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Communicative Form and Theological Style

Paul A. Soukup, S.J.

In March of 1519 Froben's press in Basel issued the second edition of Erasmus' New Testament, the first having been published three years earlier. While scholars criticized the first edition for errors introduced when Erasmus rushed it through the presses, preachers and mobs stirred against the second edition because Erasmus dared to change one word in the translation. Where the Vulgate had *verbum* in John 1:1, Erasmus substituted *sermo*: "In the beginning was the Word" became "In the beginning was the speech" (Boyle, 1977, pp. 3-6).

First defending his decision on philological grounds and on usage by the Fathers (hardly anyone before Jerome had used *verbum* to translate *logos*), Erasmus soon switched his defense to one based on theological method. Since theology imitates the divine Logos, a misunderstanding of that Logos will inevitably lead to bad theology.

Erasmus believed passionately that only the appropriately correct word could flower into true theology; semantic error must necessarily generate theological error. Thus while he refrained from pronouncing *verbum* unorthodox, Erasmus was nevertheless convinced that this translation of *logos* eclipsed the ancient faith in a Christ who is the Father's eloquent discourse to men, leaving only a corona of truth visible to the trained eye. *Verbum* or *sermo*? The implications for theological method are substantial, for Erasmus held the *Logos* as the paradigm of human language, whose most eloquent expression was true theological discourse. (Boyle, 1977, p. 30)

The implications for any consideration of communication and theology are substantial for this argument claims, in short, that the form of theology influences the subject matter of theology.

In association with her study of Erasmus, Marjorie Boyle speculates that Latin theology's use of *Verbum* leads to a confusion between revelation and the doctrine of the only-begotten Son. Both are *Logos*, a fact that the Fathers used to show the continuity of creation and redemption, and the

contiguity of God's Word and the human word. Augustine's psychological theory of the trinity in the *De Trinitate* makes brilliant use of each of these associations. At the same time, he clearly relates the one Son of God with the one Word, something that would have become more problematic had he used speech (*sermo*) or discourse (*oratio*) rather than word (*verbum*). *Verbum* suited Augustine's purposes well since, as a wordsmith, he considered the activity of the word one of the central activities of human life.

Other instances in the history of theology demonstrate a similar link between the form of theological language or discourse and its content. When the interpretation of Scripture rests in an oral context (in liturgy or in preaching), its corresponding theology consists of stories. Such stories usually move to moral interpretations, providing guides to life and activity. Both the Jewish tradition of midrash and the patristic accounts of the desert fathers provide examples of this trend. When the interpretation of the Scriptures becomes textual interpretation, scholars replace orators and pay greater attention to definitions, to the logic of the text, and to the systematic development of ideas. Unsurprisingly, their texts take on lives of their own and the Church begins not only to proclaim the Gospel but also to adjudicate competing theological claims. The content of theology becomes increasingly more speculative and technical. The scholastic period with its emphasis on definitions and systems and its explorations of the nature of God and creation illustrates this trend (see, for example, Stock, 1983, pp. 526-527).

This essay explores the ways in which the form of communication affects the content of communication—how the choice of word determines the thought—with special emphasis on theology. Its purpose is pragmatic: How can we, today, concretely reflect on communicative form in such a way as to improve the teaching and the practice of theology? The essay moves in three steps: First come some general comments on communicative form, bolstered by an historical review of the clearest form-content influences; next follow some remarks on contemporary communicative style and form; finally, some brainstorming about theological disciplines and communication concludes the essay.

From Oral Culture to Print Culture

Despite the potential novelty of its application to theology, the connection between form and content should not surprise us. Literary studies and aesthetics have acknowledged it, literally for centuries. For example, one can say things in a lyric poem that do not fit prose. Recall Macleish's famous line, "A poem does not mean but be." Conversely, prose expresses meaning and argument in ways unsuited to poetry or music. Orators choose rhetorical forms in accordance with their theme and purpose. Artists, sculptors, composers and, more recently, film makers do the same. Neil Postman

stresses this point in a negative form when he writes, apropos of television and evangelical religion:

Most Americans, including preachers, have difficulty accepting the truth, if they think about it at all, that not all forms of discourse can be converted from one medium to another. It is naive to suppose that something that has been expressed in one form can be expressed in another without significantly changing its meaning, texture or value. Much prose translates fairly well from one language to another, but we know that poetry does not...To take another example: We may find it convenient to send a condolence card to a bereaved friend, but we delude ourselves if we believe that our card conveys the same meaning as our broken and whispered words when we are present. (1986, p. 117)

The form in which theology (or anything else) resides affects what can be said, how it is said, and how people perceive it.

