

Preaching with Variety: Why and How?

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Uploaded by Dr. Rick Griffith • Singapore Bible College

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Why Preach With Variety?

- To express godly creativity.



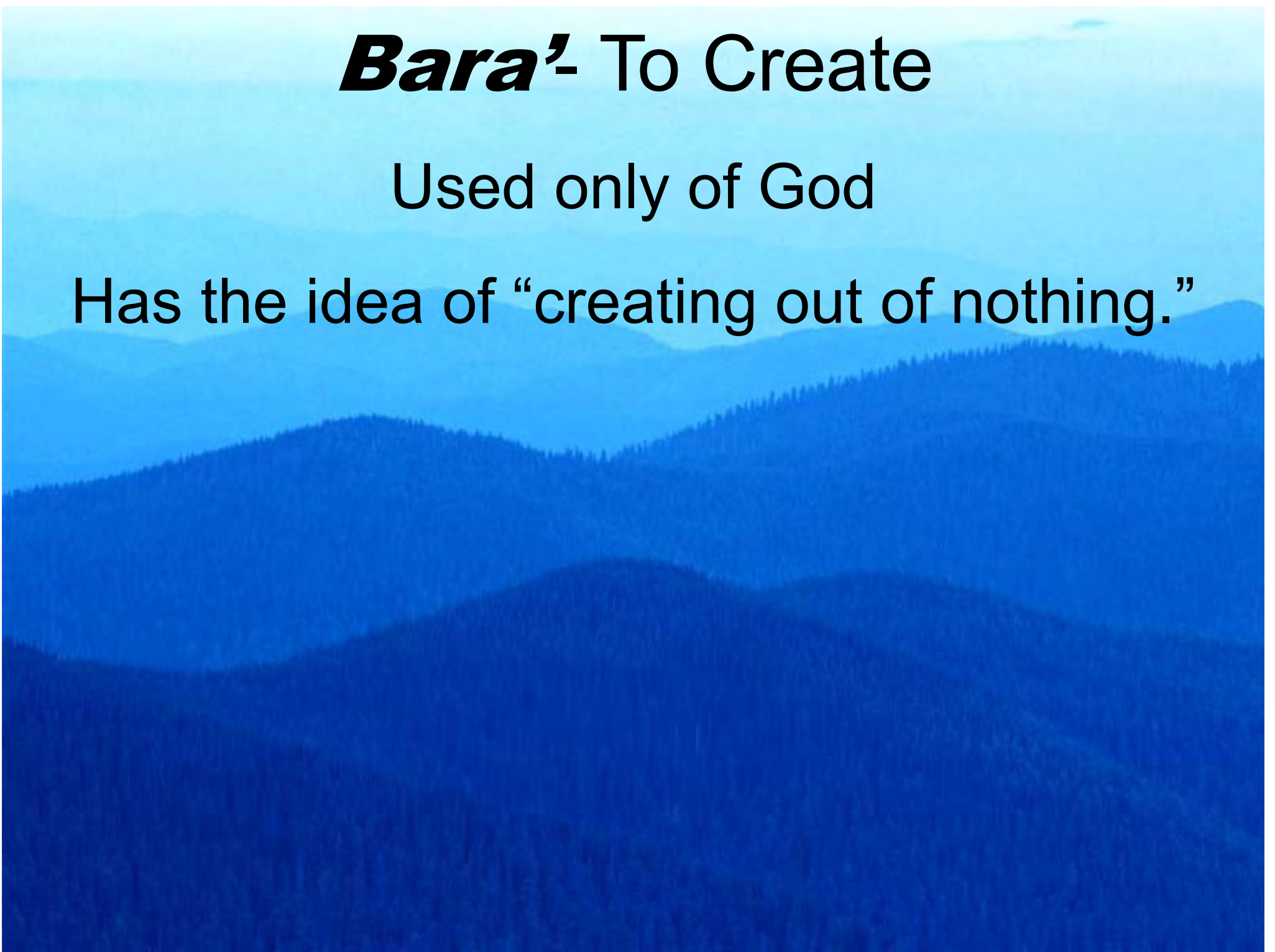
A brief theology of creativity

In the beginning,
God created the
heavens and the
earth. . . .

