

THE PRIORITY OF PERSUASIVE PREACHING Part II: Implementation

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To what extent should biblical expositors seek to persuade today's listeners? Part I of this study established the biblical foundation for persuasion as an expected element of biblical preaching. Assuming the Scriptures challenge the preacher to proclaim God's Word persuasively (demonstrated in Part I: Foundation), how is it to be accomplished? This question is answered by examining three integral elements toward persuasive preaching. First, general principles set forth in the Bible itself concerning the means of persuasion are identified. Second, specific approaches identified in modern persuasion theory are correlated with biblical principles in execution. Third, integral to the union of biblical principles and persuasion theory is a satisfactory ethical approach to the issue of persuasive preaching, which distinguishes persuasion from manipulation.

Introduction

Lamenting the loss of effective argumentation in preaching in 1963, Whitesell observed that the trend in that direction began before 1911 (Whitesell, 1963, p. 63). In contrast to that, he advocated that “there is still a place for argument in preaching, especially when we think of it as a means to persuasion” (Ibid., p. 64). Vines and Shaddix are examples of modern homileticians who identify that the motive of biblical preaching is “to see people respond positively to God’s Word,” the “eliciting of behavioral change,” and that “every sermon must be prepared and delivered with the intent of persuading people to say yes to the message” (Vines and Shaddix, 1999, p. 26). Fabarez is another contemporary writer who strongly asserts that a “good sermon is one that bears fruit--a message from God that transforms believers’ lives,” and that we “as pastor-teachers, need to focus on our call to preach messages that *change lives*” (italics his, Fabarez, 2002, p. 9). Writers such as Vines and Shaddix and Fabarez, while they correctly focus on many positive elements of expository preaching, do not explicate a direct persuasion approach which will accomplish the goals they affirm. This paper seeks to take steps in that direction.

Biblical Principles of Persuasion

Various words related to the subject of persuasion appear in the Scriptures in numerous texts of the Old and New Testaments. Part I of this study (presented at last year’s EHS meeting) specifically examined the various NT words related to persuasion, including their usage in secular literature. Those words are: *peivqw* (*peith_*), *ajnapeivqw* (*anapeith_*), *peiqovz* (*peithos*), *peismonhv* (*peismon_*), and *pepoivqhsiz* (*pepoith_sis*).

In addition to the NT words, specific OT words are relevant to the study: the verbs, **ЯЗЮЙЯ** (*ch_zaq*), **ТШС** (*sûth*), **рхЮПЯ** (*p_tzar*), **чтЯПЯ** (*p_hth_h*), **уСИЮВЯ** (*sh_sa*); and the noun **ЙЯЮЛЭ** (*leqach*). A brief consideration of these terms shows the breadth of the idea of persuasion as it was practiced in ancient times. This broad use of the concept is consistent with the comparable Greek terms of the NT.

New Testament Principles for Persuasion

Part I of this study focused on the NT emphasis concerning the validity of persuasion. There it was demonstrated that persuasion can be by argument, by emotion, by character of the speaker, and by style of speaking. It was also shown that the outcomes of persuasion include yielding or being obedient to someone as a resulting action of persuasion, and of exercising belief or trust because of being persuaded. Furthermore, the NT stresses that persuasion should not rest solely on the self-reliance of oratorical skills, but should be done in a clear and cogent style in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the message and not the preacher (Sunukjian, 1972, pp. 171-175).