A larger (cultural) question arises with a consideration of communicative form as opposed to literary or presentational form. Historians of communication have noted an association between the style of communication and cultural styles. Harold Innis, one of the first to comment on this, points out that cultures which choose "time-binding" communication (permanent materials) tend to develop locally while those which choose "space-binding" materials tend to spread out more widely (1951). Others examining how cultures without time- or space-binding materials could still maintain their level of development over centuries argue that oral cultures have highly developed means of retaining and retelling their deposit of knowledge.

Walter Ong (1982) summarizes much of this discussion by dividing the occurrence of communicative form into four overlapping periods, which succeed one another temporally (at least in the West), each giving rise to a different kind of culture: oral culture, chirographic (written) culture, print culture, and secondary-oral culture. The communicative form of each culture influences the patterns of consciousness of the members of that culture through what Ong terms the "psychodynamics" of the form. These patterns of consciousness include not only how people think but also what they think about.

Oral culture (the predominant culture from which the Bible emerges) depends on recall: People only know what they can remember. Names become especially important and powerful, for without a knowledge of names one has no knowledge at all. To know a person's or a thing's name is to have the power of understanding that person or thing. Patterns of recall also take on great importance: Rhymed verses, formulaic utterances, and proverbs both format knowledge and constitute thought (p. 35).

Other psychodynamics of orality appear more clearly in contrast to the psychological structures fostered by literacy. (1) Oral thought and expression (inseparable in practice) follow an additive style in which the speaker joins ideas or events by a series of "ands." On the other hand, chirographic and print structures subordinate one idea to another, using a variety of

clauses and conjunctions. (2) Oral styles aggregate clusters of terms (the rosy-fingered dawn, wily Odysseus) and employ parallelisms, epithets, and antitheses. Once the culture creates these clusters they tend to stay clustered; to the literate ear, they seem clichés because literacy fosters analysis and the originality of style that comes from taking received phrases apart. (3) The oral mind expends its energy in recalling the phrases; the literate mind has energy for analysis since the written text provides the recall. The economy of writing also allows a direct style; the reader can always turn back a page to re-read something. The oral style must provide a degree of redundancy to allow the hearer to catch what might not have registered on first recital. (4) In a similar way, the oral style must conserve past knowledge in its recollections; few new ideas emerge as the community depends on the wisdom (and memory) of its elders. Written style on the other hand fosters exploration of new things since writing frees the mind to move beyond what the culture knows without risking its loss. (5) The oral culture stays close to the human life world, speaking of everything in relation to the people of the tribe or group. Even something as potentially abstract as craft instructions come to the hearer in terms of the actions of a master carpenter, for example. Chirographic and print cultures simply move to the abstraction and illustrate their text with drawings or pictures where necessary. (6) Finally, oral thought is collective or participatory thought. Everyone in the group shares the thought since thought exists only in its expression. Moreover, narrators and hearers alike often take on the first person identities or personae of the heroes whose exploits they tell. In contrast the written culture promotes objectivity since writing establishes a distance (at least on the page) between the text and the reader. The content of the telling becomes foreign and object-like (Ong, 1982, pp. 36-70).

Oral and chirographic thought patterns correlate with particular kinds of consciousness. Members of an oral society tend to operate with situational or pragmatic thinking: Objects and people have value in terms of what they can contribute or accomplish. On the other hand, chirographic cultures produce formal logic which allows people to judge individuals or objects on the merits of abstract qualities or in terms of abstract categories. In other words, the oral mind depends on individual names whereas the mind supported by writing seeks definitions. Because of their orientation to particulars, members of an oral society tend to have an externalized consciousness. They know themselves in terms of their roles in society, in terms of their possessions, or in terms of their families. Members of a chirographic culture tend to possess a self-consciousness characterized by interiority. They know themselves as individuals with particular motivations, with their own thoughts, and with a certain choice of options. Finally, members of an oral society work from an operational intelligence—intelligence indicates ability in practical settings. For societies dependent on writing, intelligence indicates verbal ability—intelligence tests in our culture, for example, pri-

marily measure vocabulary and verbal activities such as the logical combination of words (Ong, 1982). Each of these differences manifests what Denny has termed the move from contextual thought to decontextualization (1991, p. 78).

