseph A. Fitzmyer /New York: Harper and Row, 1965/, p. 44.)

of traditional Christian faith that the fact of Jesus of Nazareth is essential to the Christian faith, and biblical criticism has no final word on that relationship. Harrisville puts it this way:

> It is thus not only the nature of faith or the nature of biblical criticism, . . . but the object of the critic's research which ultimately calls his criticism into question. It is this object which renders biblical criticism with its division of fact from interpretation and abstraction and relegates it to the position of an ancillary, a subordinate undertaking. . . . The Scripture begins where biblical criticism leaves off--with the call of faith.[56]

But besides being simply neutral, which would leave us with only a cipher, biblical criticism has definite positive significance for the "pastor-piper-interpreter" of the Scriptures. It shows that a spectator hermeneutic is not more scientific than a responsibly theological one; that the hermeneutic is not complete until the content of Scripture becomes comprehensible to men today;[57] and that there are human elements in the Bible. It, especially lower criticism, shows a respect for the text of Scripture and honesty and intellectual integrity in handling it. Through historical criticism differences in Gospel accounts become explicable. In a very practical way, the literary forms demonstrated by criticism can become models for preaching today.

In the pastoral training sessions the author sought to apply in a positive way the findings of biblical criticism to certain synoptic

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[56]Harrisville, His Hidden Grace, p. 61.

[57]The "sermon is the EXECUTION of the text" and not so much, if at all, its exposition. Gerhard Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," The New Hermeneutic, p. 109. That statement does minimize the noetic element in preaching, but its hermeneutical application to homiletics should not be missed.

pericopae to demonstrate to the pastors how such study could be done.[58] From the conclusions of what it meant we attempted to determine what it might mean to children today. Particular emphasis was given to textual criticism and introductory and exegetical considerations, for the author has devoted more study to those aspects of biblical criticism than any other. Each Synoptic passage was investigated from the standpoint of the text itself. All significant variations were noted and using the accepted canons of tectual criticism the author attempted to arrive at what he considered to be the authentic text. Employing the standard exegetical tools he sought to understand the grammatical and lexicographal meaning, which meaning is essential to a present understanding. The attempt was made to set each story in the structural and theological context of the Gospel, since the authors were doubtless more than compilers of the oral or written traditions of the life of Jesus, but were theologians in their own right who were writing to achieve a particular theological end. The author also sought to hypothesize what circumstances in the early church may have prompted the inclusion of an event in order to meet a particular need in the church or reflect a particular position held. In the divine providence the Gospels were written for us of the twentieth century, but they were written first of all for the early church, and they first had spiritual and theological as well as historical

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[58] See Appendix II for a sample of the content of a pastoral training session and the results of the methodology employed in studying the Gospel materials. It would have been out of keeping with reality to have presented highly technical findings since the pastors did not have the background to handle them. To have done so with them would have destroyed the viability of the project, the purpose of which was to train Assemblies of God pastors, most of whom are not trained seminarians, to interpret for children the significance of Jesus Christ.

significance to them. Though the pastors were not always willing to grant the necessity for following such procedures in preparing to preach to children, the author in the training sessions tried to show them that only when they had used every tool available to them in their study of the New Testament could they come to the clearest possible understanding of what it meant. And only when they themselves clearly understood what it meant could they clearly understand what it means and thus be able in their preaching to help the children understand.

CHAPTER IV

THE EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

The Participating Churches

The three churches involved in the project represent a reasonable cross-section of the larger Assemblies of God churches in the area. One of the churches, the Assembly of God Tabernacle, is in Arlington, an agricultural community of about 3000, forty miles north of Seattle. The city is a kind of gateway to various seasonal recreational and sportsman's activities. The church is prominent in the community, having the largest Sunday school attendance of any church in town. It is the featured church in a recent public-relations pictoral put out by the Arlington Chamber of Commerce. The Assembly of God in Renton is one of two Assemblies of God churches in that city, an industrial suburb of Seattle, with a population of about 30,000. The church presently has the largest Sunday school attendance of any Assemblies church in the Seattle area, having over 700 each Sunday. It appears to be an active, thriving spiritual community. The third church, Evangel Temple, is one of fifteen Assemblies churches in Seattle. It has an average attendance in Sunday school of over 400.[1] Its growth is making it necessary for the congregation either to relocate or to add to the present facilities.

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[1] Among Assemblies of God churches the Sunday school attendance is the criterion most generally used to indicate church size. That such is the case may leave something to be desired. But it can, and often does show a vital interest in the religious education of the children.

The Pastors and the Project

The three pastors are graduates of what is now Northwest College of the Assemblies of God, in Kirkland, Washington. Pastor John M. Tappero, of Renton, was graduated with a diploma from Northwest Bible Institute, Seattle, in 1940. Prior to coming to Seattle he had had two years of junior college work in Vancouver, British Columbia. Pastor Walter A. Buck, of Seattle, was graduated with a diploma in 1943. Pastor Rollin J. Carlson, Arlington, in 1960 received his B.A. degree in religion from Northwest Bible College. None of the men has had any further formal education since graduating. Each one has been in continual ministry, primarily pastoral, since finishing his education, a combined total of some sixty-three years. So they are men of some experience.[2]

The pastors do not have a well-defined philosophy of ministry to children, or at least they did not so indicate in the "Pastoral Essay I."[3] Their statements do not give the impression that they were personally involved in children's ministry to any great degree,[4] though they have aggressively promoted ministry to children through the various educational and evangelistic arms of the church. However, if they have no clearly defined philosophy they do have an incipient one. That was brought out in their essays by such statements as: "Ministry to children has always

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[2]That circumstance was helpful in that the foundation of ministry had already been laid, and the men were readily able to relate our discussions to what was happening in their experience today. However, the length of their ministry may have hindered them to a degree from being as open to new ideas as some less-experienced pastors might have been.

[3]See Appendix I, A, for the pastoral essay forms. All completed forms used in the project are available for examination.

[4]One pastor indicated that he had ministered in a number of church camps for children and youth.

been an integral part of our ministry in each of our Pastorates [sic] . . . . We know that children can have a vital experience with the Lord." One pastor said he thoroughly believes that "tomorrow begins today." It appears strange then, that he himself had not participated in starting some tomorrow's today.

They felt that they had a good relationship with children, which self-evaluation was confirmed by the parents and the teachers. They also felt that the relationship could be improved by a greater personal contact with the children. They expected an improved relationship as the project helped them to become more conscious of the children and to foster better communication with them.

In evaluating themselves at the beginning of the project, by using the "Self-Anchoring Scale--Personal Self-Understanding,"[5] they scored themselves higher than might be expected in view of the fact that their personal ministry to children had been rather limited. For men of experience in pastoral ministry one could possibly expect a high self-evaluation in three of the five categories, but to rate themselves high with regard to children on "ministry" and "communication"[6] seemed unusual, and reason for caution was confirmed by the subsequent sessions. The skills needed in "piping" to children were not always evident and quite clearly, at least at the first, they fell far below their presumed ability to communicate adequately with children. But, however they evaluated their

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[5]See Appendix I, B. Except in two instances they rated themselves in six and above.

[6]One pastor did evaluate himself at the level of "3" on the scale for "communication." He appeared to be more realistic.

abilities before the sermons began they consistently indicated improvement following them.[7]

The pastors prepared for each sermon "An Inter-Action Profile."[8] The rough sketches they made of the setting were to a degree significant. One pastor in his first two sketches looked at the setting from above and included the adults in his drawings. In the remaining four he was more on a level with the children and the adults were not in it. The change may indicate a change in his attitude toward the preaching situation and toward the children. He may have needed the security of the adults as he began, but once he became more sure of himself in preaching the adults were no longer necessary. A second pastor sketched the same setting each time, which may or may not be significant; it is difficult to say. The third pastor did not even include himself in the first sketch. In preaching the sermon he stood on the platform, and he and the children must have felt the spatial and the personal distance between them. In all the other sketches he included himself as part of the group. But one cannot read too much into these sketches.

In evaluating the preaching situation and the dynamic between them and the children, the pastors felt that the most characteristic attitude of the children was an "alert and trusting receptivity." They have no clear-cut reasons why; it was simply a feeling-tone on their

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[7]This is true for two pastors. One rated himself so highly on the first scale that he hardly had any place to go. One wonders if in some cases, after the experience of ministering to children, they should have rated themselves lower the second time.

[8]See Appendix I, C. This particular instrument would have proved more useful if the setting was "one-to-one." As it was, the child was often lost in the children.

part. How much of that feeling is what they might have anticipated from "good children" is hard to say. They did not always speak to the specific question of how they affected the children. But the comment of one pastor gives meaning to the entire project in its affect on the relationship between pastor and children: "They seemed to be pleased that I was personally interested in them!" It was hoped that such a reaction would indeed come about. How did the children affect the pastors? In an obviously unpremeditated fashion one pastor described the affect of the children on him from the first sermon to the last. Here are his words after each sermon:

1. They drew me out--but also frustrated me somewhat, due to my obvious adult vocabulary.
2. Less frightening then /sic/ previous week--perhaps a bit more responsive.
3. Less uncertainty /sic/ about them--I am feeling more comfortable ministering to them!
4. I am actually looking forward to our weekly sessions.
5. They are becoming a part of my Sunday ministry /and/ I actually look forward to and anticipate the children's sermon--
6. I feel very much at home with them.

The change in feeling and attitude should be noted. It is the same pastor who said that he approached the project "with some misgivings--but am now glad I participated."

Have the pastors changed as a result of the project? They say, "Yes!" One pastor commented on the affect of the children on him by calling them "life-changers." Their philosophy of ministry to children has changed somewhat in that they see the need for greater personal involvement. They have become more aware that children, too, appreciate

pastoral care. They feel that the relationship between themselves and the children has been strengthened, and they intend to continue some form of personal ministry to them. The pastoral sessions have basically reinforced their "appreciation for richness of truth that a careful study will provide." They now have new tools to open greater possibilities to them. They feel they were greatly aided by the discussions on hermeneutics as it applies to both the New Testament and to preaching. But their basic approach to biblical interpretation has not greatly changed. The project has helped and changed their preaching by "pointing out the importance of communication." The sessions exposed weaknesses in their preaching and in their handling of biblical materials that will affect the totality of their pulpit ministry. They find they are now more concerned with the people than with the content of the sermon. In particular they have become aware of a forgotten segment of their congregation, the children. They were asked, "If you knew then what you know now, would you become involved in the project?" The answer was an emphatic "Yes!"

