

Approval
By
The Doctoral Project Committee
Of Temple Baptist Seminary

Accepted by the Doctor of Ministry Committee in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree

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TEMPLE BAPTIST SEMINARY

DESIGNING A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO DEVELOPING
A ONE-YEAR PREACHING CALENDAR

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE TEMPLE BAPTIST SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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DUMFRIES, VA

NOVEMBER 1, 2010

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Acknowledgements

Thank you . . .

To Dr. Mickey Creed . . . my pastor and friend

To Chena Crocker . . . my office manager, friend, and co-laborer at FLBC

To Cass, Charlie, and Timothy . . . for making as many sacrifices as Dad

To Tammy . . . my partner in ministry, my better half, and the love of my life

To my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ . . . my blessed hope. To you alone the glory

Abstract

The purpose of this project is to develop a systematic approach to developing a one-year preaching calendar. A fifty-nine step inventory was developed with the intention of aiding the local pastor with his preaching. Specifically, the inventory will help the pastor eliminate the time he spends searching for sermon ideas to preach each week. Study-time can now replace searching for sermon ideas. This minimizes stress, which benefits the pastor both emotionally and physically. The main body of this work addresses the need for planned preaching and the biblical reason for establishing a preaching plan. Various preaching planning methods were identified and examined, with each one having strengths and limitations. The project inventory reflects the strengths of other plans while eliminating or strengthening the limitations. The appendix includes both the inventory and two one-year preaching calendars.

While other plans exist, there is uniqueness to this project. The fifty-nine items on the project inventory are comprehensive in scope and logical in sequence. The literature search failed to reveal an inventory similar to this project because other inventories examined were either too vague or difficult to quantify.

The fieldwork for this project occurred in a retreat setting. During a five-day retreat, two yearly preaching plans were constructed. The pastor documented each step used to construct the preaching calendar.

Seven pastors evaluated the list for comprehensiveness, logic, and practicality. The input from those pastors helped construct the final list, which was constructed and offered in this project to those desiring a method to develop such a preaching plan.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Problem Introduction

This pastor was recently involved in an informal discussion about ministry ideas with a small group of pastors from local churches in Virginia. The discussions revolved around everything from church planting, to giving, to new ministry ideas, and to upcoming sermon plans. While sharing ministry ideas, the group collectively realized a common problem existed involving the pulpit ministry in the local church. A discussion concerning upcoming sermon plans seemed to assume a more serious tone with each pastor. One of the pastors asked the group, “What are you guys planning to preach on in the months ahead?” One responded that he was, “just trying to figure out the next couple of weeks.” Another pastor stated he would do his, “usual stewardship campaign,” but seemed unable to provide a biblical text or share with the group a possible approach to conduct the campaign. Another pastor asked for any ideas or copies of any sermons he could use to “get him through the next couple months.”

The discussion continued until a pointed question silenced the room. An older pastor had asked the group, “Do any of you plan your preaching?” The long silence in the room revealed that none of the pastors planned his preaching more than a few weeks in advance. Out of the awkwardly silent room arose a question that was seemingly on everyone’s mind, “How do I do it?” This is the problem facing many local church pastors. While wanting to preach the whole counsel of God, many pastors are not sure how to develop a personal preaching calendar. Without a planned preaching calendar, it is impossible to be certain the local church pastor is exposing the congregation to a

comprehensive preaching of God's Word. As the pastors gathered in discussion that day, it was apparent the thought of "what to preach next" created some anxiety in each of them. Developing a comprehensive preaching plan is the only way to avoid the anxiety that arises on those days prior to Sunday when the pastor discovers he does not know what text of the Bible he will be preaching from that week.

"Sunday just keeps coming." This was the comment made by a local pastor in reference to the way he was feeling about preparing weekly sermons in his local church. Every pastor tasked with proclaiming God's Word can sympathize with the demands of preaching. The amount of time required to study, outline, pray, and deliver a sermon consumes an enormous portion of the pastor's available resources each week. However, the concurrent demand of meeting various needs of people, coupled with the common expectation that the pastor is responsible for meeting those needs, often competes with the pastor's pulpit ministry.

Still, the following truth remains: "Sunday just keeps coming." This truth brings anxiety on Saturday when the text for Sunday's sermon is still in question. It is this truth that leads a pastor to resort to using old sermons that have not been preached in a while. It is this truth that entices the pastor to preach familiar subjects from familiar texts more often than he should. It is this truth that leads a servant of God to do the unthinkable—use someone else's sermon. The result of these actions is a congregation that misses the whole counsel of God and a pastor who continues to be anxious and discouraged on a weekly basis. In order to combat these problems, pastors need a practical method to plan, develop, and maintain a comprehensive preaching schedule of sufficient length. The purpose of this project is to design a systematic approach to sermon planning through

which the local church pastor develops an annual plan for Sunday sermons and the members of Faith Liberty Baptist Church (FLBC) experience a comprehensive exposure to God's Word.

Ministry Goals and Objectives

The ministry goals for this project are specific to the local church: (1) successful implementation of this project will help the local congregation recognize the various topics addressed in Scripture; (2) exposure to the various topics will consequently encourage them to develop a deeper reliance upon the Bible to meet any need; (3) by constructing an inventory that will provide instructional material that may be used to train those who preach, this project will enable the local church to develop preachers; (4) the completion of this project will promote unity between the pastor and the congregation. A well-prepared preaching plan demonstrates to the members of the congregation that the pastor cares for their needs. As the pastor preaches on numerous topics and the congregation experiences the fulfillment of various needs, unity will increase.

This project has the added benefit of helping the pastor achieve three professional goals as well. First, a long-range preaching calendar will enhance the pulpit ministry at FLBC. Because he will decide on the sermon text prior to the beginning of each week, the pastor will have more time to devote to study and preparation. Second, this project will virtually eliminate the weekly pressure to find sermon ideas. The pastor will benefit from less stress and anxiety that accompanies last minute preparation. Third, as he follows the processes delineated in this project, the pastor will develop a better

appreciation for those parts of the Bible that he has often neglected in his preaching. The pastor experienced this third goal during the implementation of the project itself.

The pastor's goals for the project need not be limited to FLBC. By applying the general principles presented here, any pastor can establish a comprehensive preaching calendar customized to meet the needs of his local church. Furthermore, the pastor can use the finished inventory as a guide to conducting small group studies in the local church. The groups would consist of those interested in or currently involved in preaching. Additionally, this project could also provide foundational material for constructing or enhancing a seminar on preaching.

Ministry Application

By using an inventory developed during the implementation of this project, the pastor constructed a one-year preaching calendar. In order to ensure both the novice preacher and the seasoned pastor would benefit, the inventory had to be both comprehensive and practical. The practicality of the inventory will ensure that the inventory actually gets used. The comprehensive nature of the inventory will ensure that the preacher does not devise his own method to finish the one-year calendar. The inventory must be comprehensive enough to facilitate the development of sermons that address all aspects of Scripture (e.g., doctrine, spiritual disciplines, and practical Christian living themes).

Anyone who is responsible for preaching the Bible and does not follow the lectionary will benefit from this project. Since the lectionary predetermines the texts of

Scripture used each week, pastors who are required to use it do not need a method to find an appropriate text for preaching.

The inventory has the added benefit of adaptability. The project inventory is not limited by time and pastors who desire a shorter preaching program will benefit from using the inventory. Laypersons who preach on a consistent basis will find the inventory is beneficial in helping them in their sermon preparation.

The utilization of a one-year preaching calendar will result in better time management for pastors because they will know well in advance what passage they will be focusing on each week. Instead of expending valuable time and energy searching for a source to generate an idea for next week's sermon text, the pastor will be able to devote his resources to study, preparation, and promotion of the sermon within the local church setting. The long-range preaching calendar should benefit pastors by limiting the stress and anxiety that often accompanies searching for passages to preach from that week.

The implementation of the preaching calendar inventory into one's ministry will ensure the pastor is selecting a sufficient variety of texts to preach the whole counsel of God. Preaching from familiar passages, at the neglect of other areas of Scripture, will fail to meet the biblical demand required of preachers. Paul provided that dichotomy when he told the young preacher Timothy to "preach the Word."¹ At his meeting with the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28, Paul described his method of preaching the "whole counsel of God." This means the proclamation of the Bible must not be limited to a pastor's few favorite texts. The construction of a long-range preaching calendar, based on a comprehensive inventory, will help avoid this pitfall.

¹ 2 Tim. 4:1, KJV.

The ability to select an appropriate text of Scripture to meet the real life needs of fallen man is crucial and that fact makes the preaching calendar inventory essential to the pulpit ministry of the local church. Preaching should transform lives. Some texts will be more applicable to certain situations than others will. The Bible provides real answers and the pastor must be able to present those answers from God's Word. This project provides the pastor with the ability to identify those passages required to address any topic or need. Those pastors who are not responsible for preaching in the local church will find little benefit.

Project Limitations

Pastor is a term used throughout this project. The term pastor describes various ministry positions in the local church, such as children's pastor, youth pastor, and outreach pastor. This project defines the term pastor in the context of preacher. Specifically, the use of pastor in this project refers to that individual, in the local church, who is responsible for preaching the Bible on a routine basis. Therefore, the words preacher and pastor are interchangeable throughout this project. Additionally, the term Bible, Scripture, and God's Word are interchangeable. These terms will refer only to the 66 books, 39 Old Testament and 27 New Testament, of the canon.

The project was delimited to focus specifically on planning and scheduling preaching. This project was not an attempt to develop a procedure for exegesis. While text selection will emanate from following the inventory this project established, the exposition of those passages was not the focus. However, the project inventory was developed with the assumption the pastor would be preaching an expositional message.

Therefore, the inventory is a prerequisite to exegesis. By following the inventory, pastors will be able to spend their time during the week in the endeavor of exegesis. The time saved by the pastor in utilizing this inventory to plan preaching allows for greater time in study.

The literature review revealed the subject of planned preaching is neither new nor irrelevant. For many years, preachers have grappled with the need to approach their pulpits with an organized plan. Any project, such as this, involving handling the Bible will undoubtedly generate questions. Does the preacher have the biblical authority to conduct a long-range preaching calendar? What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of preaching calendar construction? Does the local church need such a plan? A review of the literature provides the pastor with answers. Those who have given of themselves to the work of preaching provide needed help to those seeking to expand their pulpit ministry through a preaching calendar.

The methodology used in this project relied heavily on previous literature written on the subject of preaching planning. There was sufficient material available to consider a method for assembling a practical and comprehensive inventory to plan a one-year preaching calendar. The research of the approaches used by a broad spectrum of writers comprised the majority of the methodology used for this project. A group of seven local church pastors evaluated the project inventory. Their responses and recommendations strengthened the final project inventory.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Questions about whether a project such as this is valid are expected. Is the construction of a long-range preaching calendar biblical? What alternative programs exist to planning a preaching calendar? Does the local church really need this type of approach to the pulpit ministry? Does the local church pastor really need a preaching calendar? Why should a twelve-month plan be preferred over shorter or longer periods? What preparations are essential to constructing a preaching plan? While not exhaustive, these questions reflect legitimate concerns among local church pastors. Much exists on the subject of preaching planning and an adequate amount of material was available to answer these questions and incorporate the responses into a preaching calendar inventory.

Biblical Support for Planned Preaching

Is the construction of a long-range preaching calendar biblical? One can best answer that question by answering two other questions. First, is planning a preaching calendar biblical? Preaching is biblical. In his Doctor of Ministry project entitled, *A Paradigm for Preaching Paul*, Ronald Satta notes,

The apostle Paul sets forth the standard for the Christian minister in his work of proclamation. In 2 Tim 4:2, Paul presents a charge to his young apprentice Timothy. He exhorts his protégé to “preach the word.” In this little phrase, Paul speaks volumes. First, Paul commands preaching as a primary task of pastoral leadership. Timothy was a young pastor and serves as an archetype of succeeding generations of ministers. Paul was a preacher, and now he charges his son in the faith to take upon himself the mantle. Therefore, preaching is clearly a major element of the pastor’s work. Secondly, Paul commands Timothy to preach. Preaching is not just some provincial notion, nor is it a quant nicety. It is a

general's order. It is imperative. Thirdly, the content of the preaching is elucidated. It is the Word, which is to be preached. The substance of the message must come from the Bible.²

Martyn Lloyd-Jones's declaration, "the work of preaching is the highest and the greatest and most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called," is in harmony with John Stott's assessment of the primacy of preaching throughout church history.³ Stott declares, "That preaching is central and distinctive to Christianity has been recognized throughout the Church's long and colorful story, even from the beginning."⁴ However, the word planning is worth exploring further.

Again, in 2 Timothy 4:2, Rummage sees concise and powerful biblical guidance. Paul writes, "Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering."⁵ This passage of Scripture describes a variety of uses in applying the Bible to the lives of people. Preachers cannot be expected to use the Bible in such a way as the apostle mandated to Timothy without preparation and planning. While it could be argued that Paul seems to lend support to the immediacy of preaching rather than the strategic planning aspect required of this project, the words "Be ready," must be acknowledged as presupposing preparation and planning. To this, Pearce warns pastors must not dismiss planned preaching on the grounds of the potential immediacy of the

²Ronald F. Satta, "A Paradigm for Preaching Paul: A Step-By-Step Manual for Preparing Expository Messages from the Pauline Epistles" (doctoral project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1997), 9.

³Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972), 9.

⁴John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 16.

⁵Stephen Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching: A Step-By-Step Guide for Developing a One-Year Preaching Calendar* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002), 18.

moment when he states there is a difference between being “ready to preach” and being “prepared to preach.”⁶

Kenneth Wuest agrees when he comments on the verse, “The exhortation is for the preacher to hold himself in constant readiness to proclaim the Word.”⁷ Therefore, for those who appeal to the preaching of the prophets and apostles as grounds for eliminating a need for planning preaching, Rummage counters, the preaching of the prophets and apostles was different from contemporary preaching because of its revelatory nature instead of the explanatory function that should characterize sermons today.⁸ Roger Raymer, in his doctoral project: *Mentoring Pastoral Staff in Homiletics: A Manual for Senior Pastors*, noted that when Paul charged Timothy,

Timothy was not a prophet or an eyewitness to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. The authority of the Apostles, who had seen and been with the Lord, rested in the fact that they were reporting what they had seen and ... heard. The Lord Jesus had sent them out Himself. Though Timothy was neither a prophet nor an apostle, Paul charges him not only to preach but to preach with authority.⁹

Timothy is no different from today’s preacher, with the exception of being mentioned in Scripture.¹⁰ Stephen Johnson, reflecting on 2 Timothy 4:1-5, asked preachers, “Are we really fulfilling our ministry when we preach without an organized

⁶ J Winston Pearce, *Planning Your Preaching* (Nashville: Broadman, 1979), 1.

⁷ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1997).

⁸ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 23.

⁹ Roger M. Raymer, “Mentoring Pastoral Staff in Homiletics: A Manual for Senior Pastors” (doctoral project, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, 2003), 9.

¹⁰ This pastor is making the point that Timothy and Paul were significantly different. Even if one believes Paul did not use a preaching plan, it would not necessarily demand the same from Timothy or others.

plan over the long haul?”¹¹ While the solemnity of 2 Timothy 4:1-5 should be reason enough to encourage any preacher to have an organized plan, apparently it was not the first occasion Paul emphasized preparation.¹² Paul instructs Timothy regarding his duties in handling God’s Word in at least two other passages.

The Apostle Paul passed on the example to Timothy as he stressed the centrality of the Word of God in public ministry. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 4:13, “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of the Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.”¹³ In Second Timothy, Paul admonishes him, “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.”¹⁴ Timothy, as a minister of the Word of God who was neither a prophet nor an apostle, is admonished to “devote” himself to preaching and teaching and to be “diligent” so his teaching is accurate.¹⁵

Timothy was to commit to handling God’s Word in a manner that would be honoring to God. Simply opening the pages of the Bible and speaking, without any forethought, cannot be what Paul had in mind. Preaching planning is about commitment to the task of ensuring God’s people receive God’s Word in a manner honoring God. The

¹¹ Stephen M. Johnson, “Preaching for Spiritual Maturity Through the Use of a Long Range Preaching Plan” (doctoral project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2002), 3-4.

¹² This is the last canonical letter Paul wrote knowing he was about to be martyred.

¹³ NIV.

¹⁴ 2 Tim. 2:15, NASB.

¹⁵ Raymer, “Mentoring Pastoral Staff,” 11-12.

local church pastor may want to reconsider any notion of extemporaneous preaching in light of Paul's words to Timothy.

