Appendix B

How Can We Be More Effective Preachers?

A questionnaire for feedback and

a bibliography on preaching

Produced by the UPCSA Worship Committee for all preachers in the UPCSA

**Questionnaire for Feedback**

“With its preaching Christianity stands or falls” (P.T. Forsyth). But in our secu­larised, post-Christian society it is hard for preachers to make an impact. We need to become better preachers! But how? Reading good books on preach­ing helps. But *we also need feedback on our own sermons.* This questionnaire has been drafted to enable such feedback. Its questions can help us to reflect on an already-prepared or even an already-preached sermon. But much more helpful is frank feedback from others, if we are really prepared to listen and learn from it. We can ask some, preferably diverse, members of our congregation to answer the questions (each out of 10, or even just with a positive tick and a negative cross). They can either return the questionnaire anonymously, if that helps them be candid, or meet with you to discuss their answers.

**Presence**

1. Does the preacher dress neatly, in clothes that do not distract? ……….
2. Does the preacher keep his/her hands out of his/her pockets? ……….
3. Does she/he stand tall and refrain from clinging to the pulpit? ……….

**Biblical Basis**

1. Is the sermon based on, and faithful to, the Bible? ……….
2. Does the preacher lead the congregation to wrestle with what a text means and apply it (not just comment on the text or use it as a peg

on which to hang ideas only loosely related to it)? ……….

**Gospel-centredness and Christ-centredness**

1. Does the sermon present the gospel to any unbelievers present? ……….
2. *Is the sermon appropriately Christocentric* (I Cor.2:2, 15:1ff.),

enabling Christ to confront the hearers through the text? .…….

1. Does the sermon make clear both the seriousness of sin and the

costly but unconditional nature of grace? ……….

1. Does it proclaim the love of God and the grace of Jesus Christ for

sinners, and the power of the Holy Spirit to save them? ……….

1. Does it seek to persuade rather than “tell people what to do”? ……….
2. If the sermon is on ‘the law’ (ethics), does it stress God’s grace and forgiveness, and not leave its hearers stranded in sin and guilt? ……….

**Structure**

1. If the sermon has an introduction, is it brief and pertinent? ……….
2. Does the sermon have a clear overarching structure and a single

focus, so that its basic argument is clear and simple enough to be

followed, understood—and remembered? ……….

1. Does the sermon end at the right point, not meander on too long? ……….
2. Does it conclude in a way that brings its basic point home? ………

**Rhetoric**

1. Does the preacher capture attention at the beginning and hold it? ……….
2. Does the preacher speak audibly and articulate clearly? ………
3. Does he/she speak in a relaxed, natural voice, with a natural rhythm

and in a measured way, not too quickly and not staccato? .……..

1. Does she/he vary her/his tone of voice to express feeling, mood and drama? .…….
2. Does he/she speak as one sinner to others, not down *at* them? ..……
3. Does she/he speak with enthusiasm and indeed passion, “as a dying

man to dying men” (Richard Baxter cf. St Paul in II Cor. 5:20)? .…….

1. Does he/she look directly at the congregation (at least more than at his/her notes) and make *steady* eye contact with them? .…….
2. Does she/he speak in uncomplicated sentences and plain, simple

words, free of theological or “sacred” jargon (I Cor. 1:17-25, 2:1-5)? ……….

1. Does the preacher avoid making grammatical mistakes? ……….
2. Does he/she avoid “ums”, “ers”, “ahs”—and too many “ands”? ……….
3. Does the preacher lace her/his sermon with a little humour? ……….
4. Are the preacher’s gestures appropriate, and not too repetitive? ……….

**Relevance and Application**

1. Does the preacher avoid abstraction? Is the sermon relevant

to life today? Does it apply in the here and now? .………

1. Does the sermon give clear directions to the lost? ……….
2. Does it hold out hope for those in despair? ……….
3. Does it stress any personal *and* any“political” challenge in the text? ……….
4. Does it call clearly for personal repentance/commitment/action? ……….
5. Does the preacher use enough illustrations (but not too many)? ……….
6. Are the illustrations apt, helpful and well told? ……….

**Other Comments**

1. What other comments or suggestions would you make? ………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Highly Commended Books on Preaching**

Books on preaching can also be a huge help to preachers. Every preacher should study the standard works. Below are some older classics (with their publication or republication dates) and, after them, some leading modern works.

Abbey, M.R. *Communication in Pulpit and Parish* (Westminster, 1973)

Broadus, J.A. *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Solid Ground, 2004)

Browne, R.E.C. *The Ministry of the Word* (Fortress, 1976)

Davis, H. Grady *Design for Preaching* (Fortress, 1958)

Fant, C.E. *Preaching for Today* (Harper & Row, 1977)

Forsyth, P.T. *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind* (New Creation, 1993)

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones *Preaching and Preachers* (H. & S., 1971)

Robinson, H.W. *Biblical Preaching* (Baker, 1980)

Sangster, W.E. *The Craft of Sermon Construction* (Baker, 1972)

Sangster, W.E. *The Craft of Sermon Illustration*  (Baker, 1972)

Scherer, P. *For We Have This Treasure* (Harper & Bros., 1944)

Spurgeon, C.H. *Lectures to my Students* (Banner of Truth, 2011)

Stewart, J.S. *Heralds of God* (Baker, 1972)

Sweazey, G.E *Preaching the Good News* (Prentice-Hall, 1976)

Boyd-Macmillan, R. *Explosive Preaching* (Paternoster, 2006)

Chapell, B. *Christ-Centered Preaching* (Baker, 1994).

Chapman, J. *Setting Hearts on Fire* (Matthias Media, 1999)

Craddock, F.B. *As One without Authority* (Chalice, 2001, 4th ed.)

Davis, E.F. *Preaching the Luminous Word* (WB Eerdmans, 2016)

Ellsworth, W. *The Power of Speaking God’s Word* (Mentor, rev. ed. 2001)

Keller, T. *Preaching. Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* (Viking, 2015)

Koller, C.W. *How to Preach without Notes* (Baker, 2007)

Kuruvilla, A. *Privilege the Text. A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching* (2013)

Miller, C. *Preaching. The Art of Narrative Exposition* (Baker, 2010)

Vines, J., and Shaddix, J. *Power in the Pulpit* (Moody, 1999)

“Preachers learn to preach by studying those who do it well” (G.E. Sweazey). Examples of celebrated volumes of sermons to study and learn from are:

Blackwood, A.W. *The Protestant Pulpit. An Anthology* (Baker, 1977)

Bonhoeffer, D*. Worldly Preaching* (ed. C.E. Fant) (Nelson, 1975)

Coffin, H.S. *God’s Turn* (Harper & Bros, 1934)

Craddock, F.B. *The Cherry Log Sermons* (Westm. Jn Knox, 2001)

King, M.L. *Strength to Love* (Harper & Row, 1963)

Marshall, P. *Mr Jones, Meet the Master* (Fleming H. Revell, 1949)

Stewart, J.S. various titles.

*The internet also offers good sermons and instruction on preaching/public speak­ing, how to begin a speech etc.*