The Children and the Project

It had been hoped that at least a dozen in each church would be available to participate. In Renton only did we have twelve children to begin the project, with nine completing it; in Arlington we began with eleven, with eight completions, and in Evangel Temple we had nine children with eight completions. To complete the project the child had to draw pictures both before and at the end of the sermons and be in attendance each Sunday.[9] For a group that was totally voluntary, the

[9]There were few absences. But in view of the fact that the cumulative attendance figure was 192 the few absences probably were not significant enough to change the overall results. I was dependent on the pastors and teachers for the attendance information.

cooperation was good. The distribution of the children is as follows:

TABLE 1: Distribution of Children by Age, Sex, and Originating Church[10]

Age	Sex	Arlington	Renton	Seattle	Total
6	Boy	1	0	0	1
	Girl	1	2	1	4
7	Boy	1	2 (1)	4	7 (1)
	Girl	3	1 (1)	2	6 (1)
8	Boy	1 (2)	3	1 (1)	5 (3)
	Girl	0 (1)	1 (1)	0	1 (2)
9	Girl	1	0	0	1
Total		8 (3)	9 (3)	8 (1)	25 (7)

The project began with seventeen boys and fifteen girls and ended with thirteen boys and twelve girls, an unusual circumstance for being chosen by lot.

One of the most important instruments to measure the results of the project was the pictures the children drew, a picture of themselves and one other person and a picture of Jesus. At first it was thought that the pastors would receive some instruction as to the significance of children's drawings in understanding the child.[11] But after consideration it seemed advisable for the author himself to conduct this phase

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[10]The figures in parenthesis indicate the number that began the project but did not complete it. The nine-year old girl was in the primary department in her Sunday school.

[11]No attempt was made to analyze the drawings from a psychological perspective. I am not a psychologist and have had no training in such a procedure. I did attempt to interpret the drawings "practically" and "inferentially" as the general ideas portrayed in the pictures had significance for the project.

of the project in order to avoid bringing undue influence on the children as they considered whom to include with themselves.[12] In each case the children were together in a well-lit room with tables to work on. Following Karen Machover's suggestion, the children used plain white paper and a soft pencil. There was no time limit imposed on them. The first pictures they drew, one of themselves and one other person, showed the following distribution of persons they selected:

TABLE 2: Persons Chosen to Be with Them in Picture 1

Age	Sex	Father	Mother	Friend	Relative	Teacher	Pastor	Other	Total
6	Boy			1					1
	Girl			3	1				4
7	Boy			4 (1)	3				7 (1)
	Girl		2	3 (1)				1	6 (1)
8	Boy	1		3 (2)	1 (1)				5 (3)
	Girl			1 (1)	(1)				1 (2)
9	Girl		1						1
Total		1	3	15 (5)	5 (2)	0	0	1	25 (7)

In view of the child's attachment to friends at this age it came as no surprise that twenty out of the total of thirty-two responses chose a friend to be with them. It was no great surprise that the categories

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[12] It was impossible for me to be in the Renton Assembly of God on the last Sunday because the preaching series ended on the same day in two of the churches. The children in Renton drew the pictures with one of the participating teachers, Mrs. Ruby Emry, in charge. She is well acquainted with the technique, having used it herself in her classroom teaching. Careful written instructions were given to her to avoid all influences on the children and to allow them to draw whatever and however they wished to.

of teacher, pastor, and "other" had only one response between them. The parents were included four times, a boy choosing his father and three girls their mother. There seemed to be an unusually high frequency of relatives. Part of the answer may be that there could have been some undetected collusion.[13] Three boys from the same church all chose an "uncle" to be with them. Of course, it could be that the "uncle" was some kindly man in the church to whom they referred as "uncle." It appears however, to be an uncommon choice. A cousin, brother, sister, and another uncle were also selected. A matter of some significance to the project is that one girl chose the author to be in the picture with her. Comment about this is made below.

At the conclusion of the sermon series the children again drew the same pictures. The results were as follows:

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[13]Karen Machover indicated that it was possible to have the children in a group to draw the pictures without losing the individuality of each child's drawing. The children were instructed not to refer audibly to the person they chose. They told Mrs. Emry and the author privately whom they had chosen.

TABLE 3: Persons Chosen to Be with Them in Picture 2

Age	Sex	Father	Mother	Friend	Relative	Teacher	Pastor	Other	Total	Change[14]
6	Boy			1					1	0
	Girl			3	1				4	2
7	Boy			5	2				7	2
	Girl			3	2			1	6	3
8	Boy			2			1	2	5	3
	Girl				1				1	1
9	Girl			1					1	1
Total		0	0	15	6	0	1	3	25	12

In this drawing the parents were omitted. The total of those who chose friends remained the same, but relatives were included six rather than five times. Not unexpectedly for children of this age there were twelve of the total that included a different person with them in the second picture.[15] But the most significant changes for the project occurred among the eight-year old boys.[16] The purpose of the project was to

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[14] The figures listed here represent the total number of changes that the children made. In some cases where the figures are the same in both tables the change would not be obvious.

[15] Among the six-year old girls one changed from a cousin to a friend and one reversed that. Two seven-year old boys included not an uncle but a friend instead. To one boy the uncle is apparently of some significance. Two seven-year old girls included with them a sister and a friend instead of "mother" and one included a sister rather than a friend. The eight-year old girl changed from a friend to a cousin and the nine-year old from her mother to a friend.

[16] How much the project contributed directly to the change is impossible to say. It has already been mentioned that the pastor's personality, his own preaching style and the individual way he approached the children in the preaching situation were among some of the variables that in a social action-research project of this kind were impossible to control. However, it is not unreasonable to assume that it could have had a significant affect.

determine if training pastors to preach to children would effect a change in their understanding of Jesus and in the relationship between the pastor and the children. At the conclusion of the project one boy included Jesus with him in his drawing instead of his brother.[17] While the picture itself may not be a clear indication of his understanding of Jesus, it is noteworthy that he would include Him in the drawing. In the drawing he put Jesus slightly above the ground, as he himself is. But apparently the distance was too great and he drew a kind of box under Jesus to attach Him to the ground. He did not put Jesus in the clouds, though they appear in his picture, but next to him on the earth.

In his first rather detailed drawing one boy put himself and a friend in racing cars, with himself slightly ahead.[18] In the second drawing he pictured himself and his pastor.[19] Again they were moving, though not now in racing cars. He was the only child of the twenty-five that included the pastor with him in the second picture. But its significance should not be minimized, since there were none who did so the first time. It indicated a step in verifying the hypothesis.

Something unexpected came out in the drawings. One seven-year old girl both times chose the author to be with her. The first occurrence is more significant than the second since it appears from the second drawing that she either overheard or had some conversation with her parents about him. She refers to him in the picture as "Dotr MCod,"

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[17] See Appendix III, Pair A, for the drawings of this boy which show the change.

[18] I asked him about it and he said he intended to have himself in the lead.

[19] See Appendix III, Pair B.

i.e. "Doctor Pecota."[20] She also appears to be a kind of childish "coquette," which may account for her including him since he was the nearest man to her at the time. Of more importance, however, is that one eight-year old boy included the author with him in the second picture, whereas he had his father in the first one.[21] The boy and the author were in direct contact only once. Other than that the boy saw the author only twice when he attended the church to observe the pastor as he preached to children. Its significance is this: If such rather casual meetings would induce a child to include the author with him in a drawing could a greater impact be made by the pastor through continuous and warm personal contacts?

The analysis of the drawings the children did of Jesus is more difficult, since it is an attempt to determine their understanding of Jesus on the basis of the pictures alone. The author selected two general categories, their sense of Jesus' "immediacy" to them and their sense of His "attitude" toward them. The former has four sub-classes, i.e., a Jesus who is "heavenly," "earthly," "framed," or "unspecific"; the latter has three, i.e., a Jesus who is "friendly," "stern," or "unspecific."[22] The first picture shows the following:

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[20] See Appendix III, Pair C.

[21] See Appendix III, Pair D.

[22] To me they indicated a "heavenly" Jesus by placing Him in the clouds or in heaven; the "earthly" Jesus by clearly putting Him into contact with the earth; a "framed" Jesus had Him in a picture frame; and in the "unspecific" category there was not sufficient material to decide fairly. If they gave Jesus no mouth or it was impossible to tell the picture was regarded as "unspecific" as to attitude. See Appendix III, E, F, G, H, and I, for samples of a "heavenly," "earthly," "framed," "friendly," and "stern" Jesus.

TABLE 4: The Immediacy of Jesus to Their Lives, Picture 1

Age	Sex	Heavenly	Earthly	Framed	Unspecific	Total
6	Boy	1				1
	Girl		2	1	1	4
7	Boy			2	5 (1)	7 (1)
	Girl	1			5 (1)	6 (1)
8	Boy	2		1	2 (3)	5 (3)
	Girl	(1)	1 (1)			1 (2)
9	Girl				1	1
Total		4 (1)	3 (1)	4	14 (5)	25 (7)

It appears from this analysis and distribution that when they drew the first pictures Jesus had no really significant immediacy for their lives. Of the total only four clearly connected Jesus with the earth unless the four who "framed" Him can be counted in this group. By far the greater number do not clearly connect Jesus with either earth or heaven. To them He appears to be "unspecific," which may represent a stage in their "hermeneutical" struggle to bring the two together. The project was an attempt to aid the pastor in conveying to the children a greater understanding of Jesus, a non-docetic Jesus.