Old Testament Principles for Persuasion

The verb **ЯЗЮЙЯ** (*ch_zaq*) is quite common in the OT, being used some 82 times in the Qal, 64 in the Piel, 118 in the Hiphil, and 27 in the Hithpael. “The basic meaning of this word in the Qal stem is ‘be(come) strong.’ In general, the Piel is causative of the Qal, ‘make strong,’ ‘strengthen.’ The Hiphil is ‘take hold of,’ ‘seize,’ while the Hithpael stem is ‘strengthen oneself,’ hence, ‘take courage’” (Weber, 1980, p. 276; see also HALOT, 1994, pp. 302-303). The most frequent use of the word in the Qal and Piel is being strong in battle, in warfare. The particular usage of the term related to this study is found in 2 Kings 4:8, “Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded (Hiphil) him to eat food” (Scripture quotations are from NASB unless otherwise noted). BDB renders the word “prevail upon” in this text (BDB, 1977, p. 305). HALOT identifies the Hiphil emphasis as “seize, grasp,” and concerning 2 Kings 4:8 place the word under the meaning “keep hold of” as a subcategory with the emphasis “to urge” (HALOT, 1994, p. 303). The term, therefore, stresses how the woman of Shunem with great determination “seizes” Elisha with her persuasive words to accomplish her goal to have him remain with them. The principle of persuasion emphasized here is: **be determined to accomplish your goal.**

The verb **ТШС** (*sûth*) occurs some eighteen times in the OT. Patterson observes that in the majority of its uses “the verb has an evil connotation,” and that “there is also the underlying idea of cunningness in this root” (TWOT, 1980, p. 621). The verb is instructive, however, in its use in 2 Kings 18:32 (and the parallel texts of 2 Chron. 32:11, 15; Isa. 36:18) in Rabshakeh’s speech at the wall of Jerusalem warning the Jews that Assyria would certainly defeat them, and that they should “hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver you” (AV). The NASB and the NIV both use “mislead” instead of “persuade” in this text, which

agrees with HALOT (1995, p. 749). From Rabshakeh's perspective, Hezekiah was being cunning and evil in his intentions, since the Rabshakeh's "ideas reflect a polytheistic and pagan

concept of God" (Constable, 1985, p. 575). However, from God's perspective, Hezekiah's persuasive appeals to his people were appropriate and godly. A principle to be gleaned here concerning persuasion is: **the motive behind persuasion must be godly even if misunderstood by people.**

The next OT verb to examine is **רָחַץ** (*p_tzar*) (Judg. 19:7) which only occurs seven times in Scripture. BDB identifies the basic meaning of the term as to "push, press" (BDB, 1977, p. 823), and observe how it is used in a physical sense in Genesis 19:9 as the men of Sodom "pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door" seeking to attack the "men" (angels) who were with Lot. The word is used more frequently in its metaphorical sense of "urge," or pressing upon someone by means of persuasive words (see HALOT, 1996, p. 954). This is its usage in Genesis 19:3 when Lot "urged" the angels to stay with him, and in 33:11 when Jacob "urged" Esau to take his gift of animals (cf. also Judg. 19:7; 2 Ki. 2:17; 5:16). Concerning this word's use in Genesis 19:3, Wenham asserts that it means "to urge, to insist," and adds, "Perhaps here 'he twisted their arm' would be an equivalent English idiom" (Wenham, 1994, p. 54). The persuasion principle gleaned from this word is: **be persistent until your goal is reached.**

The verb **חָתַן** (*p_hth_h*) occurs some 27 times in the OT and usually has the negative idea of "enticement" (Ex. 22:15) or in Deuteronomy 11:16 of "deception," being "gullible" (HALOT, 1996, p.984). Goldberg observes that "The basic verb idea is 'be open, spacious, wide,' and might relate to the immature or simple one who is open to all kinds of enticement, not having developed a discriminating judgment as to what is right or wrong" (TWOT, 1980, p. 742). In 1 Kings 22:20, 21, 22, the verb is translated "persuade" (AV), and in Proverbs 25:15 it is rendered "persuaded" (AV, NASB, NIV). The references in 1 Kings 22 fit with Goldberg's assessment. Such is not the case with the Proverbs 25:15 use, "By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue breaks the bone." Clifford correctly observes that "The verb for 'to persuade' is negative ('to deceive, seduce') in its other four occurrences in Proverbs, but it has a positive meaning here and in Hos. 2:16 and Judg. 14:15" (Clifford, 1999, p. 225). Garrett explains the parallelism in this verse: "The bones are the most rigid parts inside of a person, and fracturing the bones here refers to breaking down the deepest, most hardened resistance to an idea a person may possess" (Garrett, 1993, p. 207). Zuck concisely sets forth that this persuasiveness which overcomes resistance in a ruler is through a person's words: "Words should be spoken with restraint (10:19; 11:12; 13:3; 15:28; 16:23; 17:27; 21:23; 29:20), and should be fitting or appropriate to the occasion (10:32; 15:1, 23; 16:24; 25:11, 15)" (Zuck, 1995, p. 108). The principle of persuasion of Proverbs 25:15, therefore, is: **words must be appropriate to the occasion to overcome resistance.** While the entire subject of speech and words in the book of Proverbs has relevance to the study of persuasion, that subject is beyond the scope of this paper.