The concept of planned preaching is not new. William Smith states in his doctoral project, there are at least three antecedents to the principle of planned preaching: the Jewish synagogue, the Christian Year, and church history.¹⁶ Malphurs' contends planning exists throughout the Bible, and while Rummage agrees, he comments, "Apostolic preaching and teaching seemed to be motivated by pressing circumstances . . . [rather] than by any prepared plan."¹⁷ This situation no longer exists. Johnson is right when he states,

Of necessity there has been a transition in the type of preaching utilized by the church. At the outset, the preaching referred back to the Old Testament texts and to the teachings of Jesus (note the sermons in the Book of Acts). As the canon solidified there became more and more reliance upon the word of God as revealed in the New Testament scripture.¹⁸

Jeffrey Hinds found support for a long-range sermon preparation model in his doctoral paper and commented,

Paul wrote the following: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." Because this is true (for God declares it to be so), it stands to reason that God's Word, accurately expounded and preached through the long-term sermon preparation model, will positively affect those who allow it to penetrate their hearts.¹⁹

¹⁶ William R. Smith, "Designing a Program of Planned Preaching for the Estes Church Of Christ Henderson, Tennessee" (doctoral project, Harding Graduate School of Religion, 1990), 9-12.

¹⁷ Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), 12; Rummage, 23.

¹⁸ Johnson, "Preaching for Spiritual Maturity," 18.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Hinds, "A Research Project Using the Long-Term Sermon Preparation Model for Preaching the Book of Second Corinthians to Stimulate Spiritual Growth in the Congregation at Fellowship

In Acts 20:27, Paul stated he had not “shunned to declare . . . all the counsel of God.”

To this verse, Johnson comments,

In Acts 20:27 Paul told the church at Ephesus that he had, in barely three years of ministry, preached the whole purpose of God. Every pastor is challenged by Paul’s example to preach the whole purpose of God. In seeking to accomplish this, we must come to some understanding of what it would mean to preach the whole purpose of God.²⁰

Johnson continues, “In order to proclaim the full purpose of God, we must have some understanding of what that means . . . Unfortunately, Paul does not define the phrase when he uses it. He merely states that he has accomplished that lofty goal.”²¹ He wanted the Ephesian elders, Timothy, and preacher’s of today to accomplish the same task and while Paul was not specific, he was demanding. The preacher is to preach the whole Bible. Therefore, pastors cannot go wrong using a preaching plan, assuming that their preaching is from God’s Word.

Ronald Satta agrees and uses a book-by-book approach to preaching. He writes,

When the biblical authors wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, they penned epistles, not isolated verses. My conviction is that the fairest way to preach the Bible is by preaching through books of the Bible. 2 Tim. 3:16 records that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God . . .” the word “inspiration” literally means “God-breathed.” That means that all Scripture is deposited to us in this supernatural manner. Therefore, every word of the Scripture has value. I do not suggest that every word has the same power in relevance, but that it has come to us by the same procedure and from the same person—the Holy Spirit.²²

Evangelical Free Church in Dallas, Pennsylvania” (doctoral project, Dallas Theological Seminary, 2001), 14-15.

²⁰ Johnson, “Preaching for Spiritual Maturity,” 4-5.

²¹ Ibid, 36.

²² Satta, “A Paradigm for Preaching,” 12.

The pastor seeking a biblical basis for a preaching plan need not isolate his search to the writings of Paul. The ministry of Christ provides further examples of organized teaching and preaching. Johnson agrees, “Preaching takes its pattern from the work of Christ and the model of Christ accomplishing that work in great part through a preaching ministry. From the Sermon on the Mount, to the parables and the Olivet Discourse, Jesus utilized preaching as his primary mode of building the kingdom of God.”²³

The second question to consider is, “What is the role of the Holy Spirit?” Paul writes in Ephesians 4:30, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” Does a preaching schedule negatively influence the work of the Holy Spirit? Could a preacher be grieving the person he should be relying upon for the power to preach in the first place? The preacher who relies on a preaching plan may face the accusation he is relying on himself rather than the Holy Spirit. Blackwood concedes this is true, but argues the same can be said of the man who does not plan. He acknowledges the omniscience of the Holy Spirit when he questions, “Is He not as ready to guide a man in August as in March?”²⁴ Weirsbe lends support by confiding, “on more than one occasion,” he has been forced to interrupt his sermon preparation because of the Spirit’s conviction upon him.²⁵ These writers seem to be sensitive to the Spirit’s preference to change the direction of the pastor without notice. Weirsbe continues by cautioning preachers against being too clever with “outlines and

²³ Ibid, 17.

²⁴ Andrew Blackwood, *Planning a Years Pulpit Work* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1942), 218.

²⁵ Warren W. Weirsbe, *The Dynamics of Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 26.

amusing anecdotes,”²⁶ while Rummage cautions preachers to leave enough flexibility in planning to respond to those events requiring it.²⁷ While sensitivity to the Spirit is a mandate for all preachers, it does not preclude attempting a long-range preaching schedule.

The inability of preachers to see the future is a poor argument for avoiding sermon planning. Unexpected events are a common part of life; however, those events are unexpected to people and not to God. Alton McEachern writes, “Planning your pulpit work can give the Holy Spirit a greater opportunity to lead your thinking and thus enrich your preaching . . . The same Spirit who inspires the sermon delivery can lead you along in advance as you make thoughtful preparation.”²⁸ Rummage is more comprehensive in his agreement with McEachern, and supports the argument that a planned preaching approach is both biblical and Spirit exalting. He invokes the sovereignty of God in his endorsement of preaching planning when he states,

If we believe in the sovereignty of God, we must believe that the Holy Spirit knows what will be happening in the congregation and what the people gathered for worship on Sunday will need to hear. Because God knows the congregational needs just as well three months in advance as He does three days ahead of time, a preacher can create a long-range preaching plan that is still Spirit directed.²⁹

²⁶ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 26.

²⁷ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 70.

²⁸ Alton McEachern, *Proclaim the Gospel: A Guide to Biblical Preaching* (Nashville: Convention, 1975), 47.

²⁹ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 24.

Alternative Approaches

The inventory produced by this pastor does not result in a universally accepted method for constructing a preaching calendar. Pastors have historically used numerous approaches to sermon planning and the same approaches exist in local churches today. Each approach has both strengths and limitations. This pastor intended to capitalize on the strengths of the various approaches while minimizing their limitations.

Book-by-Book Approach

One commonly used planning method is the book-by-book approach. John Samuel Barnett uses this method in his Doctor of Ministry project.³⁰ Ronald F. Satta advocates the book-by-book approach when commenting, “When the biblical authors wrote under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, they penned epistles, not isolated verses. My conviction is that the fairest way to preach the Bible is by preaching through books of the Bible. This approach allows the preacher to cover all of the subjects in one book of the Bible.”³¹

William R. Smith notes both strengths and limitations to this approach. “The advantage of preaching through Bible books is the thorough biblical indoctrination enjoyed by both the preacher and his audience. A potential weakness would be the selection of a book with not thought given to how that book would address needs and

³⁰ John Samuel Barnett, “A Research Project Using the Long-Term Sermon Preparation Model for the Book of Revelation to Stimulate Spiritual Development at Tulsa Bible Church” (DMin, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1999), 14.

³¹ Satta, “A Paradigm for Preaching,” 12.

issues of the congregation or fail to do so.”³² This approach is beneficial to both pastor and congregation. Systematically covering an entire book often will force the pastor to address topics he may normally avoid. The congregation benefits from a saturation of related material found in individual books of the Bible. The limitation of this approach is that the pastor cannot address congregational needs that arise.

An alternative approach to the book-by-book method is to use individual themes and sections within a book of the Bible. The passages selected should be from specific portions to allow for exposition of a given passage. An example of this alternative approach is preaching a sermon series on the seven churches, in the Book of Revelation, over a seven week period. This pastor used this alternative approach to the book-by-book method in this project. Series such as “Defeating Our Giants,” “Slippery Slopes,” and “Does God Still Love Me” were all organized around particular themes within a book of the Bible. Each sermon idea is based upon specific verses which are in immediate proximity to one another in the passage. The pastor used the strength of the book-by-book approach while allowing greater flexibility to address the special needs of his congregation. The need for shorter sermon series seemed to be more beneficial to FLBC and its pastor than lengthy book series.

³² William R. Smith, “Designing a Research of Planned Preaching for the Estes Church of Christ Henderson, Tennessee” (DMin, Harding School of Religion, 1990), 33.

Lectionary

The lectionary is another method of planned preaching used in many local churches. On its website, Calvin Theological Seminary makes the case for considering the lectionary in planning ones preaching calendar:

Almost everyone lives by the calendar. Whether it's the Currier and Ives calendar hanging on the wall or the digital calendar on the PalmPilot, we all know that we forget important matters if we don't know what day or week it is. Hence, we check our calendars pretty regularly and order our days accordingly. Traditionally, the church has done this as well. Even though not every congregation follows the Liturgical Year in its entirety, most churches observe the well-known seasons surrounding Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. When planning a preaching schedule for yourself, following the Liturgical Year (in full or in part) is a natural place to begin.³³

The pastor who uses this project will not use the lectionary for more than formulating ideas because the lectionary has predetermined texts, which may or may not be timely for congregational needs.³⁴ This project requires the pastor to determine texts based upon his observations of his specific congregation. However, the prominent place, which the lectionary has occupied in the church, supports any pastor who considers consulting it for help in his preaching plan. Johnson acknowledges the lectionaries influence in church history when he writes,

Historically the church has sought to present its teachings, its doctrines, its admonitions to godly lifestyles through the use of mandated texts for each week (and even each day) of the year. The use of the lectionary, and its corresponding dependence upon the Christian calendar has been the common practice of large portions of the church.³⁵

³³ Calvin Theological Seminary: The Center for Excellence in Preaching, "Classic Plans for the Preaching Calendar," Calvin Theological Seminary Website, <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/prepareCalendar/plans/index.php> (accessed July 5, 2010).

³⁴ The Liturgical Page. Site maintained by Kelly Puckett, <http://www.io.com/~kellywp/index.html> (accessed July 9, 2010).

³⁵ Johnson, "Preaching for Spiritual Maturity," 52.

The Center for Excellence in Preaching at Calvin Seminary provides some flexibility by endorsing the use of the Liturgical Year for planning parts of the preacher's yearly calendar. The time of year between Pentecost and Advent, known to some as "Ordinary Time" remains open for the pastor to add his own ideas for sermons.³⁶ Still, the lectionary is too rigid for much use in a project such as this. This project requires the pastor to search the Scriptures for those texts addressing the needs of his particular congregation. This pastor does find consulting the lectionary a legitimate use in this type of project because the lectionary contains text selections, which are expository in nature.³⁷ Therefore, while not used in developing the projects preaching calendars for FLBC, the lectionary may prove to be a valuable resource to the pastor when exploring sermon ideas in the future.

Pre-established Calendars

Utilizing a pre-established calendar is another method for developing a preaching plan. Andrew Blackwood, J. Winston Pearce, and David Steel all utilize the Christian Year calendar for planning while Nelson Searcy and Greg Penna present preaching plans formulated around the civic calendar.³⁸ Clearly, the dominant influence through the

³⁶ Calvin Theological Seminary: The Center for Excellence in Preaching, "Classic Plans for the Preaching Calendar," Calvin Theological Seminary Website, <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/prepareCalendar/plans/index.php> (accessed July 5, 2010).

³⁷ Walter Sundberg, "Limitations of the Lectionary," *Word and World* (October 1990):16. Walter Sundberg advocates a more critical usage even for those who routinely use the Lectionary. He is critical of a blind adherence to the document.

³⁸ Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas, *Planning a One Year Preaching Calendar*, www.churchleaderinsights.com, (CD), 2006; Greg Penna, "How to Effectively Plan Preaching," search "preaching calendar," (Dec 2005), www.churchplantingvillage.net (accessed July 3, 2005).

centuries on the concept of planned preaching has been the use of the Christian year within both Catholicism and Protestant churches.³⁹ Blackwood and Steel advocate using the Christian Year for determining their preaching calendar. While Blackwood divides the Christian Year into four quarterly themes, Steele follows a more traditional method. Still, both use the Christian calendar for planning. J. Winston Pearce endorses a method using the Christian Year, but he is not a rigid proponent of it as evidenced by offering his readers seven various plans to consider in constructing a preaching calendar.⁴⁰

The limitation of strict adherence to the Christian Year calendar is that it fails to provide the pastor with enough flexibility to meet the timely needs of his congregation throughout the year. The pastor, in developing this project, wanted to maintain the flexibility to address any congregational need. The pastor using this project inventory will use the Christian calendar as a reference source, but he will not be a strict adherent to it. The civic calendar contained all of the important Christian dates used for this project.

Nelson Searcy of Journey Church plans his preaching using the civic calendar.⁴¹ Searcy emphasizes identifying strategic dates on the civic calendar and building the preaching plan around those dates. He identifies the second Sunday in September to begin the preaching plan.⁴² Greg Penna agrees with this approach but provides no exact date for beginning the September series. However, both use the civic calendar, even

³⁹ Smith, "Designing a Research," 11.

⁴⁰ Pearce lists the following seven methods in *Planning Your Preaching: Christian Year, Through the Bible, Meet Peoples Needs, Preaching Months, Denominational Emphasis, Evangelistic, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper*.

⁴¹ Searcy, *Preaching Calendar* CD.

⁴² He targets this date because families are back from vacation and children are back in school.

though Penna seems more inclined to incorporate traditional Christian days in his sermons, as Searcy does not preach a traditional Easter message. Instead, he favors using the high attendance on Easter to begin a new sermon series. Jason Curlee agrees with this approach of foregoing a traditional Easter message in favor of maximizing the promotion of a new sermon series.⁴³ The exclusion of such an important and universally recognized day as Easter appears to be a limitation in Searcy's civic calendar approach. This pastor used both Christian Year observances and civic calendar dates in this project. in order to make the preaching calendar reflective of the strengths of both the Christian and civic calendars.

The Christian Year and civic calendar method both have limitations. The Christian calendar lacks flexibility while the civic calendar is prone to neglecting congregational expectations. However, both calendars are useful when considered as tools in a larger preaching plan. The intent of this project was to create a balance in the yearly preaching plan by providing enough flexibility to meet congregational needs and enough rigidity to ensure that major themes and topics received proper emphasis. Where the Christian or civic calendar enhanced the yearly plan then this pastor used it accordingly.

Calendar Division Planning

Pastors approach their calendars differently. When planning a preaching calendar, some have advocated monthly planning, while others have opted for quarterly,

⁴³ Jason Curlee, "Making Difference Makers: Developing a Preaching Calendar, Part 6," entry posted January 31, 2008, <http://jaycurlee.blogspot.com> (accessed July 6, 2010).

biannually, and yearly plans. Still, others have considered longer periods appropriate to plan their preaching. Of the seven pastors who completed the questionnaire for this project, four answered that they planned “six to twelve months,” one “quarterly,” and two “monthly.” This project utilized a twelve-month plan.

The one-month plan may be appealing to beginning planners.⁴⁴ One of the pastors who responded to the project questionnaire had over sixteen years experience as a pastor, but because he was “trying” to plan his sermons, he felt the one-month plan helped him most. The other pastor who used a one-month plan was unfamiliar with a longer plan. After receiving the inventory, both were interested in putting the yearly plan into practice.⁴⁵ While this pastor would not disagree that experience helps in sermon planning, the novice pastor is equipped through this project successfully to develop a one-year plan should he choose to do so. Blackwood appears more flexible while advocating a “broad program for the year,” but has no objections to planning by the “quarter.”⁴⁶ One pastor who evaluated the project shared in his comments that the year is easier to organize by dividing the calendar into quarterly segments. He concentrated topics on four themes: Outreach for two quarters, Personal Development, and Ministry Development.⁴⁷

Any pastor who follows a similar quarterly system will want to ensure a variety of themes is covered. Any pastor following the quarterly plan must remember more than one

⁴⁴ Harold T. Bryson, “How to Plan and Study for Preaching,” *Church Administration* (January, 1994):3-5.

⁴⁵ Both of these pastors shared that they were excited about planning the yearly calendar and using the checklist. Both were interested in more training.

⁴⁶ Blackwood, *Planning*, 18.