The switch from an oral culture to a chirographic culture did not happen quickly but took place over thousands of years. Contemporary scholarship suggests that certain periods of history show the strains of the change-over more than others. For example, in Athens of the fifth century B.C., Socrates and Plato wrestled with the growing abstraction and logic that writing permitted while at the same time they questioned the oral substructure found in Greek epic poetry (Havelock, 1963). Almost 800 years later, Augustine still stresses the important role of memory (a necessity to the oral psychology) but in terms of its role in self-consciousness (a development fostered by writing's distanciation).

Another 800 years later scholastic theology and philosophy reflect the appropriation of written logic by the intellectual elite. The schools produced marvelously complex systems of grammar, of philosophy, and of theology. However, one would at least expect some failure in communicating the fruit of these labors to an illiterate population. Stock (1983) outlines some of these tensions in terms of medieval heresies, popular uprisings, theological misunderstandings, and scriptural interpretations.

With hindsight, we can suggest two solutions to the problem of communicating medieval theology. First (the one deliberately chosen at the time): One could make use of oral forms to embody theology—hymnody, stories (the *Divine Comedy*, for example), the use of "heavy characters" (that is, characters who typify the abstract concepts we wish to convey, characters such as those abounding in hagiography), as well as images (Miles, 1985), architecture, and role-bound social interactions. Second (the solution that proved more long-lasting but less predictable): One could strive to develop some technique to foster universal literacy. Where writing took too long to produce the materials needed to teach reading, printing provided an inexpensive means for the rapid duplication of texts (Eisenstein, 1979).

Although the psychological impact of printing on the individual consciousness does not differ all that much from that of writing, it does differ dramatically in its effect on the collective life of cultures (Eisenstein, 1979, pp. 71-159). Printing fosters all the psychodynamics of writing but makes them available for everyone simultaneously. However, it also does more than make texts available for individual reading. Printing changes the nature of authority in a culture—individuals need not depend on elders, teachers, or pastors for knowledge since everyone has equal access to knowledge. For example, in religious belief, the Protestant Reformation stressed the priesthood of all believers since all had immediate experience of the Scriptures. One needed no mediator except Christ.

Printing also facilitates critical thinking by making texts common and involving more people in the the process of gaining and ascertaining knowledge. The availability of texts allowed cross-referencing and correction of errors from one edition to another. But scholarship also became more impersonal as reading replaced face-to-face dealings. A scholar no longer had to travel from one library to another but could now possess volumes at home. This gave the scholar more time for studying books but indirectly moved learning away from discussion, debate, and dialogue to study, thought, and writing. Careful (written) argumentation replaced rhetoric in the academic curriculum.

This scholarship also undermined the accepted notions of authority. Authority had belonged to ancient books (and still did), but textual criticism cast doubt upon the inerrancy of the ancient texts. (This is another reason for the resistance that Erasmus met in publishing his critical edition of the Bible.) Further, new books attributed their composition to personal authors who often contradicted one another. This gave people even more reason to doubt what they read and to insist on some method of learning or critical evaluation—something that only the individual reader could do.

Printing affected the culture of the West in other, more subtle, ways. Since printing standardized books and typefaces, it led to an acceptance of standardized or uniform practices in many other areas as well: handwriting, manufacturing, indexing. The latter activity profoundly changed how knowledge existed and how people used it. For example, the application of laws depended not so much on the memory of a judge as on the arrangement of the laws in standardized reference works. Knowledge became static even while it grew in volume.