The final verb to examine is **שָׂא** (*sh_sa'*) which is used nine times in the OT, with the five in the Qal "describing the cloven hoof of quadrupeds" (Austel, 1980, p. 944). The other

four uses are in the Piel, with three of them referring to the tearing apart of an animal. The unusual use of the term occurs in 1 Samuel 24:7 where “David persuaded his men with *these* words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul.” Concerning the use of the word in this verse, BDB observe that “tear” “gives too violent a meaning; prob. crpt. for word = *restrain*, or the like” (BDB, 1977, p. 1042). HALOT observes that this is a difficult use of the word, and provides several

suggestions; their preference is for the meaning, “to lead on with chiding words” (HALOT, 1999, p. 1609). A fuller approach to grasping the significance of this verse, however, is presented by Gordon: “the Hebrew has ‘cleft . . . with words’, which is both more colourful and worthy of better treatment in the versions, ancient and modern. The addition of ‘with words’ (not ‘with *these* words’, as RSV) suggests that we have a figurative usage comparable with the English ‘tear in pieces’, ‘excoriate’, etc. NEB ‘reproved . . . severely’ is dull but adequate. For the expression we might compare Hosea 6:5 (‘I have hewn them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth’) and perhaps also the use of *dichotomein* (‘cut in two’) in Matthew 25:41 and Luke 12:46” (Gordon, 1986, p. 180). The verb’s emphasis is on David’s emotional fervor as he uses words to persuade his men not to kill Saul when the opportunity for such action was at hand. The principle for persuasion here is: **be outwardly fervent in your persuasion endeavor.**

A Hebrew noun also conveys the idea of persuasion, and that is the word **ЙЯЮЛЭ** (*leqach*). While the verb root of this noun occurs over 1,000 times in the OT, this noun only appears nine times. Its primary emphasis is that of “learning, teaching” (BDB, 1977, p. 544) but it also includes the idea of “teaching-power,” which is “persuasiveness” (BDB, 1977, p. 544). In Proverbs 7:21; 16:21, 23, the word is used of “the art of persuasion” (HALOT, 1995, p. 535). Proverbs 7:21 uses the term of a harlot, “With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.” The persuasive power of words is obvious in 7:21 as the “designation of the woman’s enticing description as a didactic discourse or argument” (Toy, 1904, p. 155). The persuasion principle for godly proclamation is: **do not use persuasion to achieve selfish immoral ends.**

In contrast to the negative emphasis of 7:21, the noun **ЙЯЮЛЭ** (*leqach*) occurs in a positive sense in 16:21, “The wise in heart will be called discerning, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.” Concerning the relationship of the two halves of 16:21, Briggs observes that the “internal qualities [of a wise heart] gain increasing acceptance from external gifts [of persuasive speech], and that “when we are enabled to clothe our thought in a flowing style and clear expression” then this “doubtless gives a great advantage in communicating knowledge” (Briggs, 1987, p. 241). The “sweetness of speech” refers to “gracious and friendly words” which results in teaching that “will be well received because it is persuasive” (Ross, 1991, p. 1009). Proverbs 16:23 furthers the emphasis on the positive use of the noun **ЙЯЮЛЭ** (*leqach*), “The heart of the wise teaches his mouth, And adds persuasiveness to his lips.” Delitzsch correctly notes that “the contents of the learning, and the ability to communicate it, are measured by the wisdom of the heart of him who possesses it” (Delitzsch, 1968, p. 348). The principle applicable to persuasion is: **a godly inner character [ethos] combined with appropriate communication gains acceptance.**