⁴⁷ He developed series within those themes and selected the best dates within the quarter to launch the series.

sermon series can occur within a “quarter.” This project averages three sermon series within each quarter; however, this pastor did not consider the quarterly approach in this project. Smith acknowledges the popularity and reasons some use the quarterly method when he says,

This is perhaps the most popular approach because of opportunities for series preaching in quarters, its parallel to the quarterly system of the Bible school program, and the “four seasons” of the calendar year. Preachers also feel greater freedom to change their plans when needed than they would if their plans were further in advance.⁴⁸

While the flexibility to the quarterly system is a positive, the ability of the preacher to change his plan is a negative. The yearly preaching plan, if constructed following this projects inventory, should only need slight adjustments to facilitate unexpected occasions by the pastor.

The biannual preaching plan is another method used. Dr. Stan Mast and Dr. Ed Nichols appear to use plans of six months. While neither states explicitly their preference for the length of the plan, Mast comments the plan should be “at least six months” while Nichols presents a six-month preaching calendar on his website as an example.⁴⁹ When asked in the project evaluation questionnaire “How far in advance do you plan your sermons?” four of the pastors responded with a range of six to twelve months.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Smith, “Designing a Research,” 23.

⁴⁹ Dr. Ed Nichols, “Proclaim His Praise: Sermons and Bible Studies: The Pastor’s Calendar,” website, http://www.drnichols.org/_pdf/the_pastors_calendar.pdf (accessed July 6, 2010); Dr. Stan Mast, “What I Have Discovered: Planning Ahead,” Calvin Theological Seminary Website, <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/prepareCalendar/whatDiscovered.php> (accessed Jul 6, 2010).

⁵⁰ Only one of the pastors shared that he was closer to the twelve month end of the range.

This pastor developed two twelve-month preaching calendars and an inventory to follow to construct a preaching plan for one year. Each step in developing the calendars, as evidenced in the inventory, logically progress through the entire year. This pastor, in completing the project, is a proponent of the twelve-month preaching plan. First, the twelve-month preaching calendar is a familiar way of approaching the year. All pastors are aware of the various aspects of local church life throughout the year. Whether thinking of a series to preach at Christmas, or thinking of the family vacation in July, or sighing at the thought of the attendance to expect during the summer, each pastor thinks about how to approach the year. Second, a one-year preaching plan allows the pastor to consider every holiday, season, and special event occurring during the year. Beyond one year, the preacher may encounter contingencies requiring modifications to the plan. Once altered, the plan ceases to accomplish its originally intended purpose. Both Pearce and Rummage make an argument for the twelve-month preaching calendar. Pearce contends a yearly preaching calendar provides, “enough time to objectively observe . . . preaching objectives” and is “brief enough to change should it be warranted.”⁵¹ Rummage states the twelve-month plan “ensures thoroughness.”⁵²

Some preachers, while supporting a twelve-month plan encourage even longer planning. John Oliver’s on-line presentation endorses a one-year plan, but he suggests, “thinking ahead” five years.⁵³ He agrees with Pearce who notes the twelve-month plan is

⁵¹ Pearce, *Planning Your Preaching*, 5.

⁵² Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 59.

⁵³ John S. Oliver, “Preaching Calendar Plus,” Slideshare On-line PowerPoint presentation transcript, www.slideshare.net/BrownBagHub/preaching-calendar-plus (accessed July 4, 2010).

impossible to address every major emphasis or doctrine and advocates thinking in terms of a five-year plan. Still, like Oliver, he endorses a twelve-month preaching plan.⁵⁴

Preaching Calendar Inventory

The literature and information available on assembling a yearly preaching calendar is widespread. That is the problem. Too much material leaves the pastor wondering how to best approach preaching planning. Pastors need practical material to help them plan their preaching calendars.

Some preachers and teachers have developed inventories for the purpose of planning preaching. Jeff Magruder uses a five-step inventory. He enhanced each step with a short paragraph which he used to offer ideas or suggestions.⁵⁵ Jay Perry followed this approach, but his inventory was six steps.⁵⁶ Perry discloses it takes him three months to complete his calendar while Magruder does not say. The project inventory, when followed, allows the pastor to formulate his preaching plan in one week.

Greg Penna plans his preaching based upon the calendar. He offers only a “beginning point for an annual sermon plan.” In his list, he divides the year into eight general times in which he preaches certain themes. His list lacks specificity, but this is probably due to the medium in which he presents it. Like Magruder and Perry, Penna

⁵⁴ Pearce, *Planning Your Preaching*, 3.

⁵⁵ Jeff Magruder, “You Might Need a Preaching Calendar If,” *Enrichment Journal* (no date), http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/201001/201001_000_Preaching_Calander.cfm (accessed July 5, 2010).

⁵⁶ Jay Perry, “Sermon Planning: How I Plan My Sermonic Year,” Jay Perry Blog, entry posted January, 2007, <http://jugglingsheep.blogspot.com/2007/01/how-i-plan-sermonic-year.html> (accessed July 7, 2010).

offers some additional thoughts to accompany his plan. Still, the list lacks the specific progression necessary for those who are unfamiliar with planning a preaching calendar.

Stephen Nelson Rummage provided the most thorough approach to constructing a preaching calendar found in the available literature. Rummage offers both a book and an article on the website Preaching.com. The online article contains an encapsulated inventory based upon the procedure found in his book.⁵⁷ Rummage divides his book into ten chapters with each containing suggestions, guidelines, and ideas for constructing a one-year preaching plan. While comprehensive, the book does not contain an itemized list. The reader is forced develop a list from his reading by extensive note-taking and applying the list in a manner of his own choosing.⁵⁸

While not all of the inventories, this project included, are identical, they do have commonality. While the similarities amongst the inventories demonstrate the importance of each common item, this project is unique because it goes beyond the commonly used inventory items of others and establishes both recommendations and additional itemized steps, which the others do not. It requires limited reading and is easy to follow. This pastor constructed a practical and comprehensive document that follows a logical progression to develop a yearly preaching calendar. Any pastor who chooses to follow this inventory will be capable of constructing his own yearly preaching plan.

⁵⁷ Stephen Rummage, "The Mechanics of Sermon Planning," <http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11545848> (accessed July 7, 2010).

⁵⁸ This pastor did that for this project. It was extremely time-consuming, but worthwhile.

The Local Church Need for Planned Preaching

Settling the issue of biblical authority is just a first step, albeit the most important one. Just because Scripture does not prohibit the construction of a yearly preaching calendar does not mean the pastor should attempt to create one. A practical question is whether the local church congregation needs a preaching plan. Each Sunday, real people with real lives enter places of worship expecting to hear a message of some sort from the preacher. Does planning a preaching calendar provide meaningful benefit to those people specifically and the local church generally? The local church benefits from a planned preaching calendar in at least three ways.

First, planned preaching benefits the local church by encouraging unity between the pastor and the congregation. Preaching can either create a bond or act as a divider between the preacher and parishioner. Preachers and their audiences share a common union during the preaching service—focus on the Bible. The congregation sitting before the pastor on Sunday morning is not one homogenous personality, but is instead a conglomerate of assorted personalities who have joined together for the purpose of worshipping God, part of which is hearing the sermon.⁵⁹ When the pastor has failed to plan his sermon, this becomes a divisive moment. Weirsbe remarks, it does not take long to discover whether the preacher is speaking “to the air” or speaking personally to the hearts of individuals.⁶⁰

Second, preaching planning helps the preacher demonstrate to the congregation he wants to meet their needs. Numerous authors reference the needs of the congregation as

⁵⁹ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 41.

⁶⁰ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 41.

an important part of preaching planning. Robert E. McAuley, in his doctoral project comments, “So much is lost, to the church and personally to the pastor, if he or she is not living the meaning of his or her life by caring in the pulpit.”⁶¹ McAuley developed his preaching plan by concentrating on the pastoral needs of Trinity UMC. William Smith distributed a congregational questionnaire to “isolate the areas of study most needed by the membership.”⁶² Adapting or customizing preaching so the biblical messages connect with one’s particular congregation is a need in churches today. Jay Perry and Jeff Magruder included a congregational assessment step in the inventory they each constructed to develop preaching plans.⁶³ David Acree developed a “Preaching Readiness Matrix, in his doctoral project to help pastors develop their ability to be ready to preach. Section four of his matrix is specific to “The People.”⁶⁴ Warren Weirsbe agrees by commenting, “We need in our pulpits witnesses who have learned and lived the Word and shepherds who know their people and how to help them from the Scriptures.”⁶⁵ The process of constructing a preaching calendar, forced this pastor to think with a panoramic view of the congregation at FLBC. This pastor conducted an audience evaluation of his congregation for this project.⁶⁶ The final project inventory includes a recommendation

⁶¹ Robert E. McAuley, “A Pulpit Ministry in Pastoral Care and Counseling” (doctoral project, Erskine Theological Seminary, 2000), 7.

⁶² Smith, “Designing a Research,” 89.

⁶³ Perry used the term “church needs” in step three of his checklist, and Magruder includes the idea in step four of his checklist.

⁶⁴ David M. Acree, “Developing a Model for Enhancing Preaching Readiness” (doctoral project, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2007), 79.

⁶⁵ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 15.

⁶⁶ Appendix D.

and ideas for conducting the audience evaluation.⁶⁷ Without this step in the preaching planning inventory and subsequent inclusion in the preaching calendar, the weekly demands of ministry will force pastors to choose those subjects and texts that are convenient to overcome the busyness of the week. Both Rummage and Weirsbe remind preachers to remember they are preaching to real people living in a real world with challenges. The congregation will appreciate the pastor who takes the time to address their needs. Proper planning of sermons will account for congregational needs and encourage a unifying bond between pastor and people.

A planned preaching calendar provides a systematic way for the preacher to address multiple needs. Since the demographics of a congregation differ from one member to another, the needs of people within a congregation differ significantly from one member to another as well. Ignoring this fact will result in sermons that are “largely wasted.”⁶⁸ A planned preaching calendar has the capability of addressing a plethora of needs in the church, but this benefit can only be realized when the preacher knows the audience and applies what Weirsbe calls, “the miracle book” to the various needs of the people who make up the usual congregation.⁶⁹ The faculty of Calvin Seminary agrees by acknowledging this need in its faculty statement,

Preaching must be sensitive to the cultural and congregational context in which it takes place. Every congregation lives in specific habitat, with distinctive sensibilities about appropriate dress, language, ways of talking, music art, and length of sermon and service. Preachers must be diligent students not just of Scripture but of the culture into which they seek to proclaim the gospel so that the

⁶⁷ Appendix B: Inventory items 14 and 15.

⁶⁸ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 43.

⁶⁹ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 27.

sermon truly engages the listener, creating a true meeting of meanings. Preaching must demonstrate a deep empathy with the broken condition, the "trouble," the needs, the human situation of those who listen, and proclaim the good news in ways that effectively address that broken condition.⁷⁰

The local church benefits a third way from a planned preaching calendar by recognizing the variety of needs that Scripture meets. Through the comprehensive preaching plan, the congregation will realize the Bible is a timeless book addressing every area and need of life. This encourages the congregation to place greater confidence in the relevance of the Bible to their lives. Since the ultimate goal of preaching is faith, listeners, as Richard contends, need to be exposed to the integration of biblical truth with life and the only way to integrate the truth with life is by exegeting culture.⁷¹ Relevance is essential. This pastor developed a comprehensive preaching plan for this project addressing numerous areas with which the listener will easily identify. The reason for a comprehensive long-term preaching calendar is this process takes time. Blackwood agrees and believes a positive response from a planned preaching calendar will result in a positive response over time.⁷² Following the inventory developed during this project assures the pastor will build calendars comprehensively.

⁷⁰ Calvin Theological Seminary: "Faculty Statement on the Nature of Excellence in Preaching," Calvin Theological Seminary Website, <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/facultyStatement.php> (accessed July 4, 2010).

⁷¹ Ramesh Richard, *Scripture Sculpture: A Do-It-Yourself Manual for Biblical Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 185.

⁷² Blackwood, *Planning*, 213.

The Benefit to the Local Pastor

Why should a pastor want to use this inventory to develop his yearly preaching calendar? McDill approaches the question of planning from the perspective of dealing with the ramifications of not having a preaching plan. He writes, “The symptoms include a knot in your stomach, a backache from bending over the desk, a tendency toward fervent prayer and muttering to yourself about how you will never again wait this late to prepare your Sunday morning sermon.”⁷³ The weekly planning of sermons can become negative for the simple reason it occurs on a weekly basis, thus causing a repetitious cycle of anxiety and grief when it becomes evident, to the pastor, Sunday is closer than he thinks and there is limited time to produce the sermon.

Planning removes some of that frustration because the preacher who plans is thinking of his preaching in terms of an overall program, not a series of individual sermons.⁷⁴ This pastor limited individual sermons in the preaching calendars for FLBC. Instead, sermon series dominate the schedule in this project. Weirsbe warns, “No one sermon can accomplish everything that needs to be done in a church.”⁷⁵ The preaching calendar developed for FLBC mainly contains series. The early-service preaching calendar has eleven sermon series in it while the late-service calendar has thirteen. The project inventory lists ten items to follow regarding the sermon series.⁷⁶ The pastor will

⁷³ Wayne McDill, *12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2006), 272.

⁷⁴ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 21.

⁷⁵ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 30.

⁷⁶ Appendix B: Inventory items 33-43.

miss providing the direction the church so desperately needs if he does not develop an adequate number of sermon series in his preaching calendar.

The Bible provides a comprehensive view on preaching and the preaching calendar should reflect this truth. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul wrote to the young pastor Timothy and identified four applications of God's Word to the lives of people. Paul listed doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Doctrine refers to teaching, reproof means conviction, correction has the meaning of restoring one to an upright or right state, and instruction refers to training with respect to righteousness.⁷⁷ The pastor who refuses to address these areas in his preaching is risking the enticement of resorting to "theological hobbyhorses."⁷⁸ Rummage further cautions it is unprofitable for both preacher and congregation if preachers "continually pluck one string of your homiletical harp."⁷⁹ John Barnett, Andrew Straubel, and Jeffrey Hinds avoided this pitfall by used the "Long-Term Preaching Model" to develop a series of expository sermons from individual books of the Bible.⁸⁰ Barnett preached forty-one sermons from the book of Revelation. Straubel preached twenty-seven sermons from the book of Hebrews. Hinds preached sixteen messages from the book of Second Corinthians. An assessment of these different preaching schedules revealed doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness existed in all three. Keith Bruce, in his doctoral project, seemed to neglect

⁷⁷ Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies*, S. 2 Ti 3:16.

⁷⁸ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 25.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸⁰ Each attributes the model to Dr. John Reed of Dallas Theological Seminary.

“reproof” in his sermon schedule of preaching on “Baptist Distinctives.”⁸¹ William Smith used a monthly approach to his yearly preaching plan and, through a variety of messages, covered all areas of Scriptural intent.⁸² Stephen Johnson offered a three-year program, but an evaluation of the year 2001 showed all areas addressed Paul’s words to Timothy.⁸³ This pastor constructed two yearly preaching calendars in this project. The calendars consisted of twenty-four sermon series. A breakdown of the sermon series is as follows: seven are doctrinal, three reprove, six correct, and nine instruct.⁸⁴

The intent of this pastor for this project inventory is to be a resource for calendar construction. Constructing a preaching plan, particularly one that is a year in scope, can be a daunting task. This project’s inventory served as a guide to the pastor of FLBC. A one-year preaching plan, for two Sunday morning services at FLBC, was completed. Shorter preaching plans were common at FLBC, before this pastors’ arrival, but this pastor believes the one-year plan is the most comprehensive and beneficial, both to the congregation and to this pastor going forward.

⁸¹ Keith D. Bruce, “A Planned Program of Preaching and Teaching Designed to Enhance a Congregation’s Understanding and Appreciation of Certain Baptist Distinctives,” (doctoral project, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1987), 86-87. Without being present, it was difficult to determine what the exact content of the messages was.

⁸² Smith, “Designing a Research,” 106-119.

⁸³ Johnson, “Preaching for Spiritual Maturity,” 104-107. He offers calendar plans for the years.

⁸⁴ While each sermon series contains numerous individual messages, the series theme is consistent with this breakdown.