Bara'- To Create

Used only of God

Has the idea of “creating out of nothing.”





Day 1

God makes light.
He calls the light day
and the darkness
he calls night.
Genesis 1:3-5

Day 2

God makes the sky.

He calls the sky
heaven.

Genesis 1:6-8

Day 3

God makes the dry land.



An aerial photograph of a massive ocean wave crashing. The wave is a deep, dark blue, and the crest is a bright, white foam. The sky is a deep, dark blue. The text "And the seas." is overlaid on the bottom center of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

And the seas.

A photograph of a dense forest with tall, thin trees and sunlight filtering through the canopy. The ground is covered in green foliage and fallen leaves. The text is overlaid on the bottom portion of the image.

He also makes plants of every
kind. Genesis 1:9-13



Day 4

God makes the sun
for the day and
the moon for the night.
He also makes the stars
in the sky.

Genesis 1:14-19

A large school of sharks swimming in deep blue water. The sharks are silhouetted against the blue background, with some showing their dorsal fins. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the water and the shapes of the fish.

Day 5

God makes fish and
other creatures of the
sea.

Genesis 1:20-23



And the birds of the air.

Day 6

God makes animals of the land...





Each according to its kind...



**...and He creates man and woman in
His image and likeness.**

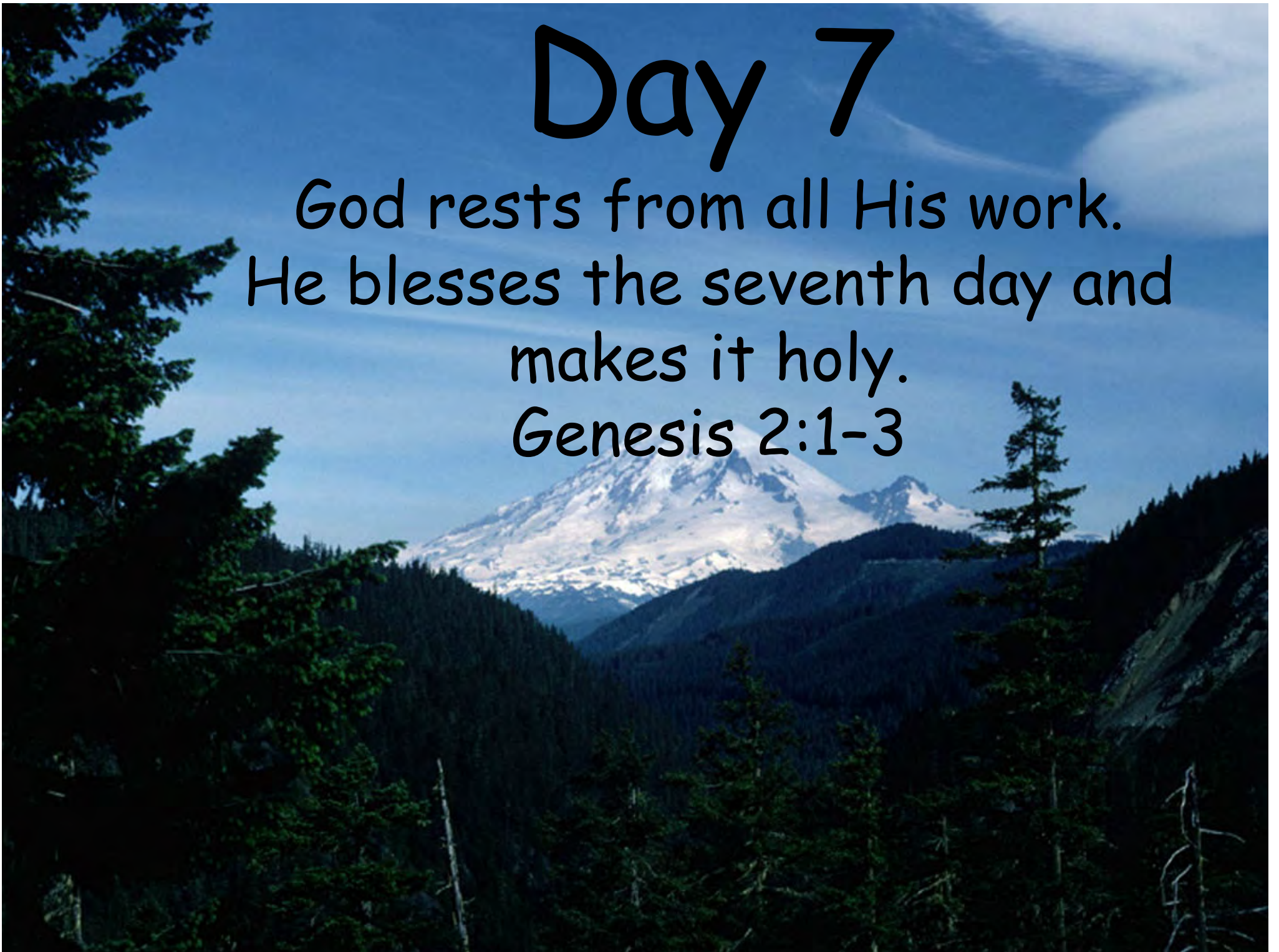
Genesis 1:24–31

God looked at His
creation and said:
It was "Very Good"



Day 7

God rests from all His work.
He blesses the seventh day and
makes it holy.
Genesis 2:1-3



Humans in God's Image

1. Spiritual Nature
2. Moral Nature
3. Eternal Existence
4. Ability to Reason
5. Rule over the Earth
6. Freedom of Choice
7. Relationship Capacity



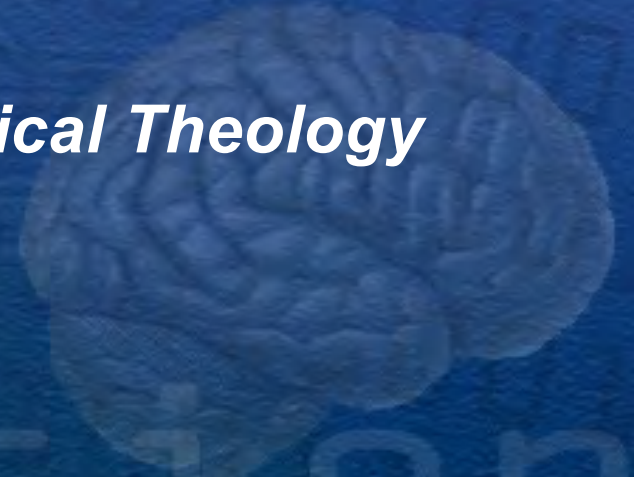
Man in God's Image

I would add...

8. The Ability to Create

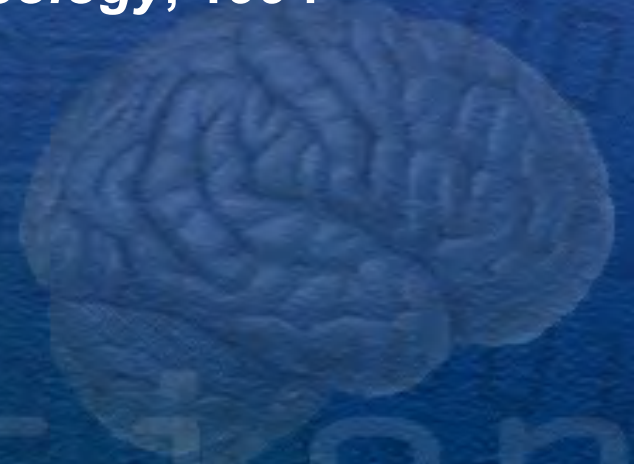
“God’s image in Genesis 1 includes ruling, creativity, procreation, reasoning, power, decision-making, and relationships”

Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology



“We can wholeheartedly enjoy creative activities with an attitude of thanksgiving [because] our Creator God enables us to imitate him in our creativity”

Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 1994



The background is a blue-tinted illustration of Noah's Ark. In the upper right, there are several animal bones and a dinosaur skull. In the lower right, there are various animals including a blue horse, a red bear, a white cow, and a red pig. In the lower left, there is a large, dark, textured object that looks like a fossil or a large animal's head. The word "DANGER" is written in large, yellow, outlined letters in the top left corner.

DANGER

“Nowhere is man’s creativity more apparent than in his ability to discover new and original ways to commit the original sin.”

Treasury of Bible Illustrations, 1995

What do we learn...

- 1. God is the Creator.*
2. God has made humans with the ability to create.
3. Man must use his ability to create good and not evil.

Creativity- *the ability to think and act in new ways that stem from being created in the image of God, often resulting in increased effectiveness*





God's creativity in communication

GOD COMMUNICATES THROUGH THE SENSES

Sense of Sight – Eyes



Example:
Solomon's Temple

GOD COMMUNICATES THROUGH THE SENSES

Sense of Hearing – Ears

Example:

- Shofar -

Ram's Horn Blowing



GOD COMMUNICATES THROUGH THE SENSES

Sense of Smell – aromas in the air



**Example:
Incense in the
Tabernacle**

GOD COMMUNICATES THROUGH THE SENSES

Sense of Taste – flavorful lessons

Example:
- Seder Plate -
Various tastes for
Passover Seder



GOD COMMUNICATES THROUGH THE SENSES

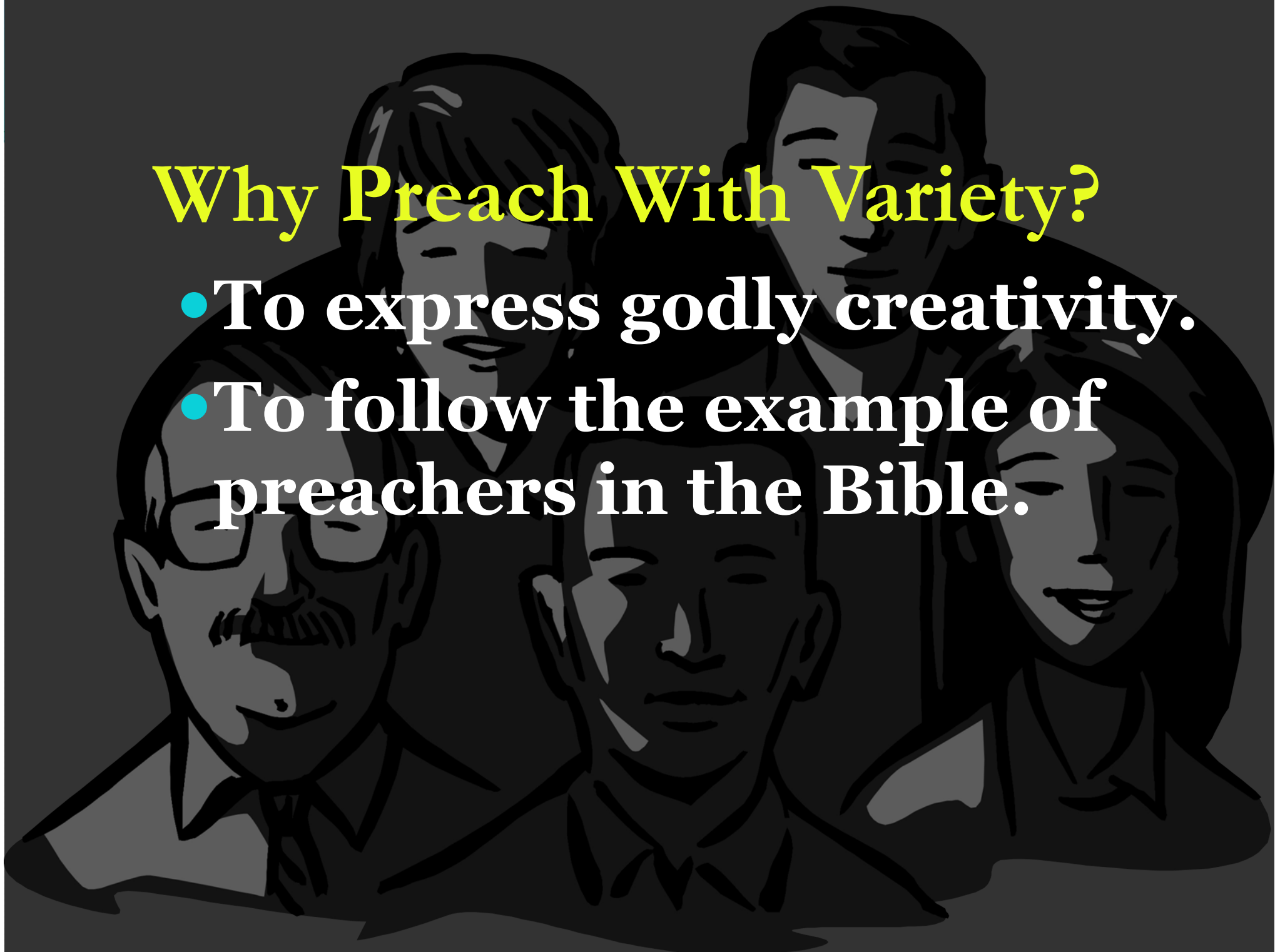
Sense of Touch – hands held



Example:
Bread at first
Communion

Why Preach With Variety?

- To express godly creativity.
- To follow the example of preachers in the Bible.



Brainstorming Exercise:

- **Divide into groups of three.**
- **Secretary = person who traveled shortest to class today.**
- **List as many examples as you can of creative/unusual communication methods preachers in the Bible used.**
 - **E.g. Paul used dialogue in the marketplace; Ezekiel shaved his head as an object lesson.**
- **3 Minutes. Go!**