The childrew drew the same pictures at the conclusion of the series with the following results:

TABLE 5: The Immediacy of Jesus to Their Lives, Picture 2

Age	Sex	Heavenly	Earthly	Framed	Unspecific	Total	Change
6	Boy				1	1	1
	Girl		2		2	4	2
7	Boy		1	1	5	7	1
	Girl		4		2	6	5
8	Boy	1	1		3	5	2
	Girl	1				1	1
9	Girl		1			1	1
Total		2	9	1	13	25	13

Again, there were changes, but the shift in the feelings of the children to the "immediacy" of Jesus is quite definitely toward bringing Him closer to their world. There is a total differential of six children whose drawings seem to indicate that. The "unspecific" Jesus remained about the same, but now to only one child was Jesus a picture in a frame, and to two others he was in heaven. Since the sermon series was about "People Who Met Jesus," it is believed that Jesus became more a person to the children as a result of the preaching.

The pictures seem to show that whatever feelings the children had regarding the "immediacy" of Jesus, they regard Him as having a caring attitude toward them. Twenty-three of the children in the first drawing and seventeen in the second pictured Jesus with a friendly countenance, often smiling broadly. The two who had shown Jesus with a stern look drew Him the second time as "unspecific," as did two who first drew Him as "friendly." Whatever the reasons, it appears that the children involved in this project had and have a positive feeling

about Jesus' attitude toward them. The sermons apparently had no affect on that feeling.

The Parents and The Project

In seeking to evaluate the project the parents of the children involved completed a questionnaire both before and after the project.[23] Unfortunately not all of them returned the second form.[24] But the number who did is sufficient to get some idea of how the parents felt their children responded to the pastor and the sermons. The questions focused on the two main objectives of the project. There was also a final question concerning their opinion of its worth. In the order of the questions the tabulation of the results and pertinent comments for both evaluations are as follows:[25]

1. Does your child know the pastor by name?

   I. Yes 18 No 1

   II. Yes 19 No 0

2. Does the pastor connect your child with you?

   I. Yes 18 No 1

   II. Yes 19 No 0

No significant change is noted. The "no" answers do not represent the same person.

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[23] See Appendix I, E.

[24] Perhaps the second questionnaire was too long and called for more writing than they were willing to do. A total of nineteen parents returned the second form, seven from Renton, three from Evangel Temple, and five from Arlington. Though it is a secondary instrument it is regrettable that not all the parents returned them.

[25] Of the thirty-two children who began the project twenty-five completed it. Two parents did not send in either evaluation form. The questionnaires of the parents who returned both are alone considered in the evaluation.

3. Does your child feel free to talk with the pastor?

I.	1	8	5	4
	Not at all	Somewhat		Very free
II.	1	4	6	8
	Not at all	Somewhat		Very free

4. Does the pastor in fact do something about it?

I.		9	5	5
	Not at all	Somewhat		Very much
II.		3	6	10
	Not at all	Somewhat		Very much

5. Does your child express attitudes toward the pastor?

I.	3	2	10	1	3
	Not at all		Somewhat		Very much
II.	1	2	8	3	5
	Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

The responses to these three questions showed that a definite improvement in the relationship between the pastors and the children had come about. The parents considered that their children now felt more free to approach the pastor. They believed that the sermons had a part in bringing about that feeling. In both evaluations, the image (question 6) the parents thought the children had of the pastor remained essentially the same. There were several who gave no opinion, but the comments were quite positive.[26]

7. Does your child in any way connect Jesus with his life?

I.	10	3	5	1
	Often		Sometimes	Never
II.	10	4	3	2
	Often		Sometimes	Never

[26] Such ideas as a "Jesus-man," "a man to be respected," "friendly like my dog," or "like my daddy" were common.

No change of any significance occurred. These children regularly attended church and it is not unusual that they would in some way connect Jesus with themselves. It was thought that the images (question 8) the children had of Jesus might change, but they did not. In both evaluations the images they had of Jesus were primarily of one who does things for them rather than of someone who is something to them.[27] But that is probably adult thinking, for to children what a person does is what he is.

The parents felt quite strongly that the services were not relevant to the children (question 9). In the first evaluation thirteen said "no," three "sometimes," and three said "yes." The second evaluation showed that more parents considered the services to be relevant (four said "yes" and five "sometimes"), but several who said "no" made an exception of the sermon series in the project. Such comments seem to confirm the viability of the project as a whole in ministering to children.

10. Were the sermons clear?

17	2	
Very clear	Somewhat	Very unclear

11. Were the sermons useful?

14	2	3
Very useful	Somewhat	Not at all useful

12. Did the sermons make a difference between the child and the pastor?

Yes 13 No 5 Uncertain 1

It was quite clear that the parents regarded the sermons quite positively. It was also apparent that in spite of the problems of communication that

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[27] "Savior," "healer," "protector," and "helper" were the most common ideas in both evaluations.

the pastors themselves felt the parents thought that the sermons were clear to their children. The pastors did improve in clarity as the series progressed. The primary difference as the parents saw it (question 13) was that the children discovered the pastor was interested in them. They felt that a gap had been bridged between them and each knew the other better, which impression found confirmation in the answers to questions eleven and twelve.

14. What about the pastor's style of preaching?

2		2		16
Talked down to them		Indifferent		Appropriate to them

[28]

In spite of some serious shortcomings in the preaching (the author's evaluation) the parents felt that their pastor's style was appropriate. The author's impression of the answers to this question is that they are not realistic. It appears that unless one is seriously attempting "to think a child's thoughts after him" it is at best difficult to detach one's self from an adult mind-set. However, the pastors did improve.

15. What about your child's enthusiasm for the sermons?

5	8	4		2
Very enthusiastic		Somewhat		Very unenthusiastic

[29]

16. Did your child talk about the sermon?

1	4	9	2	3
Often		Sometimes		Never

The children were certainly more enthused about the sermons than not,

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[28] One set of parents was divided on this point. The mother thought the pastor talked down to the children and the father considered the style to be appropriate.

[29] I question the validity of two responses as "very unenthusiastic." The rest of their evaluations did not coincide with that. Apparently they failed to read carefully the categories.

but they did not frequently speak of them, which is probably not unusual. The comments that the parents could recall (question 17) had to do with the content of the sermon more than what it might have meant to them. Several children said "the sermon was good." Some parents commented favorably on the use of visuals and demonstrations. In the training sessions there was an emphasis put on such visual aids.

Did the parents detect any change in the relationship between the pastor and the children (question 18) and between Jesus and the children (question 19)? Six parents said there was no change in child-pastor relations and nine said "no" regarding the latter question. There were eight parents who believed their children felt much more free to approach the pastor, and now regarded him as a friend. One child said, "I didn't know he was so nice." Just as significant is the child who personally felt more friendly to the pastor. Several parents (eight) felt that the relationship of their child to Jesus was positively reinforced by the sermons. No negative feelings were conveyed.

Was the project worthwhile (question 20)? A most definite "Yes!" was the response. Only two gave a negative response, feeling that more could be accomplished with the children outside of the morning service. But one mother put it, "Children's church is just great but it has also been a very important experience, having this closer contact with our pastor." Five parents hoped that the series would prompt the pastor to continue such ministry. And as was expected, there were two who said that "the stories were interesting even to the adults."

The Teachers and The Project

In each of the churches a professionally trained teacher participated

in the project.[30] They heard each of the sermons and then met with the children after the second, fourth, and sixth sermons, using the "Teacher's Evaluation Report" forms as guides. Their comments showed good insight and were quite helpful to the pastoral training sessions. Their judgment of the project and evaluation of the children's responses paralleled the observations of the author. If there was a lack at all it was that at times they appeared to reflect their own feelings rather than those of the children, but it is at best a most difficult task to filter out one's own feelings when seeking to evaluate the feelings of others.

Each teacher stated that in communicating with the children the pastors showed steady improvement. They began rather nervously but became more relaxed as the series progressed and thus helped the children to feel more at ease. They used visuals and demonstrations quite well, but the children were not always able to comprehend the directions. In addition, toward the end the visuals tended to "sameness," and a few of the children became bored and preferred going directly to children's church. The teachers felt that generally the pastors spoke with the children's background in mind, though the need was obvious for a greater exposure to a child's world. In the main the pastors became involved with the children and the children with them. The teachers also sensed that

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[30] In the Arlington church Mrs. Doris Marsh was the evaluator. She received a B.A. degree from the University of Washington. Except for nine years she has taught school from 1934 to 1970, the year of her retirement. The last eleven years she taught second grade children. Mrs. Ruby Emry assisted at Renton. Still in the classroom, she has taught in grammar school for sixteen years, having graduated from Central Washington State College, Ellensburg, with a B.A. in education. Mr. Cliff Sundin of Seattle aided in the project at Evangel Temple, Seattle. He is a graduate of Seattle Pacific College, having a B.A. in education plus sixty additional hours, and has taught grammar school children for nine years.

the children responded positively to the pastors' non-verbal communication, and indicated that the pastors improved from average to good in the level of empathic involvement with the children.

The teachers pointed out some weaknesses in communication. It was not unexpected to read in the reports that the use of inappropriate words was the major problem. All the pastors did improve, but abstractions were not uncommon and words were used that were outside the experience of the children. Other weaknesses were that the children sometimes got the feeling of "hurry-up-and-let's-get-this-over-with." That was especially true of one pastor who felt that the only way he could schedule the sermons was to "sandwich" them between the close of Sunday school and the beginning of the morning service.[31] The teachers also noted that the pastors, one more than the others, tended to make side comments for the benefit of the adults which were lost on the children.

The teachers agreed that the messages did have meaning to the children. They may not have comprehended all the details, but in most cases the main idea was clear. One commented, "They didn't understand some of the concepts in the story but they did seem to get the basic idea."

