

## **How to Craft a Message: Teaching the Bible Faithfully and Relevantly in Today's World**

Preaching and teaching within the Christian Church has undergone some tremendous changes in the last 100 years in the developed world. Society has literally been transformed by the Technological Revolution of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Digital Revolution of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the rise of Post-Modernism, and now the current collapse of the world economy. It is very true that pastors and Christian teachers have a much different cultural climate that we must speak into than our ancestors ever dreamed of. Yet human nature hasn't changed at all. And certainly the Gospel message is the same as it was two thousand years ago. Focusing on the term "relevance," this seminar will describe and define what 21<sup>st</sup> century relevance looks like for a communicator of God's truth, as well as how a message can be crafted that is geared to the times but anchored to God's Word.

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### I. Preliminary Considerations...

*RELEVANCE... felt needs vs. God needs...toward a definition...*

#### A. Biblically-focused

1. Isaiah 55:10-11; Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 24:35

2. POINT: *the Bible IS relevant and we don't need to make it so; at the same time, we must allow it to shine and not cloud its relevance with our flesh.*

*"It's a sin to bore kids with the Gospel!" (Henrietta Mears)*

#### B. Authentically Applied

1. James 1:22-25

2. POINT: *biblical relevance thrives in the soil of application that is watered by authenticity.*

3. 21<sup>st</sup> century, pragmatic culture is PRIMED for this

II. Crafting a message while keeping the process simple: *hook, book, look, took*

Four Truisms to Keep in Mind When Crafting a Biblically Relevant Message:

A. The average listener will decide whether to remain engaged with our message within one to three minutes of our opening words. (HOOK)

1. Most dangerous opening words...

2. Jesus' method: short stories and probing questions

3. Examples of engaging hooks...

B. The Christian communicator's job is to present God's truth – so hide behind the book.  
(BOOK)

1. Scintillating, engaging messages about Christianity

vs.

Teaching relevantly the very words of God

2. Expository/exegetical while avoiding “proof-texting”

3. Biblical illiteracy in the Western World Parts

C. Allow precision and passion to guide your exposition of the Scriptures. (LOOK)

1. Precision and passion create depth in preaching/teaching

2. Passion: *does your excitement show?*

3. Precision: *the value of clarity!*

4. "Content matters" – whether you are a "five-point Calvinist" or a "Whiskey Calvinist" (Wesley and Whitefield)

D. Remember: what we talk about on Sunday must matter on Monday. (TOOK)

1. Authentic Application

2. Beware of the "trap of creativity"

3. Sources for present-day application:

1. Your life
2. Your congregation's lives
3. Other Christian leaders and their experiences/writings
4. Newspaper/Media
5. History
6. Databases

4. Think: *their daily world!*