Biblical Principles Summarized

In summary, the basic principles concerning persuasion presented in the terminology of the OT and NT are:

1. Persuasion can be accomplished:
 - a. Through logical argumentation; this is the clear and direct exposition of God's Word (for its persuasive power, see: Ps. 19:7; Isa. 55:11; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12, etc.) through rational presentation (see Acts 17:2, 17; 18:14, 19, etc.).
 - b. Through emotional appeal.
 - Be outwardly fervent in your persuasion endeavor.
 - c. Through personal character (ethos) (cf. 1 Thess. 2:1-12 for Paul's emphasis on the inner character of the preacher).
 - (1) The motive behind persuasion must be godly, even if misunderstood by people.
 - (2) Do not use persuasion to achieve selfish immoral ends.
 - d. Through style of speaking.
 - (1) It is not by self-reliance on oratorical skills.
 - (2) It should be clear and cogent.
 - Words must be appropriate to the occasion.
 - (3) It should be in dependence on the Holy Spirit.
 - (4) It should emphasize the message, and not the preacher.
 - A godly inner character combined with appropriate communication gains acceptance.
2. The outcomes of persuasion:
 - a. The means to the goals.
 - "Persuasive speaking urges us to choose from among options" (Osborn and Osborn, 1994, p. 359).
 - (1) Be determined to accomplish the goal.
 - (2) Be persistent until the goal is reached.
 - b. The identification of the goals.
 - "Persuasive speaking asks the audience for more commitment than does informative speaking" (Osborn and Osborn, 1994, p. 359).
 - (1) Exercising belief or trust in the Lord.
 - (2) Yielding to, and/or being obedient to, God's will and Word.

Structuring Persuasive Messages

In the process of structuring persuasive messages, some specific items need to be included. To begin, a definition of persuasion is required. Most, if not all, preachers have ideas as to what persuasion is. However, providing a precise definition of the concept is somewhat elusive.

Defining Persuasion

Some definitions of persuasion are lengthy, seeking to be inclusive. For example, a college textbook on persuasion defines “persuasion as a process composed of five dimensions.

Persuasion is 1. the **process** of preparing and presenting 2. verbal and nonverbal messages 3. to autonomous individuals 4. in order to alter or strengthen 5. their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors” (emphasis theirs, Woodward and Denton, 2000, p. 5). Another textbook asserts, “Persuasion involves one or more persons who are engaged in the activity of creating, reinforcing, modifying, or extinguishing beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations, and/or behaviors within the

constraints of a given communication context” (Gass and Seiter, 2003, p. 34). Yet again, others assert that “Persuasive speaking is the process of producing oral messages that (1) increase personal commitment, (2) modify beliefs, attitudes, or values, or (3) induce action” (Gronbeck, et al, 1994, 409).

In contrast, some definitions are brief and general: “Persuasion is responsible communication leading to mutually desirable change or resistance to change” (Jabusch and Littlejohn, 1995, p. 107); or, persuasion is “the process of changing or reinforcing attitudes, beliefs, values, or behavior” (Beebe and Beebe, 1994, p. 340). In even greater contrast, O’Keefe seeks to de-emphasize the whole concept of definition in order to recognize the “fuzzy edges” involved in persuasion. He writes that persuasion is “a successful intentional effort at influencing another’s mental state through communication in a circumstance in which the persuadee has some measure of freedom. But it should be apparent that constructing such a definition would not eliminate the fuzzy edges of the concept of persuasion. Such a definition leaves open to dispute just how much success is required, just how intentional the effort must be, and so on” (O’Keefe, 2002, p.5).

Other definitions could be multiplied, but these are sufficient to set basic parameters to the concept. Assuming that the goal of preaching is ultimately to effect change in the listeners to bring them into conformity with the will and Word of God, then the definition by Woodward and Denton is sufficient as a foundation for our consideration in this paper.