They all concluded that the project was definitely worthwhile. The children expressed to them their pleasure and excitement over the pastor's attempts to relate to them. One teacher said, "I believe most of the children participating will remember this experience as a high point in their early years in church." The real affect, one said, will be noticed if the pastors continue the sermons. An observation by one

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[31]He did indicate in our final review session that he thought it lessened his effectiveness.

was that "it probably would take some more of this type of activity on a regular basis of some sort to really see if he is entering into their lives."[32]

Concerning the content of the sermons as they focused on Jesus one teacher indicated that some of the children "spoke of Jesus as a real friend to them." It was felt that the pastor "created a more friendly feeling about Jesus," an idea expressed by the parents. A teacher said, "It was a good effort and one that was bound to improve relationships." Their comments have led to the conclusion that the project, within its limitations, did in part achieve its goal.

The Project Director and the Pastors

The pastors were not novices at preaching, though they mostly are in preaching to children. The training sessions had the purpose of exposing them to some new ideas about communication and preaching, of instructing them regarding the use of appropriate words with children, and in general of conveying the meaning of preaching and what happens in the preaching event.[33] They did not become expert children's preachers, but within the limits of the project the goals were accomplished and the preaching reflected that. At the start, the act of preaching itself appeared to be the chief concern. They tended to overpower the children with their oratory, apparently failing to realize that the very presence of an adult in settings like that tends already to overpower a child.

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[32]I grant the validity of the comment. However, I concluded before the project began that its viability in validating the hypothesis did not depend so much on its length as on its rather startling newness among Assemblies of God churches.

[33]See Appendix II for a summary of the training sessions.

But as the series progressed they became more at ease and were able not to "try so hard." They began to sense that in preaching they were God's "piper" and that they had the grave and joyous privilege of leading the children to a greater understanding of Jesus and of their own religious experience. The sermons became increasingly "a concern to be shared rather than a topic to be discussed."

Each of the pastors was an "energetic" preacher, sometimes too energetic for the children. It kept them from being relaxed in preaching. In spite of comments and discussions in the training sessions about coming down to the level of the children, not one of the pastors was relaxed enough in himself and in the setting to do so consistently.[34] As a result, there was a distance between them and the children. However, their energetic preaching also gave the sermon more life and interest. The pastors put themselves into the preaching and were enthused. That enthusiasm apparently came across to the children.[35]

At the beginning all the sermons were too long, running between ten and as much as fifteen or more minutes. It was in part due to nervousness and the newness of what they were doing. But the main problem was that they had apparently not thought through carefully and clearly what they were going to say and do. As a result they tended to take

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[34]In one church the front pews are quite close to the platform and the church is so full that a row of chairs is provided for the children. There was little room for him to stand before them on their level. However, had he been relaxed enough in preaching to sit down it might have been possible for him to step down from the platform.

[35]There were some voice problems that we discussed in the sessions. To a degree they were corrected. At times they all tended to be "preacherish."

bypaths that were not in the least pertinent to the central idea.[36] The "feedback" sessions helped to eliminate much of it. At the end the sermons were a more reasonable five to six minutes long.

One of the greatest weaknesses in the sermons was the use of words. In one sermon there were fully twenty-five words or expressions that appeared to the author to be beyond the ability of the children to understand. The same pastor had seventeen such expressions in the next sermon. The other pastors were not so prone to use abstractions, but they all tended to use adult words. Listening to the tapes together in the training sessions gave the opportunity to point them out. By the time the series was over the pastors had remarkably improved. The words were imageable and concrete, related to the world of children, and not abstract and irrelevant to their experience. In that regard the training sessions did have a definite impact.

The pastors were not skilled in the critical study of the New Testament.[37] They were not unfamiliar with what is involved in such study, but the necessary tools do not lie ready-to-hand. They did not become critical scholars through their involvement in the project. That was not its purpose nor was it the purpose to give them an apologetic for the usefullness and necessity of a critical methodology. It was to expose them to what hermeneutical and homiletical benefits are derived in approaching biblical materials critically and thus in the process attempt to persuade them to become better scholars. The sermons showed

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[36] I preached one of the sermons in the pre-test project in Enid. I used no more than six minutes and the idea came through clearly. Two of the pastors took about twelve minutes to preach the same sermon.

[37] It was evident in the first pastoral essay in the brief exposition they gave of Matthew 18:1-6.

that they had made some progress in that direction, but their approach is still rather uncritical.

What has been said is not intended to fault them. They do have a good knowledge of the Bible and its meaning and content and of biblical theology. Their interpretation does reflect an understanding of the New Testament as a whole and, in general, was appropriate to children. Where they felt able to they brought into their sermons the instruction they received in the sessions. It was especially evident in their renewed awareness that interpretation does not stop when what the Bible "meant" becomes clear, but only when what the Bible "means" becomes apparent to the interpreter and his hearers. Without at all seeming to justify critical "sloppiness" they read the Bible in the way that Jacques Ellul says he does. He calls it a "continuous" reading of the Bible. Vernard Eller, in The Christian Century says of Ellul,

> His main quarrel with the dominant school of hermeneutics--characterized by such techniques as redaction criticism and the analysis of forms, literacy genres, traditions and sources--is not that its techniques are faulty but that the forest gets lost because of its exclusive attention to trees.[38]

The pastors would no doubt say the "Amen" to that, but in the sessions the attempt was made to show that the forest need not be lost but rather explained, enhanced, and beautified by paying some attention to the trees. If the pastors began to see that to even a limited degree the project justified the attempt. The concluding session with them was given to a summary and review of the project. It was then that the pastors indicated their appreciation for the exposure to the critical study of

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[38]Vernard Eller, "How Jacques Ellul Reads the Bible," The Christian Century, LXXXIX (November 29, 1972), 1213-1215.

the New Testament. They said that the author's method would not necessarily become their method but that the project as a whole had been helpful in conveying to them some of the complex richness of a more critical methodology in New Testament interpretation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the project the author set out to show that training pastors to preach to children would change positively the relation between them and would give the children a clearer understanding of Jesus. On the basis of his observations he had concluded that most Assemblies of God pastors have been derelict in fulfilling the commission to "preach the gospel to every creature," for they had not included the children within the scope of their own personal ministry. As a result there has been lacking a really dynamic relation between them. Further, he believes that the pastor becomes a miniature incarnation, for he represents God's hermeneutic to bring heaven and earth together for the children. He becomes a "prophetic Pied Piper" to lead the children to the God he represents.

Through a series of training sessions the pastors became more aware of their personal responsibility to the children and of the opportunity of ministering to them. The author tried to show them that such ministry, thoughtful and thought-provoking, was a "retreat into the future" as they sought to revisit their own childhood in the children today and to learn to "know" those characteristics that fit them for the kingdom of heaven. In the sessions the author gave instruction in New Testament interpretation and showed them how critical tools could be used in preparing to preach to children. He interpreted several Synoptic passages and from them devised sermons which the pastors could

preach. He gave instruction concerning the preaching task and the problems of preaching to children. Understanding children was an integral part of the training. In the instruction and the dialogical feedback the focus was on preparing them to preach in such a way that they could fulfill the objectives of the project.

In a series of six sermons the pastors sought to incarnate the training sessions. They sought to bring the people of the Bible and the Jesus of the Bible into meaningful reality for the children. They sought to enter the lives of the children and to change the relation that existed between them. Taking into account the people and the circumstances described in the project, the author's findings appear to indicate that at least an approach has been made to achieving the goals of the project. Some positive change has taken place in the relationship between the pastors and the children. It had been anticipated that greater changes would occur. The author had thought that, though brief, the newness of such preaching in Assemblies of God churches would compensate for the potentially greater results that would take place over a longer period of time. Apparently that judgment was not correct. The children's understanding of Jesus has been changed to a degree, but the project principally has reinforced ideas already held. It had been expected that a greater number of changes would take place. Part of the reason they did not may be that Assemblies of God children begin to attend Sunday school at an early age, so that by the time they are six they have already had about four years of religious training in church. Had children who do not attend church regularly been involved in the project there may have been more obvious changes. The author

believes that the statements of the pastors show that his training of them has, to a degree, been effective in bringing about changes in them. In the preaching about Jesus and the people who met Him, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, a significant hermeneutical process has taken place in the pastors and they now have a better understanding of how to relate the New Testament and preaching in ministry to children. Future study is necessary to determine whether or not greater changes would occur in all who were involved if the project were conducted over a longer period of time or in a different form. However, the author has concluded that his findings show a measurable change has taken place as a result of the project in its present form.

APPENDIX I

The Instruments Used

A. Pastoral Essay I and II

B. Self-Anchoring Scale--Personal Self-Understanding

C. An Inter-Action Profile

D. Teacher's Evaluation Reports I, II, and III

E. Parents' Evaluation I and II

F. Project Director's Evaluation

APPENDIX I

A: Pastoral Essay I

Name of Pastor_____

Name of Church_____City_____

Number of years in ministry_____

1. Give a brief description of your ministerial training and your ministry to the present time.

2. Describe briefly your philosophy of ministry to children. Include in what ways you yourself have attempted to minister to children and your honest feelings toward such ministry.

3. Describe briefly your impression of the relationship that exists between you and the children of your congregation.

4. As a result of the project, what changes do you anticipate in that relationship?

5. Give a brief exposition of Matthew 18:1-6. Describe briefly your approach to the task of biblical exposition.

Pastoral Essay II

Name of Pastor_____

1. Has your philosophy of ministry to children changed? How?

2. How do you now see the relationship between yourself and the children?

3. Have you modified your approach to biblical interpretation? If so, how?

4. Discuss briefly your evaluation of the whole project.

B: Self-Anchoring Scale--Personal Self-Understanding

The concept which a pastor has of himself as a preacher to children may be described in part by the following traits:

1) Mastery: (i.e. of the skills and tools necessary for personal accomplishment of your role as a preacher to children).

2) Coping: (i.e. the ability to respond with personal adequacy to a problematic situation in such preaching and to facilitate orderly progress).

3) Identity: (i.e. the sense of personal unity and continuity across the total scope of the role as a pastor).

4) Communication: (i.e. the capacity to use language and other symbols for appropriate, reality oriented, communication).

5) Intimacy-Commitment: (i.e. the capacity to commit one's self to concrete personal affiliations with the children and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments).