The Preparation of the Local Pastor

Pastors must be prepared in two areas if they are going to develop a yearly preaching plan successfully. First, pastors who desire to embark on the task of planning a preaching calendar will need to prepare themselves spiritually before God. This spiritual preparation of the pastor is essential to calendar construction. Too often, the mechanical emphasis of sermon planning and preparation challenges priority over the spiritual. Kenton Anderson observes the high value given to preaching by the effort preachers expend on the mechanical aspects of preaching,

More than 95% of these preachers are spending at least six hours per week in sermon preparation. More than 60% spend more than 13 hours. Almost 20% spent half their work-week (18 hours or more) in preparing to preach. These preachers are reading commentaries (99%), consulting theologians (96%), and “reading culture” (99%). These preachers want to improve in every skill area related to preaching (no aspect of preaching scored less than 28%). They are willing to work at it. 70% would be willing to attend a seminar or short course if it would improve their preaching. 41% would engage a formal course. 18% would enroll in a seminary degree program.⁸⁵

The Bible is a living book (Heb. 4:12), capable of reaching the heart of every person in the pew. Therefore, the preaching plan is not a device to control the preacher; rather it is a device to do God’s work. God must control the preacher. June Yoder’s observation is important to consider in preaching planning,

The minister must attend to his or her own relationship with God. A ministry that is not based on a listening relationship with God is hugely compromised. Indeed a pastor must have a confident and loyal faith in Jesus and his saving love; the pastor must have a regular time of communicating with God; and the pastor must be nourished by regular encounters with God. A ministry, which depends solely on the abilities of the pastor, ceases to be ministry.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Kenton C. Anderson, “The Preaching Pastor Survey” Preaching.com website, http://www.preaching.org/features/display_feature/32 (accessed July 28, 2010).

⁸⁶ June Alliman Yoder, “Teaching Preachers to Listen,” *Evangelical Homiletics Society (Oct 2003)*, under “2003 paper index,” <http://www.ehomiletics.com/papers/03/Yoder2003.pdf> (accessed July 4, 2010).

Blackwood recognizes the spiritual aspect of the work of the preacher as a matter “between him and his Lord.”⁸⁷ As pastors approach the task of planning a yearly preaching calendar they must keep in mind, “the plan is a servant, not a master.”⁸⁸ The pastor’s master is God. Therefore, listening to the master will ensure the preacher has something to say. Yoder again comments, “So often preachers are concerned with the well-trained tongue, they forget the second part of the Isaiah 50:4 passage. Indeed, those who do not listen have nothing to say. For it is the Lord who wakens our ears to listen to whatever it is that is spoken to it and it is the Lord who trains our tongue.”⁸⁹

Weirsbe reminds preachers the Master is Christ when he says, “If we’re adequately prepared and the Spirit is at work, we don’t preach the Bible so much as allow the Bible to preach through us.”⁹⁰ The Spirit must be involved in all aspects of the preachers’ pulpit duties, including the planning of sermons. Preachers must not neglect the spiritual side of sermon planning for the mechanical aspects involved in the process. In his description of the “Long-Term Sermon Preparation Model,” Jeffrey Hinds notes, “this practical method begins with prayer as a priority.”⁹¹ Richard Mayhew emphasizes this idea in his lists of seven areas of preparation that qualify a man to stand in the pulpit and declare, “Thus saith the Lord.” The fifth requirement emphasizes dependence upon

⁸⁷ Blackwood, *Planning*, 209.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁹ Yoder, “Teaching Preachers,” 2003.

⁹⁰ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 24.

⁹¹ Hinds, Straubel, and Barnett use the same model in their doctoral projects, agreeing with Hinds.

God the Holy Spirit for divine insight and understanding.⁹² Jay Perry provides a recommended schedule for a one-day retreat for sermon planning. Acknowledging the pastor's need for relying on God for the task of sermon planning, he recommends beginning the retreat with morning prayers.⁹³

This, or any pastor, would be negligent in developing a preaching calendar or a preaching calendar inventory that does not account for the spiritual preparation of the one involved in the plan. Otherwise, the pastor would rely solely on his own ability. The inventory developed during this project includes both a recommendation and steps to encourage the pastor to include spiritual preparation in the process of preaching calendar construction.⁹⁴ Although the preacher's heart must be prepared to plan and prepare God's message, spiritual preparation alone is not enough.

Second, the pastor must be prepared to take leave from his local church ministry in order to construct the yearly preaching plan. Getting away from the daily duties of ministry is compulsory for the task of calendar preparation and leaving one's ministry requires one to prepare accordingly. A retreat is appropriate for constructing the preaching calendar. Magruder is in agreement with Rummage and Blackwood in endorsing a preaching planning retreat. Rummage identifies the preaching retreat as a place for the sole purpose of planning your sermons.⁹⁵ Jeff Magruder refers to the retreat

⁹² Richard L. Mayhue, "Rediscovering Expository Preaching," *The Master's Seminary Journal* (1/2 1990), <http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj1e.pdf> (accessed July 13, 2010).

⁹³ Jay Perry, "One-Day Retreat for Sermon Planning," Calvin Theological Seminary Website, (accessed July 5, 2010). <http://cep.calvinseminary.edu/learningOpportunities/retreatPlanning/sermonPlanning.php>

⁹⁴ Appendix B: Steps 6, 7, and 26.

⁹⁵ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 63.

as a Sabbatical, and reminds preachers the time away is not a vacation but instead is a time to “pray, study, and plan.” He suggests preachers take their retreat during “slow times.”⁹⁶ Blackwood endorses the retreat and recommends sermon calendar planning occurs in the summertime when the minister is far enough away from the parish to “see it as whole.”⁹⁷

The time of year to take the sermon planning retreat seems to be less important than the ability to leave the ministry to conduct sermon planning. On his blog, Jay Perry offers a suggested schedule for a one-day retreat, but leaves the time to the pastors’ discretion. Rummage advocates four to six days of concentrated review, prayer, contemplation, brainstorming and sermonic spadework, but is not dogmatic on the time.⁹⁸ The time of year seems best left to individual preference. This pastor selected the end of May as the appropriate time for taking a five-day retreat. The reason for this is, this pastor has children. Taking five days away in the summer seemed unnecessary and counterproductive to family needs. For those pastors who have school-aged children, conducting a retreat during the school year seems most appropriate since the children are in school most of the day and the impact upon the family doesn’t seem as significant as would the summer months when everyone is home.

Some pastors will find leaving the ministry, even for a one-day retreat, prohibitive. Other pastors will find the commitment to leave the daily ministry to prepare a preaching calendar less prohibitive, but still challenging. Weirsbe reminds those pastors

⁹⁶ Magruder, “You Might Need.”

⁹⁷ Blackwood, *Planning*, 213.

⁹⁸ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 59.

who believe scheduling time away for sermon preparation is unworkable, “Preaching God’s Word is the most important thing the minister does.”⁹⁹ The pastor will have to be prepared, both spiritually and organizationally, in order to complete this important task of constructing a yearly preaching calendar.

The inventory for this project has three sections. Section one, deals with the preparation aspects of constructing a preaching calendar. Items one through twenty-six are logical in progression and easy to follow. The pastor was successful in conducting his planning retreat for this project. While all of the steps on the inventory were included practically, this pastor needed to organize the steps so future planning would be significantly easier. Some of the steps on the inventory may seem elementary to most pastors. One of the pastors commented on the questionnaire used to evaluate the inventory, “some of the details seem extremely obvious.” The goal for this project was to develop a systematic plan for constructing yearly preaching calendars. The comprehensive inventory is what makes this project unique. The pastor will find inventory items 2 through 5 essential to a successful retreat. To help him evaluate his previous year’s sermons, the pastor will find items 10 and 11 useful. These items will ensure the pastor is not relying on the same material each year, thus failing to expose his congregation to a comprehensive exposure to God’s Word. Pastors will need ideas to help them construct a preaching plan while on the retreat, which is why items 12 and 13 are included on the inventory. What material should a pastor take to construct a preaching plan? Items 18 through 24 are practical and essential resources the pastor will need. Planning during the retreat will be difficult if the pastor is concerned about what may be

⁹⁹ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 14.

taking place at home. Therefore, preparing the local church for the pastors' departure makes items 25 and 26 essential to every pastor taking a retreat. Section one, while only one part of the overall document, is concerned with preparation and the pastor who is prepared will experience the success this pastor experienced in completing the project.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this project was to develop an inventory that would enable this pastor to produce a one-year preaching calendar to use at FLBC. By developing a yearly preaching calendar, and documenting the steps used to construct the calendar, this pastor completed a one-year preaching plan and an inventory to follow to construct future preaching calendars for FLBC. The following was the methodology used to produce the yearly preaching calendar and inventory: (1) this pastor conducted an analysis of the available literature on preaching planning, specifically, the focus of the literature analysis was the identification of items to consider for constructing a preaching calendar; (2) this pastor made a preliminary list of items necessary to construct a preaching calendar; (3) the pastor took a five-day retreat to assemble a one-year preaching calendar; (4) all steps used to construct the preaching plan were incorporated into an inventory; (5) seven pastors evaluated the inventory using a questionnaire; (6) a final inventory, incorporating the responses from the questionnaire by the seven pastors, was completed. The inventory and the completed preaching calendar can be found in appendix A and B.

Planned Preaching Literature Evaluation

The initial step in completing this project involved an analysis of the available literature and information on the subject of preaching planning. The literature analysis was not exhaustive as time constraints and availability of material made acquiring every available source impractical. There were various Doctor of Ministry project titles identified as possible resources for this project, but this pastor could acquire only eleven

projects.¹⁰⁰ Those not acquired were either no longer accessible or the procurement process impractical. This pastor used the internet extensively in searching for material that could prove helpful in this project. Theological seminary websites, on-line journal articles, personal web pages, blogs, and general search engine results are included in this project. Not all material analyzed proved useful in assembling a preaching calendar, but it did allow this pastor to identify what was currently available and what possible needs existed in the preaching planning. The goal of the literature search was to analyze ideas and plans for a preaching calendar from a broad spectrum of sources.

This pastor sought to identify what preaching plans, methods, recommendations, and inventory were available and potentially useful to this project. By analyzing the work of others, this pastor was able to identify common areas that others consider important in planning a preaching calendar. No two sources were in perfect harmony. This was irrelevant for this project, because the goal was to synthesize all available material to use in developing both the preaching calendars and inventory for use in this pastors' particular locale.

Identifying Preliminary Inventory Items

Preaching is personal to each pastor and this pastor acknowledges his project inventory is not exhaustive. Any inventory could possibly have any number of steps to follow. An endless inventory is impractical and would waste more of the pastors' time than it would save. On the other hand, the list needed to be short enough to encourage the

¹⁰⁰ This pastor recruited help from Robert Jones, Theological Resource Network: www.tren.com. In an email, he stated that after an exhaustive search he was unable to identify any additional works available in his network.

pastor to incorporate it into his yearly planning. Jay Perry offers an inventory of six steps.¹⁰¹ On his blog, he readily admits it takes him three months to complete his sermon planning for the year. This may be a reflection of a lack of comprehensiveness in his method of sermon planning. While not being too long or too short, the inventory had to be logical in progression and practical to use. Only then would the preacher want to use it in his local church setting on an annual basis.

After conducting the literature search and evaluating the material available, this pastor identified an initial list of items to help develop a one-year preaching calendar. The following items were foundational to the final project inventory and instrumental in helping this preacher construct two one-year preaching calendars for FLBC.

Preparation

The preacher must not assume he can sit down at a desk and start assembling a preaching calendar without having prepared for such a task. Assembling a long-range preaching calendar requires numerous preparations. First, the pastor must be prepared personally. Second, the pastor must prepare his schedule to ensure he has the time to devote to planning his calendar. Third, the pastor must gather the resources necessary to assist him in the development of the preaching calendar.

The pastor must prepare himself spiritually for preaching planning. The pastor who is spiritually unprepared for this process may find he is unable to finish. The Holy Spirit must be involved in the entire process of preaching and not just at the moment the

¹⁰¹ Perry, "Sermon Planning."

message is delivered.¹⁰² Pierce and Weirsbe agree in their assessment of the preacher's need for the Holy Spirit to be at work in the ministry of preaching. Pearce comments, "[the Spirit] prefers working with the preacher in the pulpit who has first given the Holy Spirit the opportunity to work in the preacher's study" and Weirsbe views preaching as easier when "the Spirit is at work."¹⁰³ This pastor added items six and seven on the project inventory. Both are an attempt to ensure the pastor remembers the need for God's help in developing the preaching calendar.

The time commitment to assemble the preaching calendar will be taxing to the normal routine of the pastor. This pastor needed to adjust his schedule to construct the project calendar and inventory. The demands of daily ministry seemed overwhelmingly at odds with this project. Rummage warns against attempting to add the preaching calendar process to one's normal routine, "you will not have time to do meaningful planning if you are engaged in all of the activities that take up your week."¹⁰⁴ While admitting all men are different when it comes to scheduling, Pearce advocates finding an "isolated atmosphere," while Blackwood endorses the summer months when the minister is "far enough away to see the ministry as a whole."¹⁰⁵ Rummage provides a more specific approach by endorsing a retreat that last for four to six days.¹⁰⁶ This pastor scheduled a

¹⁰² When Peter and John gathered with the other believers in Acts 4:29, they prayed for boldness to preach God's Word. The Spirit needs to go before those who preach and not after the sermon is already prepared. Planning and the Spirit should not be separated.

¹⁰³ Pearce, *Planning Your Preaching*, 12; Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 24.

¹⁰⁴ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 60.

¹⁰⁵ Pearce, *Planning Your Preaching*, 4; Blackwood, *Planning*, 17.

¹⁰⁶ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 59.

five-day retreat to complete this project. The retreat location was approximately three hours from the location of FLBC. Inventory item two has a recommendation to leave the ministry locale and select a place sufficiently distant from family, church, and everyday routines.¹⁰⁷ Inventory items three through five provide additional guidance on the retreat location.

The pastor will need adequate resources while away from his normal ministry location to accomplish the planning task in a reasonable amount of time. Having the appropriate amount of resources is essential to construct the calendar. Rummage lists “basic Bible study tools” as essentials for assembling the calendar (e.g., a Bible dictionary, an exhaustive concordance, a topical Bible, a systematic theological textbook, commentaries of one’s choosing, one’s Bible).¹⁰⁸ Perry recommends taking Bible, journal or notebook, calendar of the congregation’s next year, liturgical seasons and holiday calendar, programming dates, vacation schedule, and denominational, regional, or special meetings.¹⁰⁹ Perry advocates “multiple translations” when assembling the calendar while Blackwood’s list appears too expansive and vague by advocating “all sorts of scholarly volumes.”¹¹⁰ Steve Cole provides an online link for immediate access to valuable resources on his blog, but seems too narrow.¹¹¹ This pastor found most of the resources

¹⁰⁷ The local pastor will have to determine what a sufficient distance from his locale is. In this pastors’ view, if one is close enough to “check-in” on things at home or church then he is too close.

¹⁰⁸ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 63.

¹⁰⁹ Perry, “Sermon Planning.”

¹¹⁰ Lloyd M. Perry, *Biblical Preaching for Today’s World* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1973), 35; Blackwood, *Planning*, 205.

¹¹¹ Steve Cole, “Unashamed Workman,” Steve Cole Blog, no date of entry, <http://unashamedworkman.wordpress.com/preparation-workshop> (accessed July 29, 2010).

used during his retreat on personal Bible software.¹¹² Some items, such as calendars, were printed and carried to the retreat. Some sources seem essential and others preferential. Those items listed on the inventory seemed essential to this pastor and provide a resource for those pastors who may be unsure of what resources to bring when preparing for a retreat.¹¹³ The distance the pastor will be from his ministry makes resource accumulation an essential element of any preaching planning inventory. The preaching retreat is no place to realize an essential item is back in one's office.

Reviewing Congregational Needs

A comprehensive yearly preaching calendar must reflect the pastor's assessment of the needs of his congregation. Koller affirms this by stating, "the supreme test of all preaching is: What happens to the man in the pew?"¹¹⁴ Liefield agrees when he says, "We certainly want to consider the spiritual and personal needs of the congregation."¹¹⁵ To plan preaching without considering the needs of the audience is what Weirsbe refers to as "speaking to the air."¹¹⁶ By assessing the needs of the audience, preachers will "determine the portions of the Bible that they need to hear and the best means for

¹¹² "Logos Bible Software, *Series X: Scholars Library*" CD-ROM (Logos Bible Software, 2001-2006).

¹¹³ Inventory items 18-24 provide those used to construct the two yearly preaching calendars for this project.

¹¹⁴ Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1962), 19.

¹¹⁵ Walter L. Leifeld, *New Testament Exposition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 164.