Homiletics books generally consider the process of preparing and presenting biblical messages, and commonly do so from the perspective of being true to the exposition of the biblical text(s). Indeed, such is the emphasis in my own book, Biographical Preaching: Bringing Bible Characters to Life (chs. 4 & 5 in particular). At the same time, homileticians often stress the need for preaching to effect change in the listeners (as in chapter 3 of my book).

An omission often found in homiletics books, however, is how to prepare sermons with a persuasive goal specifically in view. With this goal in view, I suggest the following modified definition for persuasive preaching: **Persuasive preaching is (1) the process of preparing biblical, expository messages using a persuasive pattern, and (2) presenting them through verbal and nonverbal communication means (3) to autonomous individuals who can be convicted and/or taught by God’s Holy Spirit, (4) in order to alter or strengthen (5) their attitudes and beliefs toward God, His Word, and other individuals, resulting in their lives being effectively transformed into the image of Christ.**

Implementing Persuasion

Various organizational patterns are suggested by communication scholars to effect persuasion. Gass and Seiter, for example, consider such integral elements as: implicit and explicit conclusion; quantity versus quality of arguments; repetition and mere exposure; order effects; primacy and recency effects; inoculation, message-sidedness, and forewarning; sequential persuasion; logical and emotional appeals; visual persuasion; and even esoteric forms, such as subliminal, music, and aroma (Gass and Seiter, 2003, see chs. 9-15). For preaching purposes, however, four basic organizational patterns can be effectively used to structure persuasive

sermons: problem-solution, refutation, cause-effect, and motivated sequence (Beebe and Beebe, 1994, see ch. 16). Each of these will be briefly explained, and a sample sermon outline presented to illustrate it.

Problem-Solution. The problem-solution type of sermon will have two main emphases: a statement of the problem, and a presentation of the solution to the problem. Political candidates often use this approach. “The problem-solution pattern works best when a clearly evident problem can be documented and a solution can be proposed to deal with the evils of the well-documented problem” (Beebe & Beebe, 1994, p. 383; see also Lucas, 1995, pp.180-181, 351-353). Biblical preaching often deals with this type of issues. Indeed, probably all of the “life situation” or the “felt needs” sermons fall into this category.

An example of this approach is seen in John Ortberg’s (teaching pastor at Willow Creek Community Church) sermon on April 12-13, 2003, titled, “Why Promiscuity?” His four section sermon actually fits well into these two broad categories. Under what can be called the “**Problem**” element, he discussed three areas: [a] “some observations about sexuality;” [b] the questions, “Why? It’s just a simple act, involving body parts and nerve endings. It’s biological. Why does it have this power?” and [c] “It’s not just biological; the Bible says it’s spiritual.” Under what can be called the “**Solution**” element, he discussed his fourth area: “To honor God’s design for sexuality means to reserve sexual intimacy for marriage” (www.willowcreek.org; 7/17/2003). The persuasive goal for the sermon is for biblical obedience to the sacred commitment of marital intimacy.

Refutation. The refutation type of presentation also logically divides into two broad categories: identification of the objections to your position, and refuting those objections through evidence and argumentation. “You would be most likely to use a refutation organizational strategy when your position is being attacked; or, if you know what your listeners’ chief objections are to your persuasive proposal, you could organize your speech around the arguments your listeners hold” (Beebe and Beebe, 1994, p. 384; see also Brydon and Scott, 1994, p. 220). Books and articles (and even Part I of this study) often follow the refutation model; sermons can also adopt it (see its use in texts such as, Acts 26:25-29; Rom. 3:5-31; 6:1-4; 9:19-21).