Printing also affected day-to-day life in the culture. On the one hand it fostered a common culture as people from all over read the same materials and shared the same stories. But while this common culture grew, individuals became progressively more isolated. Reading is, after all, a solitary activity. One needs quiet for concentration. And so, another side effect of the spread of individual reading is “the development of the sense of personal privacy that marks modern society....Print created a new sense of the private ownership of words” (Ong, 1982, pp. 130-131). Ong puts this state of affairs even more dramatically:

By removing words from the world of sound where they had first had their origin in active human interchange and relegating them definitively to visual surface, and by otherwise exploiting visual space for the management of knowledge, print encouraged human beings to think of their own interior conscious and unconscious resources as more and more thing-like, impersonal and religiously neutral. Print encouraged the mind to sense that its possessions were held in some sort of inert mental space. (pp. 131-132)

Besides these changes the very content of communication changes as well. When manuscripts were expensive and scarce, the culture passed on only the most valued materials (usually the Bible, theological works, important governmental documents, and some practical learning—note too that these items are the ones valued by those who control the means of textual reproduction). As printing brought the cost of duplication down, more things are printed besides those already mentioned: first scholarly works, then popular entertainments and self-help books, novels, literature, and so on. The privacy of print and the introduction of new “gatekeepers” also encouraged the printing of “private” materials like pornography.

When the churches took advantage of print, they did so in ways to provide necessary resources for the development of faith. The Lutherans stressed the Bible and produced not only vernacular translations but also materials to teach reading. Catholics maintained the importance of the hierarchical church and produced devotional materials for the faithful. Both groups produced catechisms for the uniform teaching of doctrine. This form, made possible by printing, had a profound effect on theology, for it demanded a particular kind of theological thinking to frame question and answer responses in order of ascending difficulty. Other theology became more popular as the churches moved into the publishing business in the 18th and 19th centuries: Religious presses produced popular books, pamphlets, hymnals, and even newspapers.

Television as a Communicative Form

The review of the effects of changes in communicative form from oral to chirographic to print overwhelms us with evidence that much of what we take for granted in our communication styles could be otherwise. However, the fact that we can comprehend oral and chirographic societies supports Ong's claim that we presently live in a “secondary-oral” culture, a culture which has returned to oral patterns as its communication styles move from print to speech based on printed scripts. The review also suggests that we should expect to notice similarly momentous effects in our culture as we incorporate new communication patterns and forms.

Television, more than anything else, characterizes contemporary communicative style in the United States. As a mass medium driven by commercial forces, it encompasses the effects of earlier mass media (newspapers, magazines, radio, and film); it shares in and supports the commodity structure of developed capitalism; and it combines the oral and visual qualities of earlier media but without demanding the concentration of reading or attentive listening. What, then, might television teach us about contemporary communicative style? To situate our answer, we will look at some social and psychological effects of television.

Television consumes time. People today spend, on the average, large numbers of hours watching television—averaging over four hours a day (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986, p. 19)—time that in an earlier age they would have spent on other things. Recreational reading has decreased; so too has game playing and conversation. The demise of weekday devotions in churches may be as attributable to the television alternative as it is to changing popular piety.

Television partially supplants the family, the school and the church as the socializing force in American society (Comstock, 1978). By introducing a variety of images, statements, and values into the home, it proposes a wider repertoire of behavior to people than they would otherwise have. Television also provides basic knowledge about society, about right and wrong, about appropriate behaviors, and about the world at large. While families and schools still play a large role in people's lives (at least measured in terms of hours of contact), churches do not; even more critical to the churches is their practical disappearance from the television world.

Television concentrates economic and interpretive power in a society in which economic power reigns. Some, notably George Gerbner and his associates, have argued that this gives television the form of a dominant religion which defines the world, defines the worldview, and defines the successful values in the world. In addition, television interprets events and images in terms of its world in just the way the medieval church, for example, interpreted events for Western Europe. This gives television (and those who appear on television) an immense authority in contemporary society.

Television provides, perhaps for the first time since preindustrial religion, a daily ritual of highly compelling and informative content that forms a strong cultural link between elites and the rest of the population. The heart of the analogy of television and religion, and the similarity of their social functions, lies in the continual repetition of patterns (myths, ideologies, "facts," relationships, etc.), which serve to define the world and legitimize the social order. (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986, p. 18)

However, it is an authority gained not from any expertise nor from any civil or religious role but from the omnipresence of television.

All these factors work together to reinforce the status quo and to homogenize cultural groups. Television, then, adds stability to the national culture and provides common experience for millions of people. What McCombs and Gilbert assert of the news media applies all the more to television:

Considerable evidence has accumulated since 1972 that journalists play a key role in shaping our pictures of the world as they go about their daily task of selecting and reporting the news....Here may lie the most important effect of the mass media: their ability to structure and organize our world for us. (1986, pp. 3-4)

Although we cannot measure it exactly, the form of this dominant means of communication does act on what we communicate.