¹¹⁶ Weirsbe, *The Dynamics*, 41.

preaching biblical truth to them.”¹¹⁷ Biblically oriented life-situation preaching is never outdated, for it is designed to help people resolve the tensions, relieve the pressures, and disperse despair.¹¹⁸ This pastor assessed the congregation of FLBC to determine what priority of topics and themes to include in the yearly preaching plan.¹¹⁹

Assessing the previous year’s sermons proved helpful in determining congregation needs for the preaching calendar. By evaluating last year’s sermons, this pastor saw what parts of his preaching was imbalanced. Ed Nichols comments,

A good example of the proper balance between evangelism, doctrine, and teaching can be found in many of Paul’s letters. One example of balance can be similar to that of First Thessalonians. In the first three chapters, Paul discusses doctrine. In chapter four he shifts to the practical or teaching mode. Paul seems to present an evangelistic thrust interspersed between chapters and verses of doctrine and teaching. A good, balanced preaching calendar will contain messages of evangelism, doctrine, outreach, daily living, and other Godly instruction, which leads to the winning of the lost and to the development of the whole Christian.¹²⁰

Pierce and Rummage reinforce Nichols by encouraging the preacher to consider the previous year’s sermons for help in determining ideas for the year ahead. Rummage gives a list of nine questions that proved helpful for this project in organizing the previous year’s sermon information.¹²¹ Pearce advocates “careful consideration” of the previous twelve months in order to determine the next twelve.¹²² Inventory items 10 and

¹¹⁷ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 40.

¹¹⁸ Lloyd M. Perry and Charles M. Sell, *Speaking to Life’s Problems* (Chicago: Moody, 1983), 9.

¹¹⁹ Appendix D.

¹²⁰ Nichols, “Proclaim His Praise”

¹²¹ Rummage, *Planning Your Preaching*, 65. Rummage asked nine questions. This pastor felt that including five questions on the checklist (#11) was sufficient, as no items on the checklist is exhaustive.

¹²² Pearce, *Planning Your Preaching*, 3.

11 are a resource to help the pastor review past preaching as he anticipates future needs in the upcoming sermon plan. At a minimum, assessing the previous year's messages will help the preacher avoid a repeat of the same material.

The average attendance at the early service is 30 while the later service averages 70. The majority in attendance are over 40 years of age. Most of the members have attended church regularly for the past year, but few members over 40 are actively involved in ministry.¹²³ The corporate needs of this church primarily consist of attitude, service, evangelism, and love toward outsiders. This pastor believes the church is slow to reach beyond the current membership. While the fellowship among current members and regular visitors is good, the desire to reach the community and culture around FLBC has been poor. Health, finances, and marital problems dominate the list of personal needs. Since FLBC has few families with school-aged children, this pastor chose only one series dealing with family relationships.¹²⁴

The results of the congregational assessment were used by this pastor for topics and ideas to include in the preaching plan. The pastor placed the ideas into a file folder, inventory items 12 and 13, and added thoughts and notes. The folder became a valuable resource on the retreat because the pastor considered the congregational needs and built sermon series into the preaching plan. This pastor listed the steps needed to conduct a congregational needs assessment in the project inventory. This pastor added inventory items 14, 15, 16, and 17 to help address congregational needs in future years.

¹²³ This pastor defines ministry as regular service in the local church.

¹²⁴ Homeland Security: begins 5-1-11, Late service.

Ideas for the Preaching Calendar

Lacking ideas for sermon topics can be discouraging to many pastors. Attempting to construct a yearly preaching calendar with nothing more than a blank piece of paper and a pen is nearly impossible. The preacher needs ideas to assemble his yearly preaching calendar. Where do ideas for the preaching calendar originate? Since this pastor sought to develop an expositional preaching plan for one year, it was logical that the Bible was the most appropriate source. However, the Bible does not have to be the only source of sermon ideas. Ideas may originate from anywhere. The origin of the sermon idea is irrelevant. Perry agrees and does not limit ideas to any specific area. Instead, he says the “sermon starter” comes from virtually anywhere.¹²⁵ Koller agrees when he mentions “Scripture, history, literature other than Scripture, experience, and imagination” as possible idea sources.¹²⁶ Ideas for developing sermon series to include on the preaching calendar do not need to be limited to any particular source as long as the idea is true to the passage of Scripture.

In the months preceding the retreat, the pastor documented ideas he had heard, seen, or read. The ideas proved to be a valuable resource for constructing the preaching plans for this project. This pastor arrived at the retreat location with a large file of ideas. The volume of material in the idea folder was more than enough to build a yearly preaching calendar. Upon considering the contents of the folder, only certain ideas eventually became part of the preaching plan. One idea incorporated into the calendar originated from a discussion about death. The pastor thought of the various approaches

¹²⁵ Lloyd M. Perry, *Biblical Sermon Guide* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 17.

¹²⁶ Koller, *Expository Preaching*, 45-48.

preachers take when preaching about death. The pastor thought about the power of last words and their tendency to gain a captivated audience. The sermon series, “The Day I Died,” is a five-week series developed for the late worship service at FLBC.¹²⁷ The series originated from a simple discussion, but proved useful in developing five expository messages. Many series on the preaching calendar developed this same way.¹²⁸

The management of the ideas ensures productive material is available for use on the preaching planning. Failure to complete inventory items 12 and 13 will result in less efficient use of time during the retreat. When asked if any item on the inventory was more helpful than others were to his particular ministry, one pastor commented in the project evaluation that the folder for sermon ideas was particularly beneficial.

Filing System

This preacher has found the filing system to be invaluable. The filing system for this project has two aspects. First, the pastor must have a file that is useful for collecting material for future sermon ideas. This file holds the sermon idea folder that the pastor takes to construct next year’s preaching plan. This is the file associated with inventory items 12 and 13. Koller is emphatic about filing ideas. He declares, “Let no good idea be lost for want of proper note paper. Wherever the idea strikes, record it on any kind of paper available; save this memorandum; and file it!”¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Series begins 6-26-11 on Appendix A; Late service schedule.

¹²⁸ Early service sermons from the idea folder: GPS: God’s Positioning System; Catch the Fever Being a Contagious Christian; 5 Steps To Becoming a *Spiritual Bowl Champion*; Does Jesus Care; Global Warming; The Love Connection; Homeland Security; The Day I Died.

¹²⁹ Koller, *Expository Preaching*, 119.

Second, the pastor must have a file to add material to his preaching plan. If the pastor constructs a sermon series on a particular topic and he finds an idea or illustration prior to developing the sermon, he needs a system that will help him find the material in the future. This type of filing system is the last item on the project inventory.¹³⁰ It is the last step in developing a one-year preaching plan. Perry calls this filing for sermons the “open secret”¹³¹ of the success of many preachers while Robinson calls collecting material for sermons “tributaries for high-water preaching.”¹³² Others have found similar value. The Long-Term Preaching Model, taught at Dallas Theological Seminary and used in three doctor of ministry projects evaluated by this pastor, places emphasis on filing. Jeffrey Hinds explains the model thusly,

This practical method begins with prayer as a priority. It is then followed by a four stage process for quality, life-impacting exposition. Each of the four developmental stages are to be of fairly equal time lengths. The first stage consists of reading the entire text for mastery . . . Finally, a sermon file is developed for each preaching periscope for the purpose of gathering supporting material.¹³³

A filing system created for both one-year preaching calendars at FLBC provides this pastor with a system to use calendars completed during the retreat. Each sermon series has a file. Each file has individual folders for each sermon in the series. Prior to preaching the weekly message, the pastor will check the file to see if he has added any material that supplements the sermon.

¹³⁰ A working title for each sermon series and each sermon within the series should be visible so the pastor knows to which file to add material.

¹³¹ Perry, *Sermon Guide*, 15.

¹³² Haddon W. Robinson, *Making a Difference in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999). 102-103.

¹³³ Hinds, “A Research Project,” 15-16.

Text Selection

Text selection is of utmost importance in developing a preaching calendar. Without a supporting text, the preacher has no real preaching plan. An idea for a sermon or sermon series is only as good as the underlying passage of Scripture supporting it. The pastor must not force his idea into a passage of Scripture. He must select a text that is appropriate. Jay Adams reminds preachers, “The thing to be avoided at all cost is to impose your own purposes on the passage.”¹³⁴ The method of preaching used at FLBC is expositional preaching. This pastor used only one text of Scripture for each sermon included in his one-year preaching calendar. In addition, no sermon included in the project calendar, is isolated to only one verse.

The expositional approach, that is the foundation to this project, ensures both topic and Scripture agree. Blackwood comments “let every sermon have its text, only one text, with its setting. In the coming discourse, forsaking all other texts, cleave to one.”¹³⁵ Liefeld agrees by saying, “an expository message deals with one basic unit of Scripture.”¹³⁶ Perry agrees indirectly by cautioning against topical and textual preaching. He speaks against topical preaching by noting the dangers, which include “inventiveness at the expense of scriptural authority.” He rebuffs textual preaching by calling it a “refuge for ministerial idleness” leading to “narrowness and shallowness of treatment.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Jay E. Adams, *Preaching with Purpose* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 29.

¹³⁵ Andrew Blackwood, *Doctrinal Preaching for Today* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 129.

¹³⁶ Liefeld, *New Testament*, 6.

¹³⁷ Perry, *Sermon Guide*, 18.

Expository sermon preparation was beyond the scope of this project. The identification of an appropriate text from which to preach an expository message was not.

Identifying suitable texts to use for the sermons in this project required the pastor to implement two steps. First, the pastor had to identify a portion of Scripture dealing with the topic he wanted to include in the preaching plan. Second, the pastor had to determine the boundaries of the portion of Scripture under consideration. Avoiding step one results in the pastor forcing a meaning into a passage, while avoiding step two results in topical or textual preaching. Both steps were required for each sermon series incorporated into the FLBC yearly preaching plan.

Identifying an appropriate text for the preachers chosen topic is the first step. It does not have to be a lengthy process. The retreat is not a time of intense study leading to a completed expository sermon. Campbell admits the final use of a passage for a sermon will be determined after further study. He gives an example about a text-selection then comments, “This seems to be a suitable text.”¹³⁸ The preaching plan is just that: a plan. The further study of a given passage will occur during the course of the calendar year; however, the pastor must do some preliminary work on a passage to ensure his plan is usable in the future. More than one way exists to accomplish this step. After gathering “preliminary data,” which Koller defines as those resources essential to an understanding of the passage, the preacher should “make a brief” analysis of the Scripture passage to discover the structure patterns.¹³⁹ Perry advocates reading a given passage in several

¹³⁸ Thomas Dishman Campbell, *The Bible and the Calendar: The Ministers Guide to Pulpit Planning* (Memphis, TN: The Program of Alternate Studies, 1996), 78.

¹³⁹ Koller, *Expository Preaching*, 57.

translations to avoid allowing one word or phrase to dominate an idea due to translation wording.¹⁴⁰ Koller agrees with Perry and cautions against failing to string the “gems” of a passage into a usable whole.¹⁴¹ Adams adds by saying, “There are few deficiencies in preaching quite so disastrous in their effect as the all-too-frequently occurring failure to determine the telos (or purpose) of a preaching portion.”¹⁴² Thomas Campbell finds benefit for the pastor in using commentaries by saying, “Readings from commentaries sometimes confirm our notions about a text, and at other times contradict them.”¹⁴³ Haddon Robinson asks two essential questions in determining the “anatomy of an idea. First, he asks, “what exactly is this person talking about? Second, “what is this person saying about what is being talked about?” By combining both answers, the preacher discovers the idea of the text.

Step two requires the pastor to identify the parameters of the text he will be using for the sermon. Again, more than one way exists to do this. Adams notes, identifying an expository portion of Scripture will require the pastor to “determine the natural limits of the passage.”¹⁴⁴ Perry determines the boundaries of a preaching portion by noting sudden shifts of style, tone, and content, but acknowledges, references to new places and new persons will often give a clue to a thought transition.¹⁴⁵ Adams calls for the preacher to

¹⁴⁰ Perry, *Biblical Preaching*, 35.

¹⁴¹ Koller, *Expository Preaching*, 27.

¹⁴² Adams, *Preaching*, 27.

¹⁴³ Campbell, *The Bible*, 47.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁴⁵ Perry, *Biblical Preaching*, 18.

make his divisions of the book or unit strictly based on purpose.¹⁴⁶ Whichever method utilized, Perry reminds preachers, a “good preaching portion” must be a passage with logical unity.¹⁴⁷

After identifying the appropriate text on the preaching calendar, the pastor will have an emphasis for his future study. The preacher need not be overwhelmed at the thought that his preaching calendar contains topics that will eventually need replacement due to poor text selection. Thomas Long provides encouragement:

The preacher must also remember that a biblical text is not a jar with an idea inside, waiting to be plucked out and preached. A text, rather, is like a large and lavishly furnished room. It can be entered through several doorways and, once inside, the preacher can experience this environment in many ways. A single text, then affords multiple preaching possibilities.¹⁴⁸

This pastor had numerous ideas for various sermons and sermon series upon arrival at the retreat location. Each of the ideas needed a text and the text selected needed to apply to that particular sermon idea. Personal knowledge of Scripture and the pastors’ own Bible software program proved to be sufficient to identify potentially appropriate text. This pastor read four translations for each text under consideration to confirm whether the particular text was appropriate.¹⁴⁹ Commentaries were consulted in those situations the pastor believed necessary. If the text applied to the topic, the pastor documented the idea for placement on the preaching calendar.

¹⁴⁶ Adams, *Preaching*, 23.

¹⁴⁷ Perry, *Biblical Preaching*, 31.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas G. Long, “Patterns in Sermons,” in *Best Advice for Preaching*, ed. John S. McClure (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 43.

¹⁴⁹ KJV, NASB, ESV, and NIV were the translations preferred by this pastor.

The project inventory provides the pastor with a broad spectrum of steps that will help in text identification. Sections One and Two contain essential steps to ensure the preacher can construct a plan requiring minimal revision during the year. Section one, steps 18, 19, 20, and 22 are specific to the resources needed to enable the pastor to research and select appropriate text for the preaching plan. Section two, steps 36 through 43, follows a progression for using the resources in section one.

The project evaluation revealed no comments on this aspect of text selection. It is unknown whether the participating pastors use a different method for text selection or if they followed a similar pattern. Since the questionnaire contained items allowing for negative input and no pastor mentioned those items, it seems the evaluators believed the items were logical and appropriate.

Preaching-Planning Retreat

This pastor went to Williamsburg, VA during the last week of May. The goal of the five-day retreat was to complete a one-year preaching calendar for two Sunday morning services at FLBC. A hotel was chosen with internet access and proximity to merchants, should the need arise. Williamsburg is located about three hours from the pastors' home. The distance to Williamsburg from the pastor's home and church minimized distractions, but was close enough the pastors' retreat schedule was not spent driving. The retreat lasted five days: Monday through Friday. However, the pastor left on Sunday night to ensure that the retreat started early Monday morning. Organization of the pastors' schedule and resources occurred on Sunday night.

Post-Retreat Inventory

The pastor returned home on Friday afternoon with a completed one-year preaching calendar, for two Sunday morning services, for Faith Liberty Baptist Church. The pastor recorded the steps used to produce the yearly calendar. The pastor evaluated the inventory for clarity and accuracy. The initial item count was approximately one hundred items. Since the inventory includes every step involved in constructing a one-year preaching calendar, the list appeared realistic. However, after documenting the information on computer and printing it out, the list appeared cluttered and lacked clarity. The pastor chose to remedy the problem by dividing the list into three broad sections and using sub-points under main headings. This adjustment resulted in a more cohesive document as reflected in the comments recorded in the pastor's evaluation. The post-retreat inventory item total was fifty-nine.

Project Evaluation

The method used in evaluating the project inventory is similar to the one used by Sidney Greidanus in developing his expository sermon model for first-year preaching students.¹⁵⁰ Seven pastors evaluated the project inventory individually. The selected pastors were men who were responsible for the pulpit ministry in their local church. This requirement ensured the pool of evaluators possessed the needed understanding and ability to provide meaningful input into the evaluation. The time in the pastorate varied

¹⁵⁰ Sidney Greidanus, "Teaching First-Year Preaching," *Evangelical Homiletics Society* (October 2003), under "2003 paper index," <http://www.ehomiletics.com/papers/03/Greidanus2003.pdf> (accessed July 2, 2010). Greidanus created a checklist for developing sermons and tested it himself. He asked others in the field to evaluate the list to determine its usefulness. He believed this provided credibility to the list.

from four years to thirty years. The pastors received a cover letter explaining the project, the post-retreat inventory of fifty-nine items, and a questionnaire to evaluate the inventory. The questionnaire was comprised of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Each pastor evaluated the inventory independently of the other pastors. The answers provided in the questionnaire helped this pastor ensure the final inventory was clear, comprehensive, and practical to use .

