**Planning for Oral Clarity (Step 6b)**

Illustrations

Read Stott, 236-43 for next time

**I. The Importance of Good Illustrations**

Why it is important to illustrate the text well in preaching? (Robinson, 149-50)

• Illustrations explain, validate, or apply ideas by relating them to tangible experiences.

• Illustrations render a truth believable

• Illustrations aid memory

• Illustrations stir emotion

• Illustrations create need

Listener’s World

Preacher’s World

• Illustrations hold attention

• Illustrations establish rapport with the audience (entertaining is good!)

**II. How to Give Good Illustrations**

A. Draw illustrations from the *listener’s* world—not yours!

B. Get your sermon outline done early enough in the week to give time to find good and fitting illustrations (Mawhinney, 38, 40, 252-53).

C. Vary the type of sermon illustration used. Variety is key!

Hardly ever used Sometimes used Often used

• Humor • Historical incident • Statistic

• Nursery rhyme • Definition • Scientific data

• Bible story • Quotation • Poem

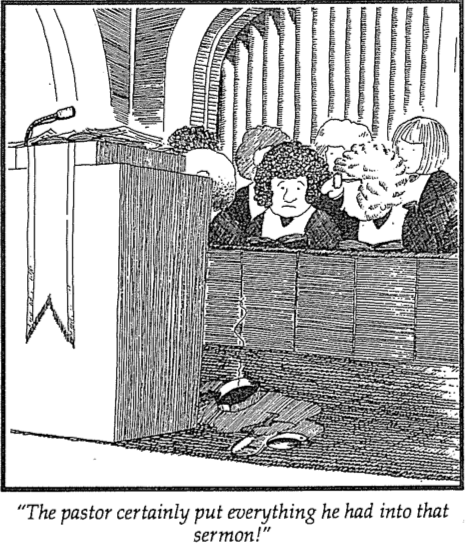
• Visualization (use of objects) • Hymn • Overused story

• Emotional story • Newspaper story • Anecdote

• Personal story (which is true, modest, and does not violate a confidence)

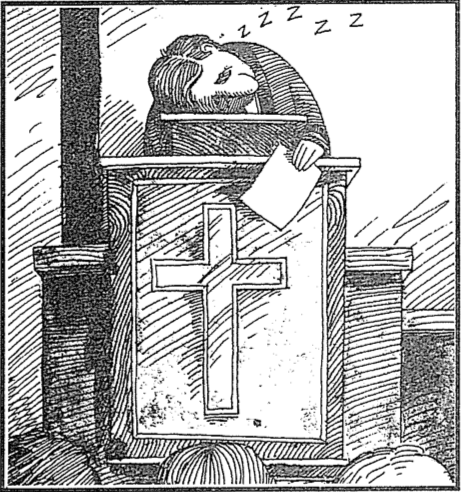
Try to emphasize this first column and you’ll be a hero to your listeners as very few Chinese preachers share illustrations in these areas!

(For a good example of variety, see Duane Litfin’s sermon in Haddon Robinson’s book, *Biblical Sermons*, 89-103, 107. He illustrates from Greek classics, pop music, science, poetry, hot air balloons, and his own experiences—all in one message!)



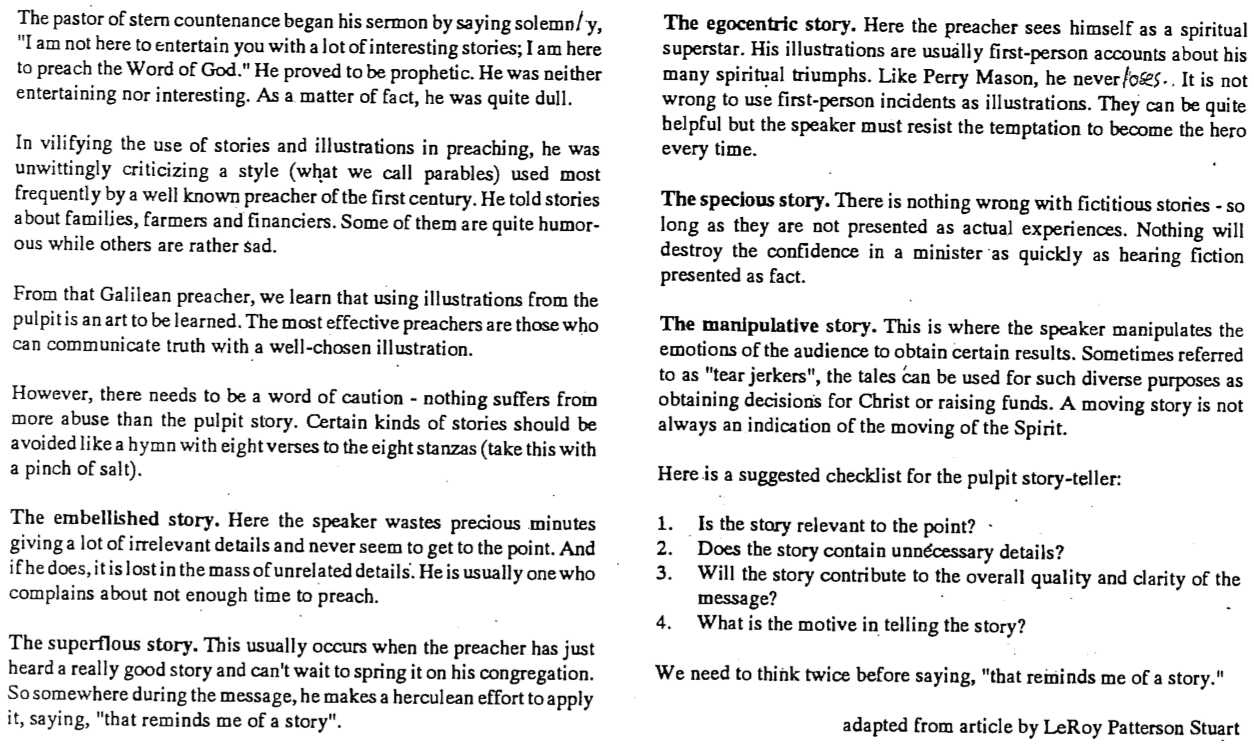
D. Don’t tell stories—relive them! Be dramatic!

