

Preaching the Gospel

A monthly magazine for preachers and those who want to preach.

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SO YOU WANT TO BE A PREACHER?

Jefferson David Tant, jdtant3@juno.com

Preaching is not a “One-man show”

What is a preacher? He is a servant, not the master. He is not the ringmaster of the show. He is not the “be all, end all.” He is just a humble servant, a sinner saved by the grace of God. Even the apostle Paul, as great as we think he was, did not have too high an opinion of himself. *“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all”* (I Tim. 1:15).

If there is one thing I have been careful of in my life of preaching, it is that I did not want the church to be “my church.” I am aware that there have been a few through the years who made such an accusation when things didn’t go their way, but their assertions were disabused by the vast majority of the Christians who were part of the body.

Obviously, there are situations in smaller congregations where the preacher must play many roles. There have been occasions where I have led singing, served the Lord’s Table, preached and prayed. Yet even in those situations, I did not set out to make arbitrary decisions. In beginning the work where I have been the past three-plus decades, we had about 12 members at the start. Besides myself, as I recall, there were four men—three young and one elderly. None had any experience in leadership roles, and in fact some were fairly new converts. But in making decisions about the work, we discussed things together.

In the absence of elders, the temptation may be stronger for the preacher to make arbitrary decisions. But this will never help men to develop leadership qualities, and lends itself to the “pastor” system that we see in so many denominations.

The large mega-churches that are growing are often cult-like in their focus on a charismatic preacher. These preachers get so full of themselves that they are setting themselves up for a huge fall. We have seen the headlines through the years—sexual immorality, financial shenanigans, dictator-style rule.

I consider myself an important part in the work of the congregation, but I am just one of many parts. In addition to being a preacher, I am also one of the elders. But I am not the “head elder.” When we have congregational meetings to present plans to the church, or discuss certain matters of mutual interest, I generally let one of the other elders make the presentation. When we have a meeting of the elders and deacons, I am usually not the “chairman.” Nor do I feel I am the only one capable of making announcements.

At the present time, we have a young man sharing the responsibilities of preaching and teaching. I don’t have to preach most of the time. In fact, we share equally when I am in town. But in addition to that, we

work to develop the talents of others. Every third Sunday one of our young men preaches. The youngest has been 12 years old, and he did a very good job. Including all males who have the ability to preach, we have perhaps 20, out of a total membership of about 130.

We cannot depend on the schools to train our preachers. We must depend on local congregations, and that may mean that the local preacher must step aside from the pulpit from time to time to prepare and encourage young men to fulfill this stewardship. This will also involve some study time with these young men to instill both knowledge and skills. A doctor must spend much time in preparing his knowledge and skills for his important role. And although it may not take six years to prepare a man to preach, it should be obvious that time is needed. And who better to do this teaching than one who is already experienced? –*Jefferson David Tant*

Online With Joel

Padfield.com



Padfield.com is a website operated by David Padfield, a preacher in Zion, Illinois. On his website he provides mostly Adobe Reader PDF documents and images. He also has a collection of debates and reviews of debates that can be read online.

Brother Padfield provides some good pictures from the Bible lands. I used his picture of a stone manger when I was teaching young people about the birth of Jesus. These images can be useful for getting the environment of the stories we read into our minds.

Brother Padfield provides sermon outlines, tracts, and class material in PDF format. Many of the sermons incorporate historical knowledge of the people in the stories we read and the places where they lived. This adds to our understanding of those stories and various phrases that are used in the scriptures.

The tracts are on a nice range of topics such as abortion, homosexuality, faith healers, and authority. Each tract is designed to be printed on both sides of one sheet of paper. He also provides church bulletin articles on his website which share a benefit with the tracts. They both deal with an important subject in a small amount of space. This forces the author to use only his best arguments, does not waste your time with fluff, and makes the material easier to read than outlines.

The class material that I have seen is very simple (in a good way). It consists mostly of questions for the students. This means the teacher will still need to put together his or her own class outline to be able to teach the class. I am sure that the teacher can get a good idea of some things to emphasize from the questions in the lessons.

Basically, I would categorize Padfield.com as a website which provides good resources for teachers and preachers but is not intended to do much teaching itself. Almost everything on the website is designed to help good Bible students, but it does not do their work for them. I like this type of website and I believe that some of us can use the materials provided to good effect.

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Request *Preaching the Gospel Magazine* from: bible@netactive.co.za.
Share the magazine with others. We want it to be as useful as possible. PKW

Pure From the Blood of All Men

John T. Lewis

(Bro. Lewis was a noted gospel preacher in Birmingham, Alabama. until his death, which was in the 1960's, I think.)