Final Inventory

A review of the questionnaires and a synthesis of the information into the post-retreat inventory resulted in a comprehensive, logical, and practical inventory. The inventory will be a benefit to this preacher in his preaching planning for many years and will serve as a valuable resource for any preacher who desires to plan a one-year preaching calendar.

Chapter 4

The Planned Preaching Calendar for FLBC

Considerations for Constructing the Preaching Calendar

FLBC is a congregation of approximately eighty to ninety people. Women slightly outnumber men and the majority of the congregation is over the age of forty. The percentages are equal for children, teenagers, and young adults. The formal educational level of most members is a high school diploma. Some college graduates and military members attend, but the numbers are minimal. The Bible knowledge of the congregation seems limited; however, the congregation appears eager to learn as evidenced by their attentiveness during the service and questions that often arise after the service.

The Sunday worship services occur at 8:30 and 11 o'clock. The services are independent of one another. The sermons and worship service format, therefore, are different for both services. The congregation has few people who attend both services.

This project required the pastor to construct a one-year preaching calendar for each of the Sunday services. Before constructing the yearly preaching calendar, the pastor established his preaching goals and objectives for the next twelve months. Second, the pastor assessed the congregations' needs. The preaching plan incorporates both the goals and objectives and the congregational needs. The two preaching calendars are included in the appendix.

Goals and Objectives

“What am I hoping God will do in the lives of the people during the next twelve months through my preaching?” This pastor pondered this question prior to establishing

his goals and objectives. The pastors' goals and objectives emphasize cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral changes desired of the congregation.

Change begins in the mind. Paul writes that Christians are to “be transformed by the renewing of your minds.”¹⁵¹ The cognitive goals and objectives for the congregation are as follows. First, the congregation will learn at least two significant doctrines. Second, the congregation will learn the specifics of the gospel message for use in daily conversations with others. Third, the congregation will learn the essentials of the faith.

The preaching calendars reflect attitudinal goals and objectives. This pastor recognized a reluctance to “try new things” by the FLBC congregation. The pastor will use a variety of sermon series to encourage the congregation to develop a willing attitude to reach others outside FLBC. This pastor hopes the congregation will become more willing to accept changes to reach people. Specifically, this pastor identified a need to change from the current traditional style of music to either a blended or contemporary style. Additionally, this pastor believes a change from an atmosphere that is more formal in dress to one that is more casual is needed to reach the people of the surrounding community. By preaching the sermon series developed for encouraging change, this pastor hopes an attitude of acceptance and a willingness to reach people will materialize. Both preaching calendars contain sermon series to encourage change in the congregation's attitude of accomplishing ministry work.

The pastor identified and incorporated certain behavioral goals and objectives into his preaching calendar. The congregation, after hearing certain sermon series, will be

¹⁵¹ Rom. 12:2, KJV.

encouraged to participate more in evangelism, prayer, and service. Various sermon series on these subjects are prevalent in the preaching plan for both Sunday morning services.

Congregational Needs

The majority of those who attend FLBC are professing Christians with a Baptist background. Some who attend regularly have not professed a relationship with Christ, but have expressed personal needs to this pastor. The pastor identified the congregational needs and divided them into the categories of corporate and personal needs. The preaching calendar reflects both needs and is equally important to achieving the goals and objectives established for the coming year.

Corporately, the congregation needs an outward focus. This requires preaching that encourages evangelism, service to others, understanding of the difference between doctrine and preference, and understanding culture in the Woodbridge, VA area.

Personal needs are numerous at FLBC. Aging members are struggling with health related issues, financial difficulties abound, parents are concerned for their children's walk with God, joblessness and foreclosures are prevalent, marriage relationships are lacking, and immorality is present among more than a few men. The pastor identified these needs and developed two preaching calendars for the next twelve months. The early service calendar is for the 8:30 service while the late service calendar is for the 11 o'clock service.

The Early-Service Preaching Calendar

The immediate benefit of this plan was that it allowed the pastor to concentrate on what he deems as his most important duty: preaching. The sermon plan took the entire five days to complete. The retreat workday was long. The only interruptions were those necessary for the pastor to take a needed break. Breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a short walk in the afternoon were part of each day. The remainder of the retreat focused on developing the preaching plan.

In building the schedule, the pastor began by consulting the civic, Christian, and congregational calendars. The pastor attempted to avoid having too many Sunday's with individual sermons that were not part of a series. The pastor prefers the sermon series because it allows for a more thorough examination of a given theme. The early service plan contains five individual dates that are not part of a sermon series. Of the five individual dates, four are for flexibility, ensuring the calendar is not too rigid. All other sermons are part of a series.

The pastor began planning using the civic calendar. This pastor identified those dates deemed important for starting a sermon series. The pastor selected the first Sunday after Labor Day, the first Sunday of the New Year, and the first Sunday after Easter to begin a sermon series. The pastor hopes to capitalize on the higher attendance on these dates and hopes a new series will encourage continued attendance.

Each sermon series emphasizes a specific theme. The following themes are contained in the early service plan: The will of God, practical Christian living, the true meaning of Christmas, overcoming adversity through faith, victorious Christian living,

wrong attitudes toward sin, the Person of Christ, dangers of sin, fear, and despair, doctrine of Hell, and eternal security.

The length of the sermon series' vary from three to six weeks. One series, "God's Positioning System," lasts six weeks. Two sermon series, "Catch the Fever" and "Becoming a Super (Spiritual) Bowl Champion," are both five sermons in length. Five sermon series', "Defeating Our Giants," "Résumé of the Redeemer," "Slippery Slopes," "Global Warming," and "Security Lock," are contained in the plan and last for four weeks. Two sermon series', "The "X" Mess" and "The Devil Made Me Do It," are three weeks in length. The pastor recorded each series on the calendar, as it was developed. The pastor ensured that each series was different from the preceding one. The pastor reviewed the remaining dates on the calendar.

No congregational dates required a special sermon. The remainder of the calendar consists of four open dates and one special sermon. The open dates allow the pastor to shift the calendar should the need arise while the only special sermon is scheduled for December 26, because it is the last Sunday of the year. This date is used to encourage the congregation to put the past year behind them while looking forward to the future.

The pastor recorded the working title and focus of each sermon series. Under each series heading, the pastor documented the date, title, text, and any special note. The pastor entered all information into his personal computer and saved the preaching plan on the computer and a back-up zip-drive. Upon completion of the early service calendar, the pastor constructed the late service calendar.

The Late-Service Preaching Calendar

The pastor constructed the late-service preaching calendar using the same process as he did for the early service. However, the pastor did not attempt to make the length of the sermon series or the dates of the individual sermons in the late service coincide with the early service calendar. The reason for this is twofold. First, those people attending the early service at FLBC typically do not attend the later service. Second, the topics and themes are different for both services, the pastor must make decisions on sermon series length, and certain topics require longer series. The pastor begins the yearly calendars with this difference. The pastor begins a series for both services on September 12, 2010. The early service series lasts for six weeks, but the late service series lasts for five. The pastor thought the early service theme about God's will required more sermons than the five part series on God's grace in the later service. Since both preaching plans contain numerous series, this difference is common. The early service contains eleven sermon series while the late service calendar contains thirteen sermon series.

The pastor was able to address a greater variety of topics in the later service because of the shorter length of most of the sermon series. The early service plan contained two series of three messages while the later service has five. In addition, the later service plan contains no six-week series compared to the one in the early service. The pastor preached more themes in the later service as a result. The following themes are contained in the late service plan: Power of God's grace, God's forgiveness, love for others, Person of Christ, choices, cost of sin, need for changing methods, Easter tears, guarding one's family, the Christian and government, death, and the reliability of the Bible.

The length of the sermon series vary from three to five weeks. Three series, The Power of God's Grace, The Day I Died, and Can I Trust My Bible, lasts five weeks. Four series, Does God Still Love Me, Crossroads, Bill Collector, and Homeland Security, lasts four weeks. Four series, The Love Connection, Christmas Away From Home, The Garden of (W) Eden, and Changing Methods-Changing Lives, lasts three weeks. The pastor recorded each series on calendar, as it was developed. Again, it was prudent to ensure that series themes were different from the preceding one. The pastor reviewed the remaining openings on the calendar.

The pastor did not choose any special dates to preach individual sermons. The early service has an individual message on December 26, but the pastor chose to make that date a part of the Christmas sermon series. The late service preaching plan contains two open dates for flexibility.

The pastor recorded the working title and focus of each sermon series. The documentation method was identical to the one used for the early service. The pastor entered all information into his personal computer and saved the preaching plan on the computer and a back-up drive. The completed plan is located in Appendix C.

Chapter 5

Evaluation of the Preaching Calendar Inventory

The purpose of this project was to design a systematic approach to sermon planning. This pastor, on an annual basis, will use an inventory to construct a preaching calendar for FLBC. The pastor created the preaching calendar inventory by evaluating available literature on the subject and recording his work during a five-day planning retreat. During the retreat, this pastor recorded any steps used to construct the one-year calendar for FLBC. The practical assembling of the one-year preaching calendar proved invaluable to developing the inventory. The pastor did not attempt to construct a systematic plan based solely on the available literature. Practicality was essential. This pastor worked through the process of constructing a one-year preaching calendar to ensure the plan included necessary steps while eliminating unnecessary or impractical steps. The inventory expanded to include all preliminary considerations used to construct a preaching calendar. The inventory includes those organizational steps necessary for comprehensiveness. The intent of following a systematic inventory is to ensure the pastor has a beginning-to-end process to complete his plan.

The inventory has three sections. Section one lists the steps followed to prepare the pastor for the planning retreat. Section two lists the steps followed during the actual construction of the preaching calendar. The completion of section two occurred during the retreat. It was not possible to accomplish the steps in section two without following the steps in section one. Section three lists the final steps involved in administering the plan. The rationale for the three-fold division of the inventory is important: (1) constructing the sermon plan began long before the pastor opened his Bible at the retreat;

(2) without section one, the pastor could not have accomplished section two; (3) the entire plan does not serve its purpose if it is not organized. The pastor needs an adequate filing system to ensure maximum usage of the preaching plan. Section three ensured the maximal use of the calendar by this pastor.

The inventory consists of fifty-nine numbered items. Some of the numbers have sub-points to help ensure understanding. Recommendations were included where this pastor felt appropriate. The recommendations serve two purposes. First, this pastor will remember important thoughts in future years. Second, as a training document, it provides guidance to those preachers needing assistance in implementing the plan.

Pastor's Evaluations

This pastor completed the project inventory and asked ten pastors to evaluate it. Each of the pastors received a cover letter, completed project inventory, and a questionnaire. The questionnaire had thirteen items. Seven pastors were gracious enough to answer the questionnaire and return it. This pastor evaluated the responses in the seven questionnaires and adjusted the final inventory where appropriate. The responses to the questionnaire revealed both strengths and limitations in this projects inventory.

The background and preaching planning experience of the pastors were the focus of questions one through five. The preaching experience of the pastors ranged from four years to thirty years. All of the pastors preached at least one sermon per week. Six of the pastors said they planned their preaching while one stated, he "was trying." Their preaching plans varied. Two pastors planned sermons between "one and two months in advance." One planned "three to six months out." Three respondents planned sermons

“six to twelve months out.” Six pastors received previous training in preparing a one-year preaching calendar, but one stated his training was “not in-depth.” One pastor responded that he had no previous training in constructing a one-year preaching calendar. The answers to questions six through thirteen reflect the variety of experience, training, and ministry practices of the seven pastors.

The remainder of the questionnaire focused on the actual project inventory. One goal of this pastor was to produce a practical and easily understood document. All of the pastors agreed in question six that the format was easily readable but one added, “I need to contemplate it more.” All seven pastors agreed the sentences and words on the inventory were clear. When asked if any of the inventory items were impractical or unrealistic for their particular ministry, the responses varied. Five pastors stated the inventory was practical and realistic, but one expressed concern with the commitment needed to complete the inventory. One pastor stated the inventory was impractical because “as a church planter, the dynamics change so frequently.” One pastor responded that the five-day retreat was “a little unrealistic.” He stated he preferred “a few days alone after meeting with other ministry leaders” in his church. This was how he gathered his ideas before planning his calendar.

Question nine asked each pastor if the inventory was too long. If so, what would he eliminate? Five of the pastors responded that the list required no changes. One suggested eliminating the file folder because he “liked storing information on the computer.” One pastor stated the inventory “does seem a little long,” but thought it was because of the fifty-nine steps. He thought some of the items “were extremely obvious.” Of the seven pastors who responded, he had the most experience in preaching planning,

which may have influenced his response. In question ten, all of the pastors agreed the inventory was not too short.

Question eleven was probably the most important on the questionnaire. It required each pastor to identify any item on the project inventory that was helpful to him in his particular ministry. Five pastors mentioned separate items on the inventory. One pastor stated that items 10, 11, 12, 33, 34, and 35 were most helpful, but offered no comments. One pastor mentioned item number 12 without comment. Number 16, "Really hit me as great for me and our church," responded one of the preachers. Numbers 35 and 48 were "very helpful" to one pastor because he said, "I just lost my files." One respondent stated that number 50 was "a great idea!" He stated, "in all these years it never occurred to me to print two copies of my sermons." Inventory items 51 and 52 proved "very useful" to one of the pastors. One preacher mentioned that number 59 was "very useful to me." Two of the pastors failed to list specific item numbers from the inventory. One responded, "The whole list was profitable" while another stated, the "details that you listed were the most profitable."

Would the seven pastors consider using the plan in their ministries? Six pastors responded to question twelve in the affirmative. One commented, "The inventory is very good" but "it was better suited for a new lead pastor" or "seminary/college student" or "a help for the disorganized, fly-by the-seat of his pants pastor."

The last question asked each pastor to add any additional comments that would make the inventory better in any way. Six of the seven pastors added at least one additional comment. Two responded they liked the inventory with one adding the inventory was "outstanding" in its current form and planned "to put it on my computer."

Four pastors added more substantive answers. One pastor believed the questionnaire should have included a copy of this pastors' one-year preaching plan. In retrospect, this appears to be a good idea. Another pastor believed some of the items needed further discussion since they were foreign to the evaluator. He mentioned the filing system needed further sub-points. He also stated item 11, "balance in the yearly calendar" needed further discussion. One pastor mentioned the idea of the pastor "scheduling some breaks" into his preaching calendar. He was emphatic, "The pastor MUST have this on his mind while putting his annual plan together." The last respondent listed three items to add to the inventory. He recommended adding to item 13, "the pastor needs to consider portions of the Bible on which he never preached or seldom preached." He believed item 31 should include "possible speaking engagements." Lastly, he commented that the length of the sermon series should "perhaps be longer." He believed the inventory recommendation of four to six weeks was too restrictive.

Strengths of the Inventory

After analyzing the responses to the questionnaire, this pastor recognized three strengths of the project inventory. First, the inventory organization is clear in wording and divisions. The pastors responded favorably to the organization of the material. Second, the list is comprehensive and sufficient for a pastor. The preacher who follows the fifty-nine steps of this inventory will produce a one-year preaching calendar. Third, the inventory is practical. The pastors who evaluated the plan were very complimentary and some were enthusiastic to use the inventory immediately. One goal of this pastor was

to develop an inventory that was practical. If the inventory was impractical then others would not use it and this pastor would eventually abandon its use.

Limitations of the Inventory

While the overall response to the inventory was positive, four of the seven pastors noted at least one limitation. One pastor thought some of the items were abstract. Two of the pastors thought that the inventory was limited to certain ministries. One of these pastors agreed with a fourth pastor that the inventory was long and challenging. This pastor evaluated each response and found no specific entries that needed changing. However, the list was again checked for clarity and organization.

The inventory was clear to the pastors, but one believed the inventory had some items that required additional explanation. Explaining each item was not this pastor's purpose for the inventory, but some items needed elaboration. One pastor asked, "How can you tell if you are presenting a balance of topics, needs, and exposition?" This pastor attempted to remedy this inventory limitation by providing recommendations and questions in each main section on the inventory. Still, any pastor using this inventory would benefit from discussing the inventory with this pastor prior to using the document in his respective ministry.