A sermon by A. T. Robertson, titled “Asaph’s Recovery from Pessimism” (from Psalm 73) basically follows this approach (Robertson, 1979, pp. 56-64). The basic issue refuted is that living an ungodly life has benefits that you miss when living a godly life. The **identification** of the objections to living a godly life are presented in his first point: “The Psalmist’s Absence from the Sanctuary Gave Him a Wrong View of Life.” Here he identifies how the wicked enjoy temporal prosperity, seem to be free from trouble, show insolence towards others, and even talk against God, and have no negative results from it. The **refutation** comes in his second point,

“Return to the Sanctuary Gave Asaph the True Angle of Vision” (wherein he shows that the final end of the wicked is disaster), and in his third point, “And Good Now Came to Asaph” (wherein he shows Asaph’s trust and his ultimate reception into God’s glory). The persuasive goal of the sermon is to continue to trust God through life’s trials since He is conforming us to His glorious image.

Cause and Effect. The cause and effect message logically divides into two broad classifications, and can be presented in alternate ways (Beebe and Beebe, 1994, pp. 384-85; see also Zeuschner, 1993, p. 222-223). A common approach is to start by showing effect(s), either negative or positive, and then to follow that by identifying the cause(s) of that effect. However, it can also be reversed, noting the cause(s) at the beginning, followed by the effect(s).

I will illustrate this with one of my sermons on John 2:1-11, Jesus’ first miracle when He turned the water into wine. Under the broad category of the cause, I included the first three points of the sermon: [a] Jesus is the One who supplies needed wine (2:1-5); [b] Jesus is the One who supplies abundant wine (2:6-7); and [c] Jesus is the One who supplies better wine (2:8-10). The category of effect was presented in point four: Jesus is the One who supplies purposeful wine (2:11). The persuasive goal of the sermon is reached in point four since the effect of the miracle is explained in 2:11 as showing forth His glory in order to bring people to faith in Him.

Motivated Sequence. The motivated sequence was developed into its present form by Alan H. Monroe, and first copyrighted in 1935 (Monroe, 1955). However, I believe that Paul’s basic approach in the book of Romans follows this primary sequence of thought, and he obviously precedes Monroe’s copyright date. Although Monroe intended it to be used for all types of speech (including entertaining, informing, stimulating, convincing, and actuating), it has continued to be used more in persuasive speeches than any other. It follows five organizational steps:

- (1) Attention--get the audience’s attention; this is the “introduction.”
- (2) Need--present clear reasons why the subject concerns this audience, what Bryan Chapell calls the “Fallen Condition Focus” (Chapell, 1994, pp. 40-44); this can also be included in the introduction, or in the first part of the body of the sermon.
- (3) Satisfaction--demonstrate how the need can be met and satisfied; this makes up the body of the sermon.
- (4) Visualization--paint a word picture showing what the future will be like if the solution is adopted, and/or if it is not adopted; this can either be in the body or in the first part of the conclusion.
- (5) Action--specifically set forth what the audience now needs to do in clear, easy-to-follow steps; this is the “conclusion.” (Monroe, 1955)
 - Weaver explains why a specific action is needed: “When we say to a friend, ‘Won’t you come and call on us sometime?’ we are not nearly so likely to induce a visit as we would were we to put the request more specifically and definitely, saying, ‘Won’t you come over next Tuesday evening at eight o’clock?’ A great deal of writing and speaking [and preaching] fails for this very simple reason. We leave the reactor

favorably disposed but confused as to just how he can translate his favorable disposition into concrete action” (Weaver, 1948, p. 353).

McDill provides an example of this approach in a sermon from Ephesians 1:3-6 (McDill, 1994, pp. 176-77). In the Introduction he presents: (1) **Attention**, a childhood experience of being “chosen” for games; (2) **Need**, the need for belonging, for affirmation, for being wanted. In the sermon Body he presents: (3) **Satisfaction**, with five statements: [a] We are chosen by God’s grace to be completely blessed (v. 3); [b] we are chosen by God’s grace to be fully accepted (v. 4); [c] we are chosen by God’s grace to be adopted as sons (v. 5); [d] we are chosen by God’s grace to fulfill His plan (v. 5); and [e] we are chosen by God’s grace to glorify God (v. 6). In his Conclusion, McDill incorporates the final two steps: (4) **Visualization**, story of a family that adopted handicapped children, and (5) **Action**, acknowledge what God has done and thank Him, and trust your needs to Him now. The action step is the persuasive goal of the sermon.