Structurally, television has changed many elements and institutions in the United States. Its development shifted radio from a national medium into a local medium. Made-for-TV films have transformed the traditional Hollywood production houses and have advanced an independent book trade. More seriously, television has altered the shape of politics: Gone are the days of the whistle-stop campaign and hotly debated issues. A candidate's image often counts for more than the candidate's issues. Television has also reshaped religion. Religious television has done away with the community, with the sacred space of worship, and with the separation of sacred and profane (Postman, 1986, pp. 118-119). The same set that sells bleach now sells salvation.

Television also has psychological effects (Postman, 1986, pp. 92-107). Its pacing accustoms us to rapidly shifting images. What we gain in the ability to deal with visual complexity we lose in the ability to maintain an attention span over a long period of time. The nature of the medium suppresses content, particularly abstract content, in the name of visual interest. Because television must above all maintain interest, it opts for entertainment. And so, it confuses fact with fiction: We have news stories and docudramas, soap operas and happy news talk. Television avoids reflection, preferring instead presentation.

The power of the media lies not only (and not even primarily) in its power to declare things to be true, but in the power to provide the form in which the declaration appears. News in a newspaper or on television has a relationship to the "real world," not only in content but in form; that is, in the way the world is incorporated into unquestionable and unnoticed conventions of narration, and then transfigured, no longer for discussion, but as a premise of any conversation at all. (Schudson, 1982, p. 98)

Stories develop in an uncritical manner—the pace counts, not the plausibility. This psychological formula has such power that the successful religious programming on television explicitly imitates it: There are religious entertainment shows, religious talk shows, and religious dramatic shows. Few, if any, of them demand an examined life of their viewers.

But we cannot claim that the communicative form of television supports only ill effects. On the positive side, it heightens our visual senses and sharpens our appreciation of symbols, particularly condensation symbols. It can restore a sense of presence and immediacy lost in writing or print. It touches emotions, bringing them closer to consciousness, restoring a psychic balance missing from linear or logical reasoning. By joining visual and oral communication into one image, it integrates the nonverbal with verbal communication. Finally, television can also promote an appreciation for more complex narrative structures. Television viewers generally watch stories

with multiple plots and multiple perspectives (the varying camera angles, for example). More ambitious shows explore non-linear story lines and juxtapose events and images to create a feel for the characters and their histories.

In short, whether structurally or psychologically, television is a medium through which anything can come. And it is a medium, a form, that shapes its content, just like any other form. The nature of the interaction that takes place through television (and indeed through all the mass media) features entertainment, limited content, fragmentation of presentation (that is, variety of content), unidirectional address, a lack of reflection (or self-consciousness), and commercialism. The nature of the interaction also fosters an appreciation of symbols, emotions, nonverbal communication, and complexity of narrative style.

Theology and Form

Writing in *The Rhetoric of Religion*, Kenneth Burke, American rhetorical and literary critic, forcefully argues the validity of an analogical relationship between theological principles and the nature of language, between theory (if you will) and narrative. Implicit in his argument lies the claim that linguistic form can predict theological form. His argument nicely summarizes what we have considered in a roundabout way through the history of oral and written cultures. Narrative, he writes for example, expresses first principles in quasi-temporal terms—the Genesis accounts of creation and covenant deal with principles of governance (power and authority) in terms of the stories of creation and fall (1961, p. 180). This clearly reflects an oral background. Theology, in contrast, deals with logical firsts, with essences, distilling from the narrative of Genesis ideas of authority, order, and obedience. Writing and print, of course, facilitate this kind of analysis.

Burke also sounds a warning that the condensation of temporal sequences into their logical forms can lead to metaphysical problems. Using as an extended analogy the musical distinction between a dissonant chord and a melody consisting of the same notes, he writes:

In keeping with our chord-arpeggio distinction, the metaphysical problem could be stated thus: In the arpeggio of biological, or temporal growth, good *does* come out of evil (as we improve ourselves by revising our excesses, the excesses thus being a necessary agent in the drama, or dialectic, of improvement: They are the “villain” who “competitively cooperates” with us as “criminal Christ” in the process of redemption). But when you condense the arpeggio of development by the nontemporal, nonhistorical forms of logic, you get simultaneous “polarity,” which adds up to good and evil as consubstantial. (p. 229)

By the same token, logical analysis does not translate well into narrative. Logic gives deeper insight into motivation, relationship, human socio-political order, and so on. Despite its problems, logic (or theology) is more flex-

ible and allows application to more situations than does narrative. The danger for theology (and for narrative) is the danger of its form, particularly for people who neither know nor understand the form.