RATE YOURSELF AS YOU NOW ARE BY CHECKING THE PROPER RUNG IN EACH OF THE SELF-ANCHORING SCALES BELOW:

I Mastery
Most Possessed
10 _____
9 _____
8 _____
7 _____
6 _____
5 _____
4 _____
3 _____
2 _____
1 _____
0 _____
Most lacking

II Coping
Most Possessed
10 _____
9 _____
8 _____
7 _____
6 _____
5 _____
4 _____
3 _____
2 _____
1 _____
0 _____
Most lacking

III Identity
Most Possessed
10 _____
9 _____
8 _____
7 _____
6 _____
5 _____
4 _____
3 _____
2 _____
1 _____
0 _____
Most lacking

IV Communicator
Most Possessed
10 _____
9 _____
8 _____
7 _____
6 _____
5 _____
4 _____
3 _____
2 _____
1 _____
0 _____
Most lacking

V Intimacy-Commitment
Most Possessed
10 _____
9 _____
8 _____
7 _____
6 _____
5 _____
4 _____
3 _____
2 _____
1 _____
0 _____
Most lacking

C: An Inter-Action Profile

1. In light of the preaching situation:

   a. Draw a rough sketch of the setting--stick figures will do.

   b. In one sentence: How did you affect the children?

   c. In one sentence: How did the children affect you?

2. What strikes you as the most characteristic attitude of the children as you preached? Why?

D: Teacher's Evaluation Report I

Name_____

Date of meeting with children_____

1. In what ways is the pastor communicating with the children?

2. In what ways is he not?

3. How empathically is he entering into the life and experiences of the children?

1	2	3	4	5
Most Empathic		Somewhat		Least Empathic

4. What observations can you make from your session with the children?

Teacher's Evaluation Report II

Name_____

Date of meeting with children_____

1. What improvements has the pastor made in communicating with the children?

2. Where are places he still needs to work?

3. How is the "empathy level?"

1	2	3	4	5
Most Empathic		Somewhat		Least Empathic

4. What observations can you make from your session with the children?

Teacher's Evaluation Report III

Name_____

Date of meeting with children_____

1. What improvements has the pastor made in communicating with the children?

2. Where are places he still needs to work?

3. How is the "empathy level?"

1	2	3	4	5
Most Empathic		Somewhat		Least Empathic

4. What observations can you make from your session with the children?

5. What is your estimation of the whole project in developing a better relationship between the pastor and the children and their understanding of Jesus?

E: Parents' Evaluation I

Name of Parents_____

Name of Child_____ Age_____

Please answer all the questions. In answering those which call for a judgment on your part, please be as objective as you can. Content of the sermons will necessarily be discussed with your child, but please avoid any tendency to influence him to think as you do concerning the sermons and the pastor, whether positive or negative.

1. Does your child know the pastor by name? Yes _____ No _____

2. Does the pastor connect your child with you? Yes _____ No _____

3. Does your child feel free to talk with the pastor?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very free

4. Does the pastor in fact do something about it?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

5. Does your child express attitudes toward the pastor?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

6. What images would you use to show the attitudes of your child to the pastor?

7. Does your child in any way connect Jesus with his own life?

1	2	3	4	5
Often		Sometimes		Never

8. In what ways does he see Jesus connected with his life?

9. Do the church services appear to be relevant to children?

Person(s) Filling Out This Evaluation

_____

Parents' Evaluation II

Name of Parents_____

Name of Child_____ Age_____

Please answer all the questions. In answering those which call for a judgment on your part, please be as objective as you can. Content of the sermons will necessarily be discussed with your child, but please avoid any tendency to influence him to think as you do concerning the pastor, whether positive or negative.

1. Does your child know the pastor by name? Yes _____ No _____

2. Does the pastor connect your child with you? Yes _____ No _____

3. Does your child feel free to talk with the pastor?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very free

4. Does the pastor in fact do something about it?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

5. Does your child express attitudes toward the pastor?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all		Somewhat		Very much

6. What images would you use to show the attitudes of your child to the pastor?

7. Does your child in any way connect Jesus with his own life?

1	2	3	4	5
Often		Sometimes		Never

8. In what ways does he see Jesus connected with his life?

9. Do the church services appear to be relevant to children?

10. Were the sermons clear?

1	2	3	4	5
Very clear		Somewhat		Very unclear

11. Were the sermons useful?

1	2	3	4	5
Very useful		Somewhat		Not at all useful

12. Did the sermons make a difference between the child and the pastor?

Yes _____ No _____

13. How?

14. Please check the appropriate place with regard to the pastor's style of preaching.

1	2	3	4	5
Talked down to children		Indifferent		Appropriate to them

15. Please check with regard to the enthusiasm of your child about the sermons.

1	2	3	4	5
Very enthusiastic		Somewhat		Very unenthusiastic

16. Without prompting, did your child talk about the sermons in a way that reflected what was said?

1	2	3	4	5
Often		Sometimes		Never

17. Can you give his specific comments?

18. Please comment on the changes you detected, if any, in the relationship between your child and the pastor.

19. Please comment on changes you detected, if any, in your child's understanding of Jesus.

20. Please comment on the worth of the whole project.

Person(s) Filling Out This Evaluation

_____

F: Project Director's Evaluation

Pastor_____

Sermon Theme_____Date of Preaching_____

A. The content of the sermon

1. Was the interpretation of the New Testament appropriate to children?
2. Was the content relevant to them?
3. Was it expressed in concrete, imageable words?

B. The presentation of the sermon

1. Did the pastor "try too hard" to relate?
2. Did the "oratory" overpower the content?
3. How enthusiastic was he?
4. Was his voice alive?
5. What use did he make of visuals? of dialogue?
6. Was he distracted by interruptions? by indifference?

C. General comments (improvements made, suggested changes, etc.)

APPENDIX II

Outline Summary of the Training Sessions

Session 1

I. On Communication
   A. Input: How is it we know something to communicate?
   B. Interpretation: What do we do with what we experience?
   C. Output: Words, words, words

II. On Biblical Interpretation
   A. What the Bible "meant" and what it "means"
   B. The backgrounds of the Bible
      1. Ancient books
      2. The languages of the Bible
      3. The sources of the Bible
      4. The formation of the biblical canon

III. On Understanding and Ministering to Children (Professor Dwayne E. Turner)
   A. Understanding children
      1. The child a real person
      2. Childhood the age of discovery
      3. The child has needs that arise from his being as God created him
      4. The intellectual and social developmental tasks of childhood
      5. Childhood developments
         a. Physically: a "hustler"
         b. Mentally: an observer
         c. Spiritually: a discerner
   B. Implications of understanding children for learning
      1. What is teaching?
      2. How we learn
      3. The matter of recall
      4. Steps of the teaching/learning process
      5. Methods of teaching /preaching/ to be used

Session 2

I. Discussion of the Tapes

II. Tools of Modern Critical Study
   A. Connotation of the word "critical"
   B. Meaning of "higher criticism"

C. Rationale for the tools
D. The tools in diagram (borrowed from Dr. M. Eugene Boring, The Graduate Seminary, Phillips University)

III. The Tools applied to the New Testament
A. A study of Mark 14:66-72
B. Its meaning for today

Session 3

I. Discussion of the Tapes

II. Meeting with Dr. Dale Turner, University Congregational Church, Seattle

III. A Study of Mark 10:17-22
A. Introductory considerations
B. Its place in the Gospel
C. An exegesis of the passage
D. Its meaning for today

Session 4

(This session is given more completely as an example of the approach used. See the Bibliography for citations made in the outline.)

I. Discussion of the Tapes

II. General Discussion on the Progress of the Project

III. The New Testament in the Project
A. Interpreting the New Testament
1. Significance of Historie and Geschichte
a. The difference in meaning
1) Historie: the "facticity" and chronology of the events
2) Geschichte: the meaning and interpretation of the events
b. Things to grant
1) Bible not written by historiographers, therefore its "main" purpose is not history
2) Bible written out of a context of religion, therefore its "main" purpose is faith
3) The Bible primarily Geschichte not Historie
c. An unfortunate distinction
1) Has led some to deny the "facticity" of some or much Historie that underlies the Geschichte
2) To some:
The Bible is written from a religious point of view.
Facticity is clearly secondary.
Therefore, biblical facticity is suspect.

d. A fortunate distinction
   1) We do not impose historiographer's categories on Bible
   2) We do not fault Bible for not being "historical"
   3) We are not distressed over "different" accounts
   4) To others:
      The Bible is written from a religious point of view.
      Facticity is clearly secondary.
      Therefore, facticity is told from a religious point of view.