E. Illustrate for every 3 minutes of preaching   
(p. 51 has 18 ILLs in 15 minutes!)



F. Avoid these dangers when illustrating your points

(from *100-Fold*, the EDAA [English Department Alumni Association]-SBC News, February 1992)



**II. How to Catalog Illustrations**

A. *Find your illustrations.* Beg, borrow, or steal illustrations wherever you can—from…

1. *Sermons you hear* (in church, chapel, on tape, etc.): Never be caught without your mobile phone to write down what you hear as soon as you hear it.

2. *Things you read*

a. Newspaper articles and comics—especially on the morning you preach!

b. Christian Books—especially by Charles R. Swindoll (read *Living on the Ragged Edge, For Those Who Hurt, Improving Your Serve, Strengthening Your Grip, Dropping Your Guard, Growing Strong in the Seasons of Life*)

c. Secular Books—see Tan Huay Peng, *Fun With Characters: The Straits Times Collection.* 3 vols. Singapore: Federal Publications, 1982.

d. Magazines—especially *Reader’s Digest, Insight*, and *U.S. News and World Report*

e. Devotional guides—especially *Our Daily Bread*

f. Written sermons—especially Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Sermons*

3. *Your own personal experiences in life (but be transparent)*

4. *Other people’s life experiences or quotes (good for clarity and authority)*

5. *Your imagination (make up a scenario or conversation as if the listener is in it)*

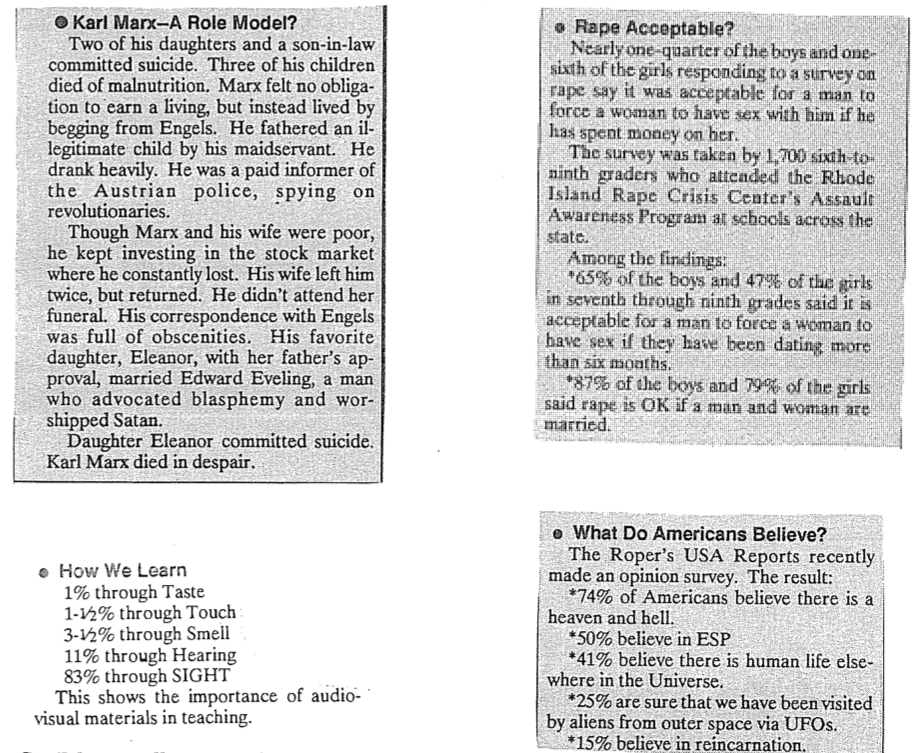
6. *Websites of Illustration Collections*

* IllustrationExchange.com allows weekly subscriptions of one free illustration per week
* PreachingToday.com
* SermonCentral.com might be the best one with the most illustrations
* SermonIdeas.com
* MoreIllustrations.com

7. *Films and Television—including advertisements (printed ones too)—hundreds of clips are available at wingclips.com*

8. *Other preachers (exchange your best ones with one another)*

B. *Categorize your illustrations* by pasting them into a separate Word file for each illustration where the file name has the TITLE in CAPS and the subtitle in small letters. For practice, give each of these four illustrations a TITLE and subtitle:



C. *File these illustrations* in a folder on your computer. If your titles and subtitles make sense, then this will be valuable in the future when looking for illustrations.