What does all this mean for theology and pastoral ministry today? First, and minimally, we have seen that contemporary communicative forms move away from logic and analysis, providing instead an emphasis on symbol, emotion, and perspective. The theological preparation for pastoral ministers should then stress the translation of theological content into a form that neither betrays it nor alienates it from people's lives. But this must take place carefully, stressing an understanding of the form as well as an understanding of the content. Unfortunately, current educational practice tends to stress content over form.

But, second, because the current communicative culture participates in what has gone before it (because of its secondary orality), it can never force us to forego even partially our theological heritage. Past theology can well be understood and appreciated, given the necessary preparation. A reflection on its form may well help to understand its nature.

Third, we should expect theology to change and develop as it shapes itself to the communicative forms of the 20th century. Where this happens uncritically, as with the "theology of material success" of the television evangelists, the Church and its members will suffer (Fore, 1987). But when careful reflection leads us to use the newer communicative forms effectively, we can expect both a deepening of theological thought and a more profound effectiveness of theology in culture (much the same way that the theology of liberation has transformed some third world cultures).

What, then, might some tasks be for theology in the light of these reflections on communicative form? Here are some immediate thoughts about theological directions and disciplines from the perspective of someone working in the area of communication.

Somewhere along the line theology must recover its sensitivity to the analogical character of language. As theology has become more "scientific," it has become more sensitive to the critique of the linguistic analysts and seen its own task as one of explication, interpretation, and reasoning—in the manner of linear thought. And yet theology has an ally in language (communication) itself: There is a sacredness in language. Theological reflection shows an awareness of this sacredness from time to time, beginning with the Johannine prologue and continuing with subsequent wrestling with the notion of the *Logos*. The recovery of the communicative intensity of theology may well involve renewed meditation upon the *Logos* as a central theological category.

From this flows an interpretation and explication of the Word that takes advantage of our contemporary sensitivity to symbols. The study of Scripture can supplement its gains in critical analysis with new reflection on the multiple senses of Scripture.

Liturgy has retained its close association with communicative forms and liturgists have experimented with ways to recover more of its ritual roots in action, in music, in dance, and in drama. The task for liturgy today goes beyond this; now it must integrate a congregation which has accepted the role of an audience from all its usual communication fare.

Christology can greatly benefit from contemporaries' appropriation of condensation symbols since the image of Christ is such a symbol. While the Church's theological reflection must continue in its efforts to understand Christ, the Church should also exploit Christ as the symbol of the new humanity in its teaching and proclamation.

The theology of God (the Trinity) might add to its current focus material drawn from ideas of communication as relationship. Classical formulations of the Trinity use the language of communication. It may well be helpful to explore the analogy further, given today's new knowledge about communication.

Ecclesiology might contrast differing styles of communication. Mass communication clearly exhibits one-way styles; to the comfort of the Church, we can recognize that not even in its most hierarchical times did the Church ever approach the unidirectional monologue of television. Ecclesiology could include more specific considerations of dialogue as a communicative style. It could also add reflections on roles and leadership based on communication.

A theology of the human person should certainly begin from the experience of human community. As we move away from print-based ideas of culture, we can stress again the common basis of our humanity in language, in families, and in communicating groups.

Historical theology may find more light in a correlation of communicative styles and communicative form with theological conclusions. We have already gained an appreciation for the cultural embeddedness of theology; the addition of communication as a part of culture may add yet another dimension to that understanding.

Fundamental theology might also benefit from this meditation on communicative form since its purpose is to prepare the proclamation of the Gospel by addressing issues of culture, authority, and interpretation.

This brief review of topics in theology barely scratches the surface of what might happen when an appreciation for communication interacts with theological disciplines. As an exercise in brainstorming it suggests the possibilities. Best of all for teachers and students, it requires no additional courses for pastoral ministry. However, it does require something much more difficult: a rethinking of theology's treasures in the light of our new communicative forms.

The hope is this: to become like the householder who brings out from the storeroom things both old and new (Matt. 13:52).