Two of the pastors believed the inventory was not particularly applicable to every preaching ministry. Specifically, one stated, "It is impractical for a church planter because dynamics change so frequently." The other stated the inventory was profitable only for the novice or disorganized pastor. The inventory is applicable to every ministry. Both pastors liked the plan and provided other positive comments, but they did not find

applicability to their respective ministries. This pastor believes a discussion of the inventory with church planters, seasoned pastors, and organized pastors would encourage adoption of this inventory into their respective ministries.

Two of the pastors saw a limitation in the length of the inventory. One of the pastors commented, “The inventory is not too long for someone who is serious about the commitment.” Later in the questionnaire he stated, “Completing the inventory will require a commitment to fully implement.” The other pastor simply stated, “59 items seems like a lot.” This pastor restructured the initial list of 110 items to the current 59. This pastor decreased the number of items by emphasizing only main points, adding sub points where needed, and providing recommendations where necessary. Further, this pastor divided the document into three areas with applicable item numbers in each section. This inventory is long because it is comprehensive. The intent of this pastor was to create an inventory of items that lists every step necessary to construct a one-year preaching calendar. This pastor made appropriate adjustments, but the adjustments did not compromise the comprehensiveness of the current inventory.

Personal Evaluation

Producing two one-year preaching calendars for FLBC was an extremely difficult, but rewarding task. Developing a comprehensive inventory from that labor was even more rewarding. In the search for a systematic system for constructing a preaching calendar, this pastor was left wanting. While so many programs and methods have worked for others, this pastor wanted a step-by-step approach that left no consideration out. While it is debatable if any list could ever be complete, this project inventory goes

far in reaching this pastors' goal. Upon final examination of the inventory, this pastor observed both strengths and limitations.

Strengths of the Inventory

This pastor feels that the inventory has four areas of strength. First, the inventory has logical progression. Second, the inventory is organized which allows for ease of use. Third, the inventory items serve as a guide to preparing the preacher for the work of preaching. Fourth, this project inventory honors the Word of God.

The logical progression of the inventory items required extensive work and research. Each item required testing in the ministry setting by this pastor. The list was structured, restructured, evaluated, and restructured again to compose the final inventory. The pastor using the inventory is not required to revisit previous items as he works through the inventory. This will encourage completion, as the pastor gets closer to item number fifty-nine.

In addition to the logical progression of the inventory items, a second strength is the way in which the material is organized. Because the list is comprised of fifty-nine steps and numerous sub points, the pastor needs good organization of the material. This pastor divided the inventory into three sections: Preliminary Considerations, Calendar Construction, and Administering the Plan.

The third strength of the inventory is the emphasis placed on preparation. Preaching planning does not happen when the pastor opens his Bible. The pastor must be prepared to leave the local ministry setting with the resources collected, ministry goals

established, and pulpit supply scheduled. Section one contains all necessary steps to ensure the pastor is properly prepared.

This project has a fourth strength: honoring God and His Word. Preachers preach, but not all preachers preach the Word of God. This pastor intends for this project to make him a better preacher of God's Word. The commitment necessary to complete the inventory, the time required to collect resources, the financial commitment to leave town, the emotional challenge of leaving family, and the dedication to preach God's Word every week of the year is honoring to God and His Word.

Limitations of the Inventory

There were two limitations noted by this pastor. The first involved the evaluation of the finished product and the second involved the ability to clarify all points in the inventory. While this pastor notes only two limitations, he is confident that others will arise as he implements the plan on an annual basis. Therefore, he humbly reserves the right to add, delete, and restructure as necessary for the glory of God.

The first limitation of the project inventory was in the evaluation. Seven pastors evaluated the inventory, but this pastor did not enclose the finished preaching calendar constructed for FLBC. In retrospect, including the preaching calendar may have generated responses from those who declined to complete the questionnaire. One of the seven pastors who completed the questionnaire agreed by requesting a copy of the finished preaching plan for FLBC. The second limitation of the project was the inability of this pastor to clarify the more abstract points on the inventory. Any list of fifty-nine

items has an inherent risk of being vague at certain points. Other than adding supplemental material, which is impractical, this pastor's only solution is to train those who desire to use the inventory.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Pastors need help in the pulpit. Sunday keeps coming. The challenge confronting every preaching pastor is what topic to preach the following Sunday. This is needlessly stressful. For those who do not follow a systematic plan for preaching, there is a better way. The primary goal of this project was to design a systematic approach to sermon planning through which this pastor develops an annual plan for Sunday sermons and the members of FLBC experience a comprehensive exposure to God's Word. This pastor created such an approach by constructing a fifty-nine item inventory. This pastor constructed two, one-year preaching calendars for FLBC by following the steps on the inventory.

This pastor established four ministry goals for this project. First, the preaching plan would provide a means to encourage the local congregation to recognize various topics addressed in Scripture. The completed preaching calendars, developed in this project, contain over twenty topics and themes. During the next twelve months, the congregation of FLBC will realize this broad exposure to Scripture. Second, while exposed to various topics, this pastor hopes the congregation will develop a deeper reliance upon the Bible to meet any need. As this pastor preaches the various sermon series in the preaching plan, one hopes the congregation will have their needs met in various capacities. Third, the pastor is equipped with a resource to develop other preachers. This pastor used the inventory to train one new pastor in his ministry because of this project. The fourth ministry goal was to promote unity between the pastor and the congregation. Through a well-prepared preaching plan, the pastor demonstrates weekly to

the congregation that he cares about their needs. This pastor hopes the congregational analysis completed during this project and later incorporated into the one-year calendars will ensure the pastor is meeting the needs of the people. The pastor must be perpetually sensitive to the needs of the congregation. While the congregational analysis will normally occur during the annual retreat, a significant change in regular attendees to the church may require a new analysis be formulated sooner.

The project had the added benefit of helping this pastor achieve three professional goals. First, the pastor enhanced his pulpit ministry by eliminating time spent searching for sermon ideas. The pastor will now devote this time to study. Second, the pastor experienced stress-relief because of this project. Instead of searching for weekly sermon ideas, the pastor spends his time in study. The weekly texts for the next twelve months are included in the preaching plans. Third, the pastor wanted to develop a better appreciation for those parts of the Bible he has often neglected in his preaching. The pastor achieved the third during the implementation of the project. As topics were considered, needs assessed, and the Scriptures searched, various passages were read as if for the first time. The completion of this project encouraged this pastor in understanding the value of using all parts of the Bible in his preaching plan.

The practical application of this project need not be limited to the pastor of FLBC. All pastors are capable of developing a one-year preaching calendar by using the project inventory. Novice pastors will benefit from the comprehensiveness of the inventory while more experienced pastors will benefit from the practical aspect of the document. The seasoned pastor will discover the inventory is easily adaptable to any preaching plan in

use. By using the project inventory, both will be encouraged to preach a variety of topics and themes that in turn will ensure their congregations receive the whole counsel of God.

The ability to select an appropriate text of Scripture to meet the real life needs of fallen man is crucial, which is why a preaching calendar inventory is essential. The volume of literature on the subject of planned preaching validates this fact. This project attempted to examine as much literature as possible to develop and complete this project. Lack of availability of some literature, especially dissertations related to the subject of preaching planning, and the time limitations to complete the project, prohibited the evaluation of all material on the subject. Still, the research was extensive and provided a plethora of information to establish an inventory. This pastor questions if one is capable of exhausting the available literature that exists on the subject of preaching planning. It seems wise to recommend that pastors continue evaluating approaches to their pulpit ministries. No plan is perfect, including this one. Still, it is this pastors' hope that many local churches will benefit from this project inventory now and for many years to come.

Appendix A

One-Year Preaching Calendars

**PREACHING CALENDAR FOR EARLY SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 2010 – AUGUST 2011**

SERMON SERIES – GPS-GOD’S POSITIONING SYSTEM

Date: 9-12-10
 Title: Where to? Choosing the Right Way
 Text: John 14:1-7

Date: 9-19-10
 Title: The Map- How God Directs Us
 Text: John 16:7-15

Date: 9-26-10
 Title: Recalculating- What Happens When You Miss a Turn
 Text: 1 John 1:8-10

Date: 10-3-10
 Title: Lost Satellite Reception
 Text: 2 Peter 1:3-11

Date: 10-10-10
 Title: My Favorites- Count Your Blessings!
 Text: James 1:16-17

Date: 10-17-10
 Title: Arriving Home- Time to Rest
 Text: Psalm 23

END OF SERIES**SERMON SERIES – CATCH THE FEVER-Being a Contagious Christian**

Date: 10-24-10
 Title: A Humble Heart
 Text: Mark 10:35-45

Date: 10-31-10
 Title: A Forgiving Heart
 Text: Matthew 18:21-35

Date: 11-7-10
 Title: A Loving Heart

Text: Matthew 5:43-48

Date: 11-14-10

Title: A Content Heart

Text: Philippians 4:10-13

Date: 11-21-10

Title: A Thankful Heart

Text: Luke 17:11-19

END OF SERIES

Date: 11-28-10 (Open for flexibility)

SERMON SERIES – THE “X-Mess”

Date: 12-5-10

Title: The Priorities of Christmas

Text: Matthew 2:1-12 Part 1

Date: 12-12-10

Title: The Praise of Christmas

Text: Matthew 2:1-12 Part 2

Date: 12-19-10

Title: The Presents of Christmas

Text: Matthew 2:1-12 Part 3

END OF SERIES

Date: 12-26-10 (Single message)

Title: Burying the Old and Planting the New

Text: Philippians 2:4-14

SERMON SERIES – DEFEATING OUR GIANTS

Date: 1-2-11

Title: Assessing the Giant

Text: 1 Samuel 17:26

Date: 1-9-11

Title: Remember Past Victories

Text: 1 Samuel 17:34-37

Date: 1-16-11

Title: Using God’s Armor

Text: 1 Samuel 17:38-47

Date: 1-23-11
 Title: Partial Victory Is No Victory At All
 Text: 1 Samuel 17:48-51

END OF SERIES

Date: 1-30-11 (Open for flexibility)

SERMON SERIES – 5 STEPS TO BECOMING *SPIRITUAL BOWL CHAMPION*¹⁵²

Date: 2-6-11
 Title: Draft Day
 Text: Acts 13:1-3

Date: 2-13-11
 Title: Staying on the Right Team
 Text: Acts 2:41-47

Date: 2-20-11
 Title: Set One Goal for the Season
 Text: Philippians 3:12-16

Date: 2-27-11
 Title: Follow the Playbook
 Text: James 1:19-25

Date: 3-6-11
 Title: Play Until the Whistle Blows
 Text: II Timothy 4:6-8

END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!

Date: 3-13-11
 Title: Slow Dismissal Secures our Downfall
 Text: Genesis 3:1-8

Date: 3-20-11
 Title: The Things That Make Us Go WOW!
 Text: James 1:13-18

Date: 3-27-11
 Title: Accepting Things at Face-Value
 Text: 1 John 2:15-17

END OF SERIES

¹⁵² This series is to be preached in proximity to Super Bowl.

SERMON SERIES FOR EASTER – THE RESUME OF THE REDEEMER-

Date: 4-3-11

Title: No Criminal Record

Text: Luke 23: 13-25

Date: 4-10-11

Title: Ability to Carry Heavy Loads

Text: Luke 23:32-38

Date: 4-17-11

Title: Able to Work Alone

Text: Luke 23:44-49

Date: 4-24-11 (Easter Sunday)

Title: Completes Tasks Before Leaving

Text: Matthew 28:1-10

END OF SERIES**SERMON SERIES – SLIPPERY SLOPES**

Date: 5-1-11

Title: Just Once Won't Hurt

Text: 2 Samuel 11:1-5

Date: 5-8-11

Title: I Can Fix It!

Text: 2 Samuel 11:6-27

Date: 5-15-11

Title: I Didn't See It Before!

Text: 2 Samuel 12: 1-19

Date: 5-22-11

Title: Help!

Text: 2 Samuel 12:20-24

END OF SERIES

Date: 5-29-11 (Open for flexibility)

SERMON SERIES – DOES JESUS CARE

Date: 6-5-11

Title: The Storms

Text: Mark 4:35-41

Date: 6-12-11

Title: Death

Text: John 11:1-44

Date: 6-19-11
 Title: Our Uncertainties
 Text: Matthew 11:1-6

Date: 6-26-11
 Title: Spiritual Needs
 Text: Matthew 9:35-38

Date: 7-3-11
 Title: Our Protection Against Evil
 Text: John 17:11-26

END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – GLOBAL WARMING

Date: 7-10-11
 Title: Why is There a Hell?
 Text: Isaiah 6:1-8

Date: 7-17-11
 Title: What is Hell Like?
 Text: Luke 16:19-31

Date: 7-24-11
 Title: Who is There?
 Text: Revelation 20:11-15

Date: 7-31-11
 Title: How Long Will It Last?
 Text: Matthew 25:31-46

END OF SERIES

Date: 8-7-11 (Open for flexibility)

SERMON SERIES – SECURITY LOCK? Why Christians Can't Go To Hell

Date: 8-14-11
 Title: An Impenetrable Lock
 Text: John 10:22-30

Date: 8-21-11
 Title: The Combination Lock
 Text: Romans 8:29-30

Date: 8-28-11
 Title: Case Hardened Steel
 Text: Romans 8:31-39

Date: 9-4-11
 Title: Down Payment
 Text: Ephesians 1:3-14
END OF SERIES

**PREACHING CALENDAR FOR LATE SERVICE
 SEPTEMBER 2010–AUGUST 2011**

SERMON SERIES – THE POWER OF GRACE

Date: 9-12-10
 Title: The Grace to Endure
 Text: 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

Date: 9-19-10
 Title: The Grace to Forgive
 Text: Philemon

Date: 9-26-10
 Title: The Grace to Give
 Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Date: 10-3-10
 Title: The Grace to Start Again
 Text: John 21:15-17

Date: 10-10-10
 Title: The Grace to Die
 Text: 2 Timothy 4:6-8
 Notes: Paul faced death with great courage knowing he was ready
END OF SERIES

Date: 10-17-10 (Open date for flexibility)

SERMON SERIES – DOES GOD STILL LOVE ME?

Date: 10-24-10
 Title: A Cheating Spouse
 Text: Hosea 1:1-11

Date: 10-31-11
 Title: An Angry Husband
 Text: Hosea 2:1-13

Date: 11-7-11
Title: A Desire to Reunite
Text: Hosea 2:14-23

Date: 11-14-10
Title: A Sacrificial Love
Text: Hosea 3:1-5
END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – THE LOVE CONNECTION

Date: 11-21-10
Title: The Value of Love
Text: 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

Date: 11-28-10
Title: The Look of Love
Text: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Date: 12-5-10
Title: The Length of Love
Text: 1 Corinthians 13:8-13
END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – CHRISTMAS AWAY FROM HOME

Date: 12-12-10
Title: He Had the Passion to Come
Text: Philippians 2:5-11

Date: 12-19-10
Title: He Had Prophecy to Fulfill
Text: Micah 5:2

Date: 12-26-10
Title: He Had Power to Do It
Text: Luke 1:26-33
Notes: The characteristics described in the text show his authority.
END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – CROSSROADS

Date: 1-2-11
Title: Uncertainty
Text: Matthew 4:18-22

Date: 1-9-11
Title: Worldly Concerns
Text: Luke 9:57-62

Date: 1-16-11
 Title: Fear
 Text: Matthew 10:24-33

Date: 1-23-11
 Title: Price too high
 Text: Luke 14:25-33

END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – BILL COLLECTOR

Date: 1-30-10
 Title: Sexual Sins
 Text: Psalm 51

Date: 2-6-11
 Title: Rejecting Christ
 Text: Matthew 27:1-10

Date: 2-13-11
 Title: Disobeying God
 Text: 1 Kings 11:1-8

Date: 2-20-11
 Title: Spiritual shortcuts
 Text: 1 Samuel 15

END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – THE GARDEN OF (W)EDEN

Date: 2-27-10
 Title: From Life to Death
 Text: Genesis 2:16-17; Romans 5:12-21

Date: 3-6-11
 Title: From Closeness to Separation
 Text: Genesis 3:9-15

Date: 3-13-11
 Title: From Blessing to Toil
 Text: Genesis 3:16-19

END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – CHANGING METHODS CHANGING LIVES

Date: 3-20-11
 Title: Willing Not To Be You
 Text: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Date: 3-27-11
Title: A Different Approach
Text: Acts 17:22-31

Date: 4-3-11
Title: Cultural Divides
Text: Acts 1:6-11
END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – THE TEARS OF EASTER

Date: 4-10-11
Title: Tears of Sorrow
Text: Luke 22:54-62

Date: 4-17-11
Title: Tears of Rejection
Text: Matthew 27:3-10

Date: 4-24-11 (Easter Sunday)
Title: Tears of Ignorance
Text: John 20:11-18

END OF SERIES

SERMON SERIES – HOMELAND SECURITY

Date: 5-1-11
Title: Profiling the Enemy
Text: 1 Peter 5:8

Date: 5-8-11
Title: Be Completely Surrendered to the Battle
Text: Joshua 24:15-28

Date: 5-15-11
Title: Securing our Borders
Text: 1 Peter 1:13-16

Date: 5-22-11
Title: Stay Organized
Text: Ephesians 5:21-6:4

END OF SERIES

Date: 5-29-11 (Open date for flexibility)

SERMON SERIES – THE CHRISTIAN AND GOVERNMENT

Date: 6-5-11

Title: Praying for the Opposite Party

Text: 1 Timothy 2:1-8

Date: 6-12-11

Title: Submission to the Things We Don't Like

Text: Romans 13:1-6

Date: 6-19-11

Title: Refusing to Replace God with Government

Text: Daniel 3:8-18

END OF SERIES**SERMON SERIES – THE DAY I DIED**

Date: 6-26-11

Title: You Can't Take It With You

Text: Luke 12:13-21

Date: 7-3-11

Title: There's More Beyond Today

Text: Deuteronomy 34:1-8

Date: 7-10-11

Title: Just Another Part of the Journey

Text: Acts 7:51-60

Date: 7-17-11

Title: He Never Let's Us Down

Text: Luke 8:40-56

Date: 7-24-11

Title: Absent From the Body

Text: Luke 16:19-31

END OF SERIES**SERMON SERIES – CAN I TRUST MY BIBLE?**

Date: 7-31-11

Title: Who Actually Wrote My Bible?