B. The sermon: Jesus and the Man Nobody Liked (Luke 19:1-10)
   1. The Gospel of Luke
      a. It is anonymous
         1) Early church tradition ascribes to Luke
         2) There is no significant early testimony to the contrary (V. Taylor, Interpreter's Bible, opts for Luke)
      b. Luke intends to write "historically"
         1) "Luke reads his sources from the standpoint of the aim he himself is pursuing. His aim is to write past history, and to do this as accurately as possible, and he reads his sources--although with a critical eye--as historical records. If Luke wishes to be a 'historian' he can only achieve this by writing history, and he therefore sets out the units of proclamation as a succession of past events, but at the same time he characterizes the story by describing the events as 'fulfilments', and as fulfilments of a Divine plan of salvation which has unfolded itself in a sequence of history . . . . As a 'historian' he is always the believer, and his account of history is always determined by his 'belief'." (Marxsen, Introduction to the New Testament, p. 157)
         2) Luke divides history into three epochs
            a) Period of Israel--law and prophets
            b) Period of Jesus--the 'center of time' (See Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time)
            c) Period of the Church--from Pentecost to Parousia
      c. Luke regards death of Jesus as a legal murder by Jews
         1) Written for Gentiles
         2) "The aim Luke pursues . . . is not that of villifying the Jews but of exonerating the Romans, and it is this that gives rise to the emphasis on the guilt of the Jews." (Marxsen, ibid., p. 159)
            a) Not Luke's main emphasis--see 1:1-4
            b) But may have influenced his use of material
      d. May give some explanation why Luke alone includes account of Zacchaeus
         1) It appears in the "Judean section" of the Gospel
         2) Jesus on His way to Jerusalem
         3) The story "symbolizes" the rejection of Jesus by the Jews and His reception by those who are despised by the Jews--"the Gentile dogs"

4) "In the period of the Church, according to Luke, the only choice open to the Jews is that of becoming Christians or of remaining Jews." (Marxsen, ibid., p. 159).
5) They refuse to do so and "murmur" against their "Jewish Jesus" for His action in receiving the "despised"

2. A study of Luke 19:1-10
   a. There is no variant reading of significance
   b. The story belongs to the Lukan addition to the progress of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem
   c. Some suggest it as a variant of the story of Jesus and Levi (I.B.)
      1) Unnecessary, for Luke does record other incident (5: 27-32)
      2) There is "no good reason for doubting that two such incidents had taken place." (Plummer, Luke, I.C.C., p. 432)
   d. The story
      vs 1: It is not necessary to assume inner contradiction in the account, i.e. trees would not grow in the narrow streets of an oriental city
         a. We really don't know where Jesus was in the city nor all about ancient Jericho
         b. It could be a general statement giving the setting without being too specific
      vs 2: Luke gives us the man's:
         a. Name: Zacchaeus
            1) It means "pure"
            2) But no reason to attach significance to that, as if Luke is trying to establish a contrast between the Gentiles who are "pure-hearted" and the Jews who are not
         b. Occupation: chief tax collector
            1) This Greek word and designation are not found elsewhere in any Greek literature
            2) Precise nature of the office cannot be determined, but he was probably a head man over local collectors of taxes
            3) Jericho would be an important customs station
         c. Social standing: he was rich
            1) That he was a publican would subject him to extreme hatred
            2) That he was a rich publican would intensify that hatred
      vs 3: The multitude was the source of the hindrance
         a. Greek implies that Zacchaeus continued to seek a way to see Jesus
         b. The suggestion has been made (I.B.) that it was Jesus who might have been short in stature
            1) A possibility but not likely
            2) Subject is Zacchaeus not Jesus

vs 4: "No thought of personal dignity or propriety deterred him from his purpose." (Plummer, ibid., p. 433).
- a. Probably a fig-mulberry tree
  - 1) Fruit like fig, leaf like mulberry
  - 2) Easy to climb, short trunk, wide lateral branches
- b. Probably not trying to hide

vs 5 and 6: How Jesus knew his name is not said
- a. No reason to assume exercise of supernatural power
  - 1) Could have asked about him
  - 2) Could have heard crowd refer to him
- b. Jesus' invitation was uttered in a cordial tone
  - 1) He emphasized it
  - 2) "This very day in your house"
- c. His joy is in contrast to their murmuring

vs 7: The crowd murmurs at Jesus
- a. May have taken place after Jesus entered the house
  - 1) A murmuring of outraged propriety
  - 2) "Sinner" does not equal "Gentile"
    - a) He is a son of Abraham (vs 9)
    - b) He is a sinner because he is a publican
- b. The verb "to be a guest" has idea of "loosing one's garments and resting from a journey"

vs 8: Zacchaeus demonstrates a change
- a. Possibly in his home
  - 1) May have been in the street
  - 2) Luke not interested in giving precise location
- b. Present tense expresses present resolve
  - 1) Does not convey idea of a past habit
  - 2) The "Behold" indicates a sudden resolution
- c. "If I have defrauded" conveys the idea that he knew he had
- d. Fourfold restitution
  - 1) In keeping with Roman law
  - 2) Commanded in O.T. (Ex. 22:1)

vs 9: Jesus speaks "to him" but for all to hear--the third person is used in His statement
- a. He was a "son of Abraham"
- b. "His detested calling has not cancelled his birthright." (Plummer, ibid., p. 437)

vs 10: Son of Man
- a. Term of significance
  - 1) In the Synoptics found only on the lips of Jesus and used only by Stephen in book of Acts
  - 2) Here it is perhaps to be regarded simply as "I"
- b. "The lost"

"Here the term points to the social degradation and isolation of the publicans. They were social lepers. With reference to the conduct of Jesus in this case /the remark has been made/: 'it is necessary to despise the little scandal when a great solution comes to any one and not to lose

the great on account of the little' . . ." (Bruce, Expositor's Greek Testament, p. 605)

3. Its meaning for the children: Jesus likes me even though others don't

IV. Preaching in the Project

A. In defense of words

1. If he preaches one sermon per week the pastor will write and preach about 150,000 words per year
   a. In a world oriented to experience, words, spoken or written, have fallen into disrepute
   b. What good are all those 150,000 words? Can bring healing and more meaning to our existence

"Since the advent of the psychiatrist, the significance of words has gained scientific acceptance. Words are now generally accepted as tools to operate on souls that are affected. Words are the medicine that can start at work the spiritual chemistry that can bring about a new balance within the personality. Words are the catalytic agent that can precipitate a new reaction to life in the individual. Words have gained new status as means of saving life. That which the pulpit has always felt to be true has been sustained by the judgment and practice of those who are dedicated to a scientific view of personality. And strangely enough, they lend their words to the task of bringing to the sick soul a sense of maturity, a release of power, and a capacity to fulfill the needs for love in their own living." (Jackson, Psychology for Preaching, p. 177)

"Just as each word mastered by the young child increases his universe, so too for the adult the act of speaking continually contributes to existence." (Gusdorf, Speaking, p. 38)

B. Some ideas (mostly from Webb B. Garrison, Creative Imagination in Preaching)

1. "How to take the drudgery out of sermon preparation"--especially for children
   a. Focus on essential first step--finding new ideas and insights
      "Compared to the matter of discovering new material, the task of arranging it into an orderly body of words is simple." (p. 14)
   b. Make best use of time
      1) Easy to fritter away blocks of time--sometimes small, but significant
      2) Listen with inner ear to divine whispers in every situation
   c. Anticipate joy of discovery
      1) Hearing message from God
      2) The experience of reading a thought you have already thought

2. Do not be afraid of original stories
   a. Freshness compells attention
      "Because we have heard the route many times, we do not always listen when cities on life's highways are enumerated in church. Even a slight change in pattern will prod many travelers into giving full attention." (p. 21)
   b. Must be from "life to life"--not "canned" stories
3. Tell yourself that potential for revelation is found everywhere--be childlike
   a. Beware of the familiar
      "The power of the familiar is such that even a few repetitions of a pattern may camouflage all meanings except the one already recognized." (p. 40)
   b. Be alert--in relaxed attention
   c. Be interested--in everything that crosses your path
   d. Cultivate a poetic mood
   e. In humility invoke divine inspiration
4. Write your "revelation" down
   a. Need paper and pencil handy--ideas do not always return
   b. Ways to increase value of notes
      1) Record insights without waiting for applications
      2) Be specific and detailed
      3) View selectively--take a good look at a few things
      4) Analyze unusual experiences soon afterward
      5) Meditate on possible meanings
5. Think yourself out of your self into the child
   a. As parents we all do this
      1) Watch us at football game when our son is playing
      2) Watch us at Christmas program when our son recites
   b. Strive for the viewpoint of a child
      "Childlikeness is a major asset to the seeker for God. Part of the reason lies in the fact that a child is open and receptive. His world is more fluid than that of an adult. Some of the rigid outlines of the adult world are plastic when viewed through the eyes of a child or a poet." (p. 119)
   c. Seek for the outlook of a beginner
      1) Not complacently assured
      2) Be a questioner--What does this mean? Why? How?
   d. Adopt the viewpoint of one who offends you
      1) Put self in his shoes
      2) Is he ill? In trouble? Lonely? Frightened?
   e. See a situation from the perspective of various backgrounds
      1) Not always from viewpoint of minister
      2) Man in pew
   f. Go outside what is familiar
6. Pitfalls to be avoided--in preaching to children
   a. Satisfaction with where we are
   b. Pride of professional status
      1) Pulpit one of the most sheltered spots
      2) One-way communication--unchallenged

c. Being non-human
"The man becomes the message when it becomes clear to his hearers that this man of faith is a man like themselves." (Rice, Interpretation and Imagination, p. 79)

d. Contentment with techniques presently used
"Hugh St. Cher, a Dominican of the thirteenth century, is best known for his work in compiling the first concordance of the Scriptures. He excelled in the pulpit as well as in the study, however. His formula for effective preaching was brief: 'The bow is first bent in the study, and then, in preaching, the arrow is let fly.'

"No bending of the bow, no power for the arrow. It is that simple--and that profound" (Garrison, p. 136)

7. Be willing to work.

Session 5

I. Review

II. Listen to Tapes

III. Preaching to Children and the Need for New Approaches
- A. The foundations for preaching
- B. Weaknesses of conventional preaching
- C. The man is the message and so is the sermon in itself (continued next session)

IV. Preaching to Children and the New Hermeneutic
- A. The terms "new" and "old" hermeneutic
- B. The significance of the term "hermeneutic"
- C. The emphasis of the new hermeneutic
- D. How it helps in preaching to children

V. The Sermon
- A. A study of Mark 14:3-9, the anointing at Bethany
- B. The meaning: As the woman spared nothing in her extravagant love neither did God (John 3:16)

Session 6

I. Review

II. Listen to Tapes

III. New Testament Criticism and You
- A. Why bother with historical criticism
- B. Some possible reactions to criticism
- C. The positive significance of historical criticism
- D. Some negative aspects of historical criticism
- E. The need to listen and understand

IV. Preaching to Children and the Need for New Approaches (con't.)
   D. The use of words in preaching
   E. Relevancy in preaching
   F. Kinds of preaching

V. The Sermon: Worked out by the pastors

APPENDIX III

Sample Drawings of the Children

Pair A: Shows the change from including a brother to including Jesus

Pair B: Shows the change from including a friend to including the pastor

Pair C: The project director in both pictures

Pair D: Shows the change from including a father to including the director

E: A heavenly Jesus

F: An earthly Jesus

G: A framed Jesus

H: A friendly Jesus

I: A stern Jesus

PLEASE NOTE:

In binding, the drawings F, G, H and I were put in the wrong order. They should be:

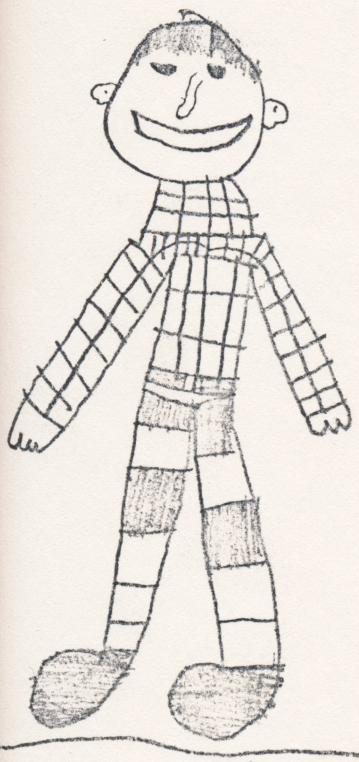
F - A friendly Jesus
G - A stern Jesus
H - A framed Jesus
I - An earthly Jesus

DBP

David Oss Age 8

My (Brother)

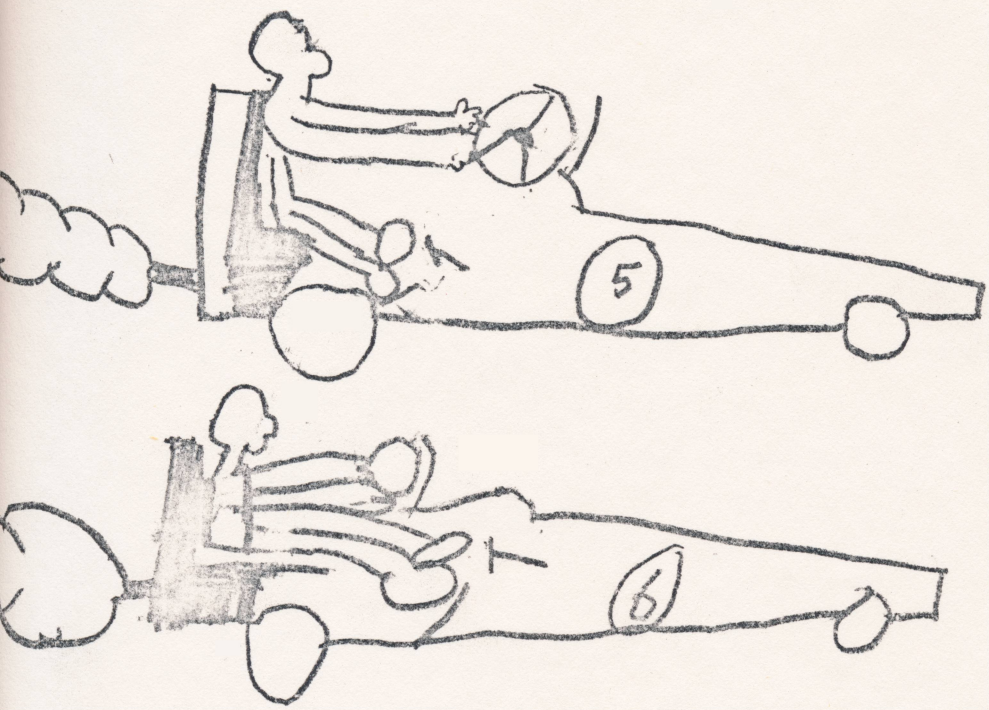
avid Oss Age 8

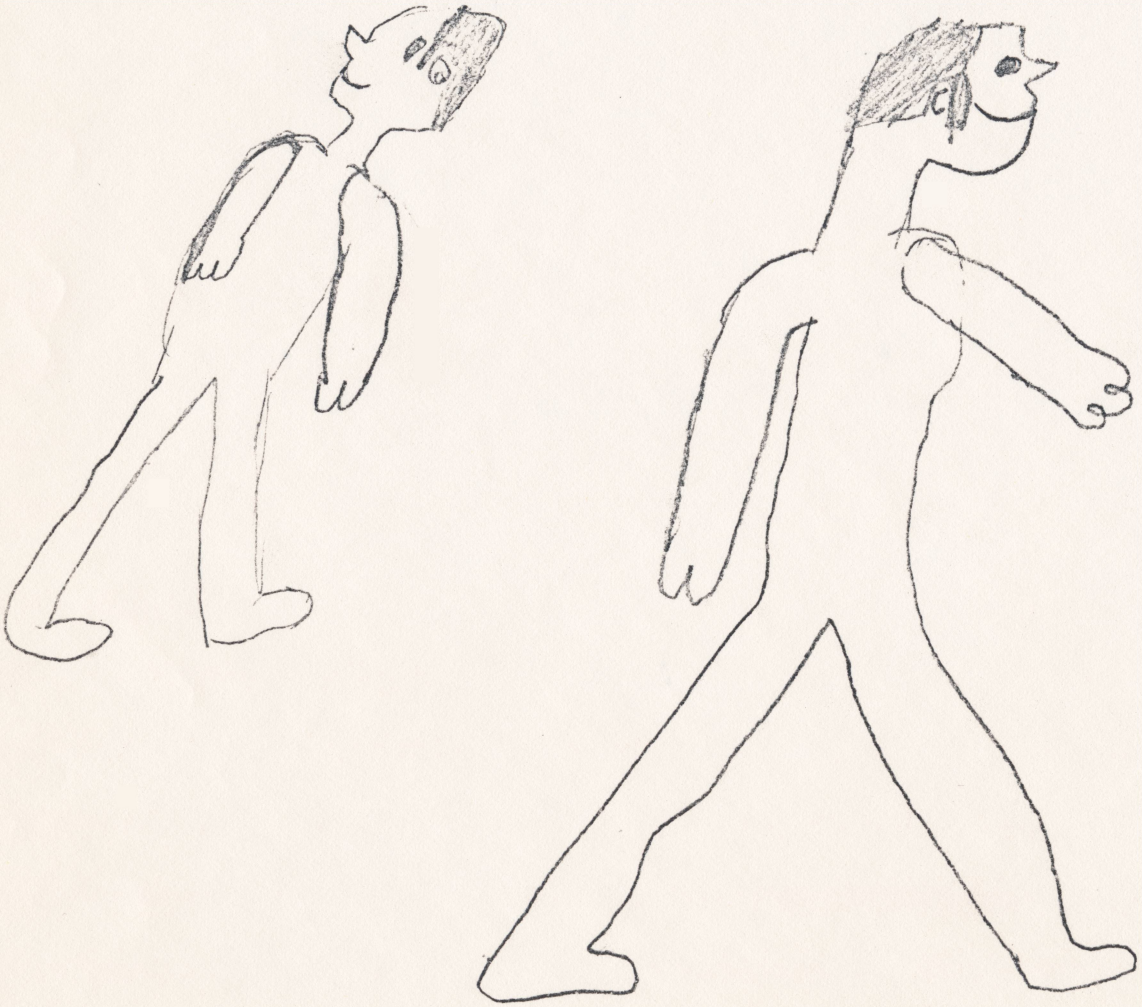


David

Jesus

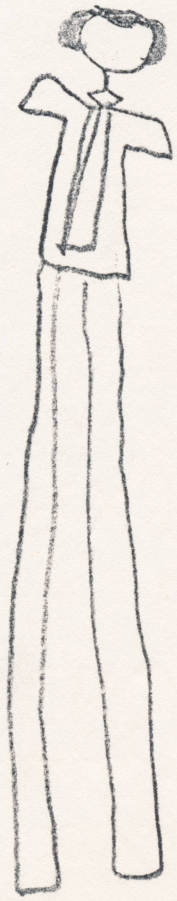
Nathan Grapes age8 freind





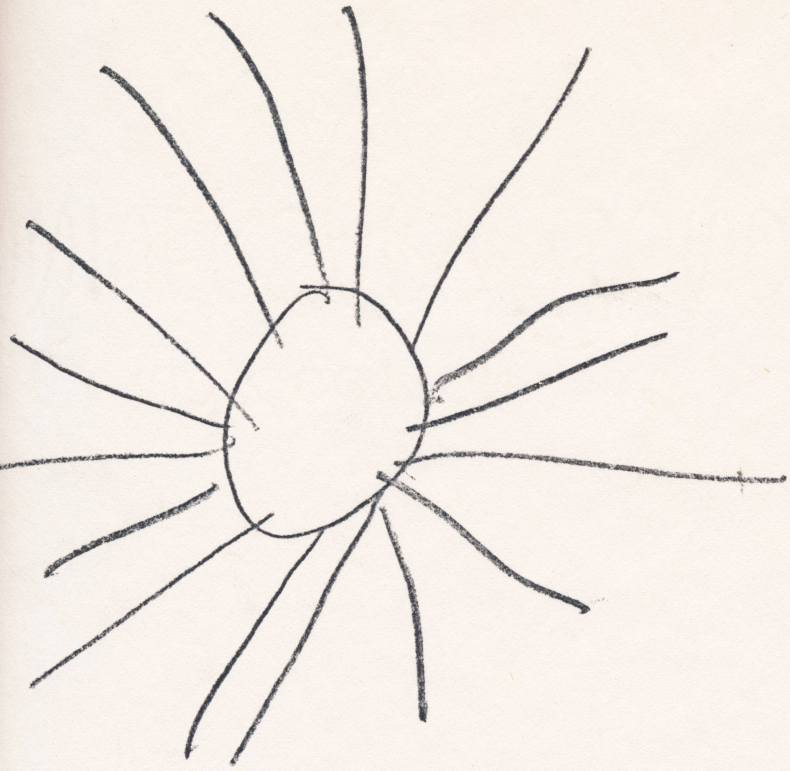
Nathan Strapes 8yrs.