Persuasion Versus Manipulation

Persuasion is appropriate and biblical; that is the emphasis of this paper. Baumann expresses this well: “The ultimate goal of preaching is not the transmission of information, but the transformation of persons; not simply data exchange, but behavioral change. This means that preaching is done for a change in attitudes, beliefs, and values expressed verbally and nonverbally on the part of the persuadee” (Baumann, 1981, p. 236). However, this must be accomplished so that the persuadees maintain freedom of decision, that they are not under compulsion.

The question of what is ethical persuasion and what becomes manipulation must now be briefly answered. A failure to distinguish persuasion from manipulation has probably caused many preachers to avoid persuasive techniques. Christian writers have interacted with this difficulty (see Basinger and Bassett, 1982; Kehl, 1980), and so have secular writers (Hine, 1995; see also the contemporary college persuasion textbooks by: Gass and Seiter, 2003, pp. 357-76; Woodward and Denton, 2000, pp. 367-402). That the ethics of persuasion is perceived as a complex issue was set forth by McLaughlin in an article (*JETS* 1972) and then in a book (1979). More recently, Stephen Hines summarized basic issues (March 17, 1989).

Both secular and Christian writers agree as to the primary issues of an ethical approach to persuasion. Ayres and Miller, for example, state: “To define what is ethical is not easy, but some basic points can be agreed upon: a communicator is unethical if (1) his or her purpose or goal is to manipulate a listener with the intent to harm someone else; (2) if the content of the message is known to be untrue; or (3) if, however good the end may be, the means of achieving it are questionable” (Ayres and Miller, 1994, p. 254). The focus, therefore, is that the persuader should never desire to manipulate anyone for any reason. Baumann also summarizes the basic elements of ethical preaching into three guidelines: (1) “It is generally agreed that it is unethical to be dishonest. There is no excuse for deliberate deceit, for intentionally misleading an audience, regardless of the end in view.” (2) “It is also unethical to deceive the audience about your intention. When a speaker has a goal, a predetermined end for his listeners, and seeks to deceive them regarding this intention, he has flirted with untruth.” (3) “Persuasion which either

overtly or covertly attacks the basic freedom of response in the individual or subjugates his self-determination is also unethical” (Baumann, 1981, p. 238).

With greater detail, Hanna and Gibson delineate eight basic guidelines for ethical persuasion:

1. Be candid as you reveal your thinking and feelings. Your honesty is your most valuable personal asset. It is the source of your strength as a person and as a persuader.
2. Don't make arguments you can't support, and don't support arguments with evidence that is misleading.
3. Avoid oversimplifying complex matters.
4. Don't use emotional appeals that are insupportable in evidence or reasoning.
5. Don't pretend to be sure about something when you're not.
6. Try, as far as possible, to let others make up their own minds without manipulating them, coercing them, or misleading them.
7. Remember that, sometimes, preserving harmony and peace is more important than speaking your mind. It is sometimes better to keep your mouth shut.
8. Respect the enormous power of language to create reality. Take care never to misuse that power (Hanna and Gibson, 1992, p. 359).

Larsen (1989, p. 138) provides a helpful chart contrasting manipulation and persuasion:

The Manipulator	The Actualizer (Persuader)
1. Deception, phoniness	1. Honesty, transparency
2. Lack of awareness, tunnel vision	2. Awareness, real interest, aliveness
3. Control, concealment	3. Openness, spontaneity, freedom
4. Cynicism, distrust	4. Trust, faith, belief

Conclusion

The Bible itself, both in the OT and in the NT, calls for preachers to proclaim its truths, and to do so persuasively. The Scriptures themselves set forth integral principles guiding the preacher in that persuasive proclamation. Preaching should have the goal of effecting change in the lives of listeners, seeking to bring them into conformity with the will and Word of God. This will ultimately result in lives being transformed into the image of Christ. The biblical principles of persuasion are not manipulative, and are compatible with persuasion methodologies. The biblical expositor can confidently use those methods as he observes the appropriate parameters of Scriptural ethics.

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