Text: 2 Peter 1:16-21

Date: 8-7-11

Title: The Last Word

Text: Acts 17:10-12

Date: 8-14-11
Title: A Book of Rules or Blessings
Text: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Date: 8-21-11
Title: Two Parts = One Whole
Text: Luke 24:13-27

Date: 8-28-11
Title: Who Could Remember All That Stuff?
Text: John 14:25-27

END OF SERIES

Appendix B

Preaching Calendar Construction Inventory

The pastor developed the following inventory after taking a five-day retreat to plan and construct a one-year preaching calendar. This itemized inventory has three sections. Section one is a list of preliminary steps necessary to construct the preaching calendar. The list of items in section two is the steps necessary to develop the sermons for the yearly preaching calendar. Section three lists the final steps necessary to ensure that the preaching calendar is manageable and useable throughout the year. The following steps are progressive in order. At the conclusion of the last item, the pastor will have a completed one-year preaching calendar that is ready for use in his local church preaching ministry.

It should be noted that some inventory items are actually subcategories of a previous number. For example, numbers 3-5 are subcategories of number 2. However, because each number in the inventory is essential to constructing a preaching calendar, this pastor decided to assign all inventory items a number whether or not the item was a subcategory to a larger heading. This helps ensure that anyone using the inventory will accomplish every step in the inventory.

SECTION ONE: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

1. Identify five consecutive days on the calendar to conduct a preaching planning retreat
Recommendation: Do this in early summer (May-June)
2. Select a location that is conducive to a successful retreat
Recommendation: The pastor needs to be away from family, church, and everyday routines. This requires traveling some distance away from his local church.
 3. Ensure computer and Internet access is available
 4. Location should be isolated from distractions
 5. Location should be in close proximity to food and basic needs
6. Begin personal spiritual preparation as soon as the retreat date is identified
Recommendation: Focus on being disciplined before the retreat as the retreat will require focus and discipline.
 7. Begin daily prayer specifically for the upcoming retreat
 8. Develop consistent study hours to prepare you for the five-day retreat and the demands it will be
 9. Keep a consistent daily schedule in the local church leading up to the retreat
10. Review all sermon subjects that were preached in the previous 12 months

Recommendation: If no files are available for review, the pastor should take a few hours and write from memory, check bulletins, and ask members to identify topics that were preached during the year.

11. Ask the following questions to determine what areas need more focus and which need less in the next 12 months

What doctrines were covered?

Were any books where covered at length?

What themes were covered?

Were there certain series or subjects that drew an especially positive or negative response?

Was there a balance in subjects?

12. Create a folder for sermon ideas as a resource to take on the preaching planning retreat. The further away the date for the retreat the larger the file should be.

Recommendation: If the retreat date is close, the pastor should brainstorm some ideas a few minutes each day so that there will be some ideas available when he begins calendar construction at the retreat.

13. Record notes and thoughts as ideas for sermons and topics arise

-ideas from outside reading

-sermons ideas of others (just for seed thoughts)

-general conversations with people

-cultural trends or “hot ideas”

-conversations with other pastors

-don't be limited to where ideas originate.

14. Determine the congregations' needs for the next 12 months.

Recommendation: Both the pastor and the people will view needs differently so both should be considered.

15. Consider including the following items in the assessment.

-notes from counseling sessions (be discreet)

-questionnaire to congregation (ask them)

-general interaction (what are people talking about?)

-demographics of the congregation

-current events

16. Establish preaching goals for the next 12 months

Recommendation: Document any topics, doctrines, or themes that need to be incorporated in the coming year. This should be placed in the sermon idea file (item #12).

17. Consider including the following items in the assessment.

-identify at least two doctrines to cover

- identify some “felt-needs” of congregation
- identify spiritual weaknesses of the local church (i.e. evangelism, giving)

18. Accumulate the needed resources to construct a preaching calendar

Recommendation: Limit the resources to what is personally practical and manageable.

19. Bible

- ensure multiple translations are available

20. Computer

- preferably one with Bible software
- internet capability is essential

21. Calendars

- Christian, church, secular, and denominational
- print out four blank calendars that to use in calendar construction

22. Bible helps

- favorite commentary
- Bible Summarized Handbook
- concordance
- topical index
- theology texts (basic/systematic)
- theological dictionaries

23. Sermon-idea file

(#12-13 above)

24. Office supplies

- various colored highlighters
- notepads
- pens/pencils w/sharpener

25. Prepare the local church for pastor’s retreat

Recommendation: Don’t try to pastor the local church while at the retreat.

26. Complete these items in advance to ensure that the time away is fruitful.

Meet with church leaders and staff

- solicit prayer
- develop emergency notification procedure

Schedule preachers to supply pulpit

- Sunday and mid-week

Schedule substitutes for teaching obligations

- Sunday school
- Colleges or small-groups

Prepare sermons in advance for your return

- especially important if the retreat ends on Saturday

Share with the congregation your general plans

-this will encourage them and demonstrate the pastor's commitment to God's Word

SECTION TWO: CALENDAR CONSTRUCTION

27. Organize the retreat location workspace

Recommendation: Arrive the night before you begin the actual retreat work. This allows the pastor to utilize the first day fully.

- Ensure computer and internet is connected
- Set goals for each day
 - be realistic- it is a five-day retreat
 - schedule times to eat
 - schedule a short walk if needed
 - avoid lengthy breaks
- Limit distractions
 - avoid using the television
 - turn off cell-phone
 - check email and messages during breaks
 - keep area neat
- Organize resources for easy access (#18 above)

28. Establish a procedure to keep the year in view at all times

Recommendation: Don't work from memory. Refer to the calendar to help determine when to begin and end series, when a special date requires attention, and to ensure that the series do not overlap.

29. Take one of the blank calendars and lay it out on a flat surface with all months in view. This will allow the preacher to view the entire year at all times and prevent him from schedule conflicts.

30. Select the special days that the pastor wants to address during the next 12 months.

Recommendation: Use caution when selecting special days as it will influence the placement and length of the sermon series.

Determine potential special day dates by consulting the following.

- Christian Year
 - Easter and Christmas
- Civic Calendar
 - important secular dates on internet
- Local church special days
 - anniversary
 - mission conferences
 - special meetings or conferences
 - communion Sunday

31. Document any personal dates that will require the pastor to be absent.
Recommendation: Make sure vacation is taken and accounted for
32. Create flexibility into the calendar in case of emergencies.
Recommendation: Don't connect sermon series consecutively for the entire year. Maintain flexibility in the calendar.
- Identify three Sundays that are not already selected as special-days (see #30)
 - These dates will allow for the calendar to shift should the need arise due to unforeseen events
 - Name these dates "open dates"
 - Select a text and topic for these dates
 - Only preach them if calendar doesn't change
33. Develop sermon series as desired and place them on the blank calendar.
Recommendation: Identify the priority time periods for each sermon series. Work from the highest priority dates to the lowest priority dates. (i.e. week after Labor Day would be a higher priority to begin preparing a sermon series than would the middle of summer)
34. Select the section of the calendar to begin a series
- The following dates should be considered for sermon series
 - Sunday after Labor Day
 - First Sunday of New Year
 - Sunday after Easter
 - Four weeks prior to Christmas
 - Remainder of calendar is equal in weight
35. Determine length of sermon series and theme
- Length of each series is determined by pastor
 - four to six weeks for each series is recommended
36. Develop all sermon series using the resources (#18-24)
Recommendation: Complete one series before starting another.
37. Select sermon series themes, doctrines, topics that are related to goals established for year (see #16-17)
- write ideas down on notepad
38. Review ideas from the "idea folder" (#12)
- Write ideas down on notepad
39. Evaluate congregational needs (see #14-15)
- Write ideas down as you evaluate each one
 - What would be the appropriate length for this series?
 - What would be the best theme or topic to address?

40. Select Text for series or sermon
 Recommendation: Use the resources above (#18) to complete the following steps.
41. Identify the text to explore for this particular sermon series?
42. Read the passage in at least two translations?
43. Record any initial observations about the text that seem significant to the series
 What is the writer talking about in the text?
 -What does the writer say about the subject he is talking about?
 -What eternal truth is this passage about?
 -Does the truth apply to your series theme?
 No? Find another text
 Yes? –Record the text, title, and theme. For each sermon in the series on notepad until the number of sermons in series is complete
44. Record series and sermons info on the calendar
 -Place series title on the calendar to maintain a working overview of the year
 Record the sermon series title in each Sunday block for the entire series
 -Return to calendar and select next place to begin series
 -Repeat process until calendar has only single days remaining
 -Record single and special day sermons
 -Record a sermon for the open dates
45. Continue this process until first calendar is complete
 - Construct additional calendars in the same way
46. Document series/stand-alone sermon information onto computer for later print-out
47. Review each series and sermon title
 Is it brief?
 Is it interesting?
 Is it clear?
 Is it appealing?
 Is it relevant?
 -Make preliminary changes to titles if needed
- 48.-Back up information on zip-drive

SECTION THREE: ADMINISTERING THE PREACHING PLAN

49. Organize the material for use upon return from preaching planning retreat
 Recommendation: Complete the following final filing system on the first day back in the office after returning from the retreat

50. Print two copies of the completed preaching calendar for each worship service
One copy will be filed and one copy will be kept at pastors' desk
51. Create a file for each sermon series in the preaching plan
 - each sermon series gets a separate folder (i.e. 10 series = 10 folders)
 - place the title for each series on the respective sermon series folder
52. Create a folder for each sermon in the sermon series
 - place the sermon title on each respective folder in the series (i.e. 5 sermons in a series = 5 folders inside the series folder)
 - add illustrations, notes, thoughts, and experiences to folders as appropriate during the year-
53. Use the preaching calendar material for the next 12 months.
Recommendation: Don't neglect the filing system. It is a tool that will make sermon preparation easier by creating a resource to hold ideas until it is time to prepare the sermon.
54. Review the copy of the preaching calendar at the time of weekly sermon preparation
55. Check the file for that weeks sermon to see if notes, thoughts, or illustrations have been added that may be used in the sermon
56. Schedule a monthly review of upcoming series for planning
57. Once the weekly sermon has been preached, replace all study notes used to prepare the sermon and completed sermon back in the respective file.
 - Leave all files in place until yearly calendar had been executed
 - The files will be reviewed prior to assembling next year's calendar (see #10 above)
58. Establish a file to record ideas for next year's preaching calendar construction
Recommendation: Place one folder at the rear of the sermon series files (see #46)
59. Create a file folder titled Future Sermon Ideas
 - Write down ideas, illustrations, and thoughts may be used in next year's planning
 - Don't limit what goes into the folder. Remember it is a folder for "ideas."

Appendix C

Evaluation Questionnaire and Cover Letter

Dear Pastor,

As pastors, we all face similar needs of providing a balanced preaching diet to our people, organizing our preaching to make the best use of our time, and developing preachers in our respective churches. For the past few years, I have been working to enhance my pulpit ministry in the local church. Specifically, I want to be a better preacher to the folks here at Faith Liberty. Generally, I want to edify the body of Christ by providing a resource to other preachers in their respective churches. As part of my doctoral work at Temple Baptist Seminary, I am developing a comprehensive and practical inventory that is the by-product of my work on a one-year preaching calendar for Faith Liberty Baptist Church. I am writing to ask for your help in filling out a short questionnaire that will allow me to adjust this inventory.

A questionnaire accompanies the inventory. The inventory items were a combination of research and personal application from my preaching planning retreat. The intent of the inventory is to save time and energy so that sermon preparation receives our greatest attention. By following the inventory, both the novice and seasoned pastor will be able to construct his own yearly preaching calendar that is both comprehensive and practical in his own pulpit ministry.

In order for me to complete the work on this inventory, I need some help. First, would you take time to review the inventory? Second, would you answer the short questionnaire that follows? Once complete, I am asking that you save the questionnaire on your computer and email it back to be in an attachment. Please email your responses to me at cclark9904@aol.com. Thank you for your help, and I will ensure that the final version of the inventory is emailed back to you for your use should you desire to incorporate it into your ministry. Should you have any questions, please call me.

By His grace,
Chuck Clark
Faith Liberty Baptist Church
Woodbridge, VA

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How long have you been a pastor?
2. What is the average number of sermons you preach in a week?
3. Do you currently plan your preaching?
4. How far in advance do you plan your sermons?
5. Have you ever been instructed in preparing a one-year preaching calendar?
6. Does the format of the attached inventory seem easily readable to you? If not, please explain.
7. Are any of the sentences or words foreign to you or unclear in meaning? If so, please give the number of the item with a brief explanation.
8. Do any of the items on the inventory seem impractical or unrealistic for your particular ministry? If so, please explain.
9. Does the list seem too long to you? If so, what would you eliminate or combine?
10. Does the list seem too short? Please explain.
11. Is there an item on the list that you feel is more helpful to you in your particular ministry? Please give the inventory item number.
12. Would this inventory be useful to you in your ministry? If not, please briefly explain.
13. Do you have any additional comments that you feel would make this list better in any way?

Appendix D

Audience Evaluation

Size

The size of the current group of listeners varies with the time of service.

8:30 service is smaller than 11am service

Total audience on Sunday average just over 100

Demographics

Age- majority over 40 (60%), rest are equally divided between 20-30's and teens

Gender- slightly more women than men, but fairly equal

Congregational culture-primarily church background where preaching was taken at face value. Bible knowledge limited to few areas, but seemingly likes to learn. Strong desire to understand the Bible

Education- majority are high school education. Some college graduates and military experience.

Spiritual Condition of Audience

Majority are professing Christians. Many have extensive church backgrounds. Most come from Baptist background, but some from other denominations.

Congregational Needs

Corporate Needs-become more evangelistic, more outwardly focused toward the lost, greater participation in affairs of the church, more willing to be used by God on an individual basis, better understanding the difference between doctrine and preference. Learn how to address modern culture instead of repeating failed methods.

Personal Needs-Aging members struggling with health related issues, immorality among young people, financial struggles, single parenting, poor marriage relationships.

Appendix E

Preaching Goals and Objectives

What am I hoping God will do in the lives of the people during the next twelve months through my preaching?

Cognitive Changes

Learn two major doctrines

Trust God more and be able to articulate that trust in daily conversation

Learn how to present their faith in everyday life

Become firmly grounded in essentials of faith

Attitudinal Changes

Become more willing to change (try things that make one uncomfortable)

Become more outwardly focused

Be contagious with a friendly and caring demeanor

Be willing to do whatever it takes (biblically) to grow

Be more accepting of others

Behavioral Changes

Participate in outreach functions faithfully

Give more generously to the ministry

Become more evangelistic in daily life

Bring neighbors and co-workers to church

Become active in the community through service

Develop meaningful relationships with people they are unfamiliar with in the church

Regularly demonstrate “acts of love” during the week

Become a more prayerful church body

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