The preacher who tries to show you that your hope is in the gospel, and that in disobeying the gospel you are cutting yourself loose from the only hope men can have, is your friend. I would rather have thousands say to me at the judgment, "We heard you preach and, you hurt our feelings," than have just one lost soul say, "I heard you preach, but you did not tell me the truth."

Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, "**Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.**" (Acts 20:26-27). That means if he had *not* "declared all the counsel of God" he would not have been free from their blood.

"And when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (Acts 18:5-6).

Yes, those Jews got mad at Paul because he told them the truth, but he left their blood upon their own heads. I hope and pray that I may come to the end of my earthly pilgrimage just as free from the blood of my fellow travelers as Paul was. I cannot do that if I handle the word of God deceitfully.

It makes no difference how good you are. You either obey the gospel, or you will perish (**2 Thess. 1:7-9**). So if you want to know what is going to become of all these good people who have not obeyed the gospel, the Lord has told you. Therefore, the only sensible thing to do is to try to show all responsible beings — good and bad alike — the folly in thinking they can be saved without obedience to the gospel.

--via the *Charlottesville Beacon* (North Carolina)—www.uvachurch.com

Books Which Help Preachers

This is the first in a series of articles in which I will review books which I think are profitable for preachers to buy and study. I solicit lists of books from other preachers. Please send a list with your comments, please.

YOUR BIBLE: This should be your constant study. Read, and read, and read. You should have a copy in your first language if it is not English. And you should have a good English translation. Recommended translations are: (1) **The New American Standard Bible (NASB)**. This is the Bible I use constantly. It is careful in its translation, and it translates from the best Greek and Hebrew texts. When the translators have inserted words in order to complete the meaning of a sentence, the inserted words are in *italics*. Its English is usually clear, though the one who uses English as a second language will have to use a dictionary frequently. (2) **The English Standard Version (ESV)**. This is a very new translation which is accurate. It reads a bit smoother than the NASB. It does not use italics, so it is not possible to know when the translator has inserted words to complete the meaning of a phrase. In some places it seems to me to be a better translation than the NASB, in other places it is worse—and I think in a few places that it completely changes the proper meaning of a passage. Over-all, though, it is a very good translation. It is cheaper to buy than the NASB and more likely to be available in countries other than the U.S. (3) **The New King James Bible (NKJ)**. This is the favorite of many Christians. It is based on the same Greek and Hebrew texts which were used by the

translators of the original King James Bible (1611). I think this is a drawback because since that time many very ancient copies of Bible books have been discovered and a purer text has resulted from comparing these texts with one another. However, this is a recommended translation.

I have found that the New International Version (NIV) is not reliable. Most other modern speech translations are worse. My strong recommendation is for you to buy one of the three translations above.

Cross references: Be sure that your study Bible has cross references. These are found in the center column or on the margin of the page. Here you will find other verses which deal with the same subject as is found in the verses you are reading. Often these are very helpful.

Maps: I constantly check the maps in my Bible. Try to find a Bible with good maps.

Other Bible Features: Concordances (lists of words with the verses where they are found) which are in Bibles are very limited. I do not find them useful. Some Bibles have other things which are supposed to help the student. Usually they don't help much.

CONCORDANCE: A concordance lists the words in the Bible. Under each word it lists the verses where that word is found together with a phrase from the verse. Second only to your Bible, this is the most useful book you will own.

There are two types. The first is the B-I-G book which lists every word in the Bible and every verse where that word is used. This is called an **EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE**. The two standard ones are **Strong's** and **Young's**. They list the words in the KJV. Both are very good. I like Strong's better, but that is just a personal preference. There is also an exhaustive concordance of the NASB, but it is expensive.

The second is a smaller book which lists most of the words of the KJV with many of the places where the words occur. This kind of concordance is usually good enough most of the time. **Peloubet's Concordance** is of this kind.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH by Roy Cogdill: This small book consists of 52 outlined lessons dealing with almost everything the New Testament says about the church. I have said, only half-jokingly, that a man cannot be a gospel preacher without this book. This is a book for study, not reading. It is packed with scripture references which require reading and study. The preacher who studies this book carefully will have a wealth of useful knowledge to help him in every situation.

Joel has found that this book is available free on the internet. It can be downloaded from www.religionguide.org/biblestudyguide/church in pdf format. There is also a condensed version available at this same address.

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