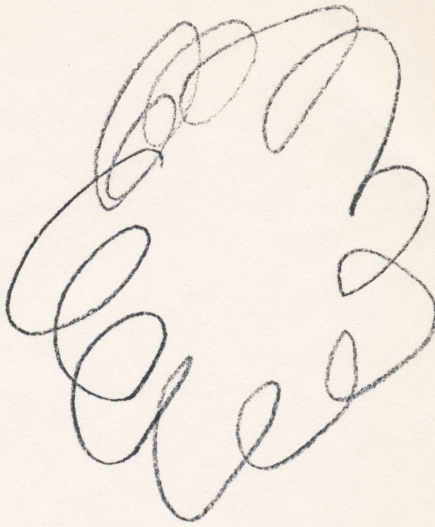
enise yeadon /

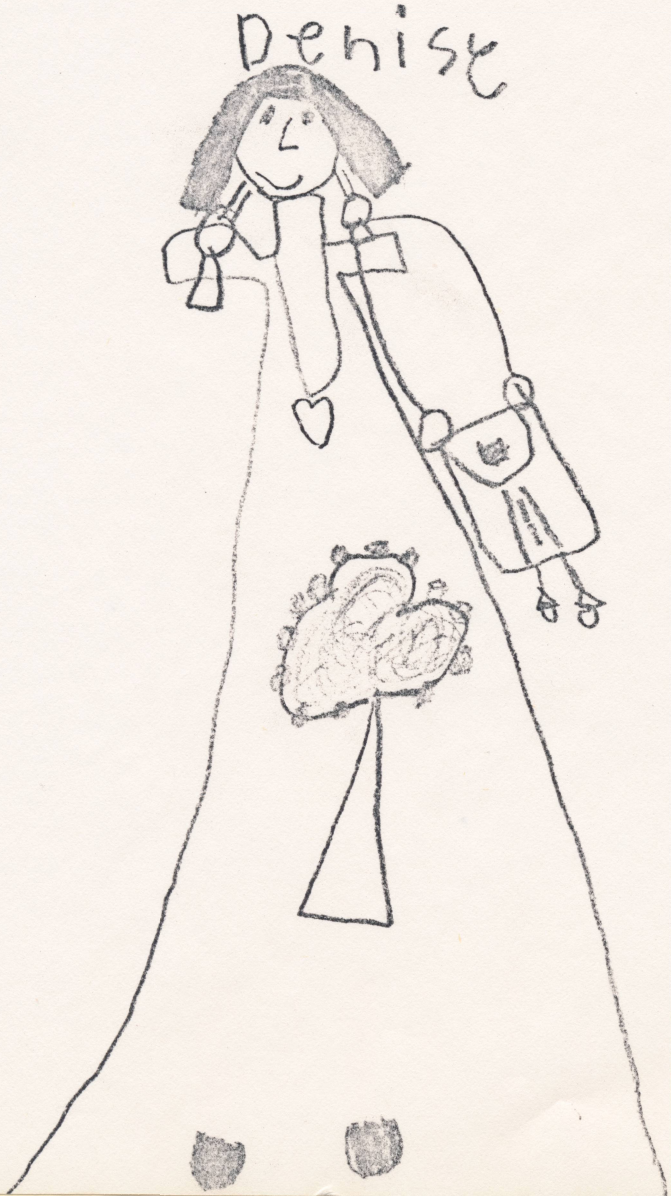


Mr. Peanut

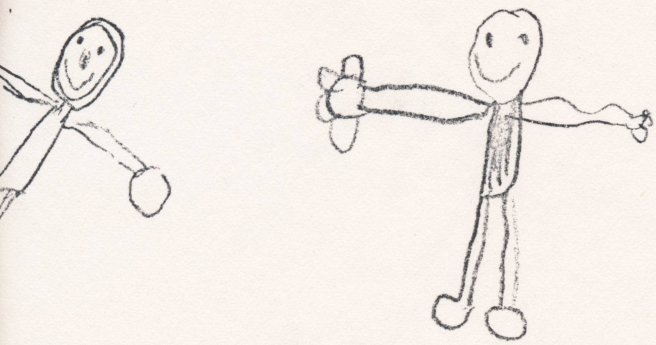
(E) Denise Yeadon

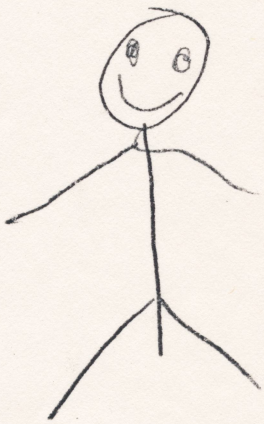





Denise

dad



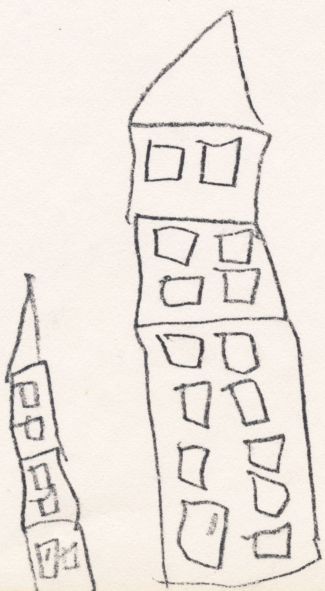


Mr Pecota

Me

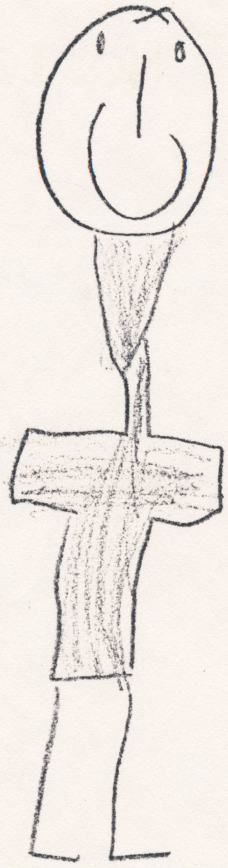
(R) Chris Renwick 8yrs

Danny 6



(4) Danny Groendyk 7

NAME - MCMULLEN 6

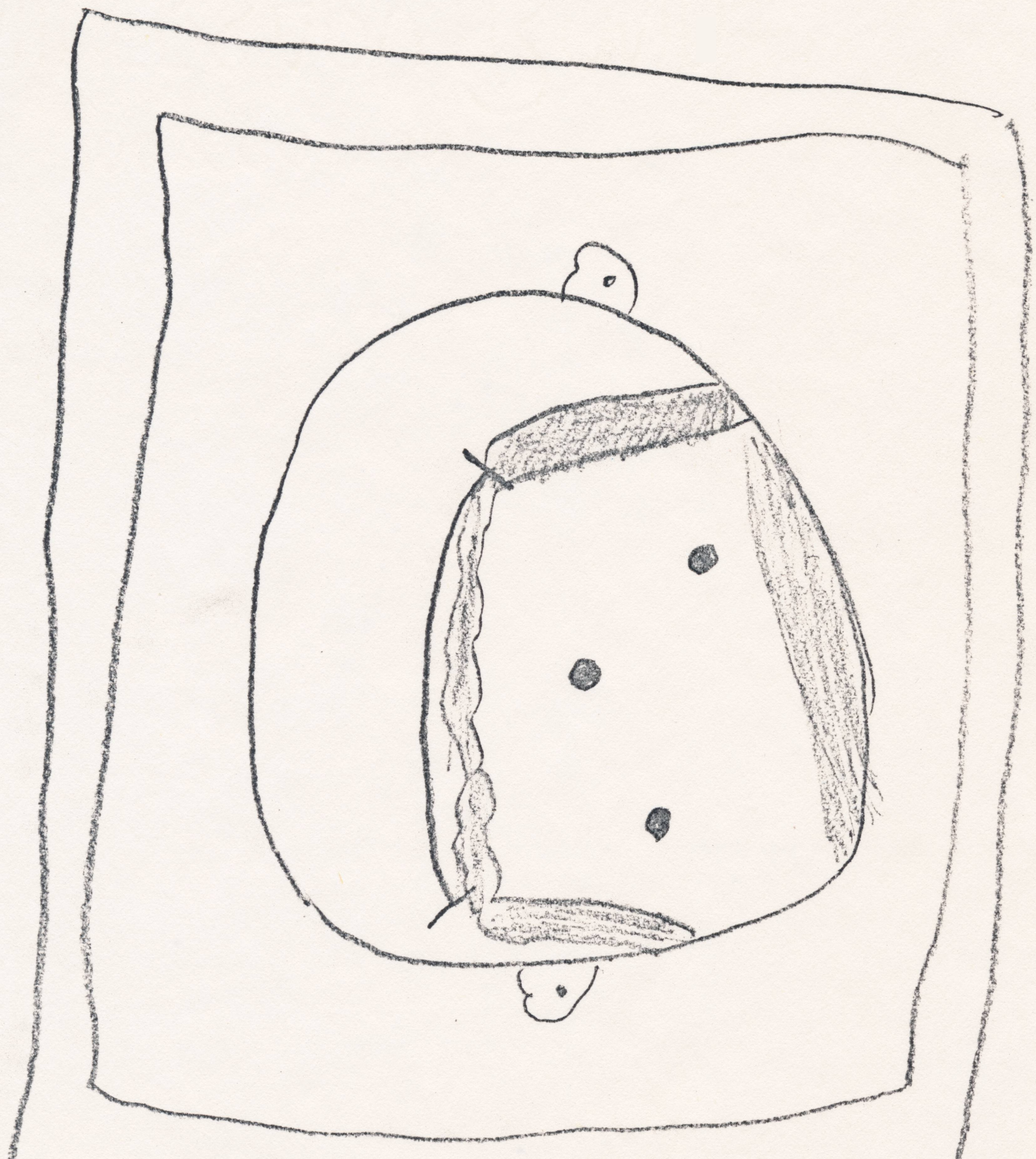


(C) Sharon McMullen I

Joel Nichols

7

David Oss Age 8



(R.) David Oss 2

This is Jesus.

(c) Darlene Clark

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