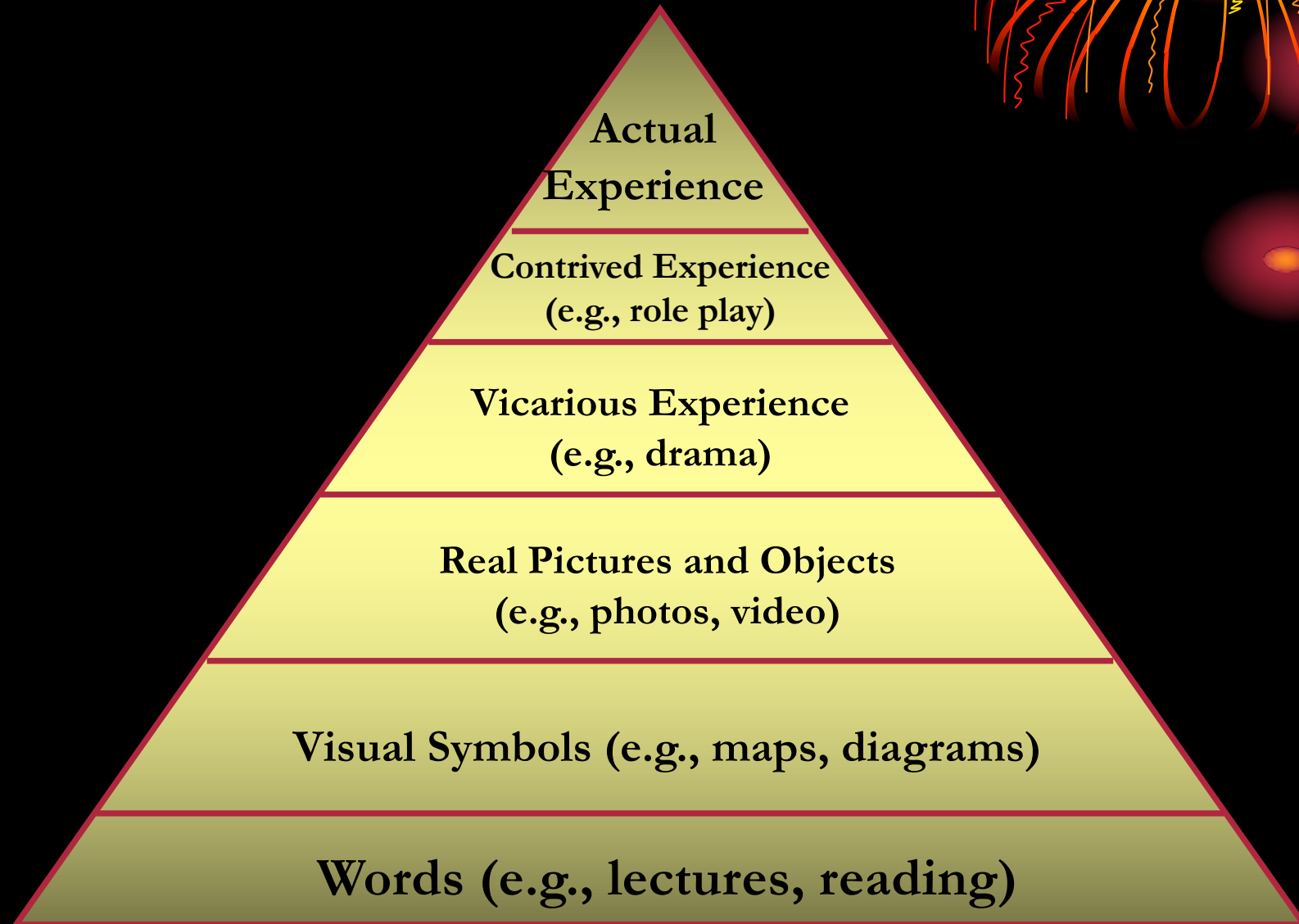
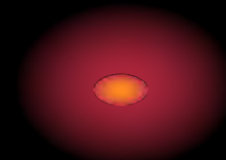
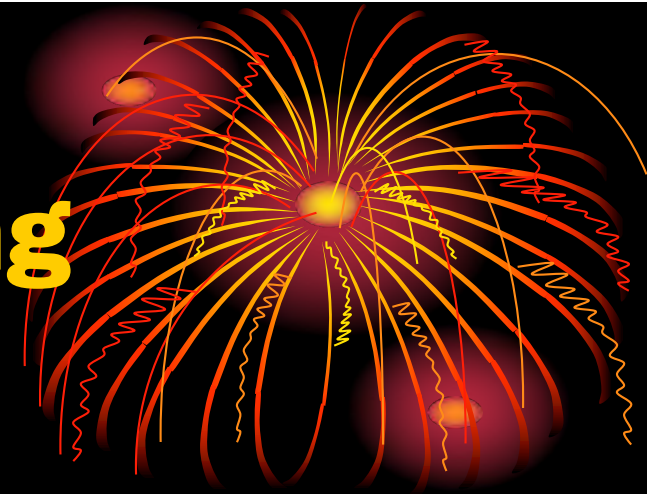
Why Preach With Variety?

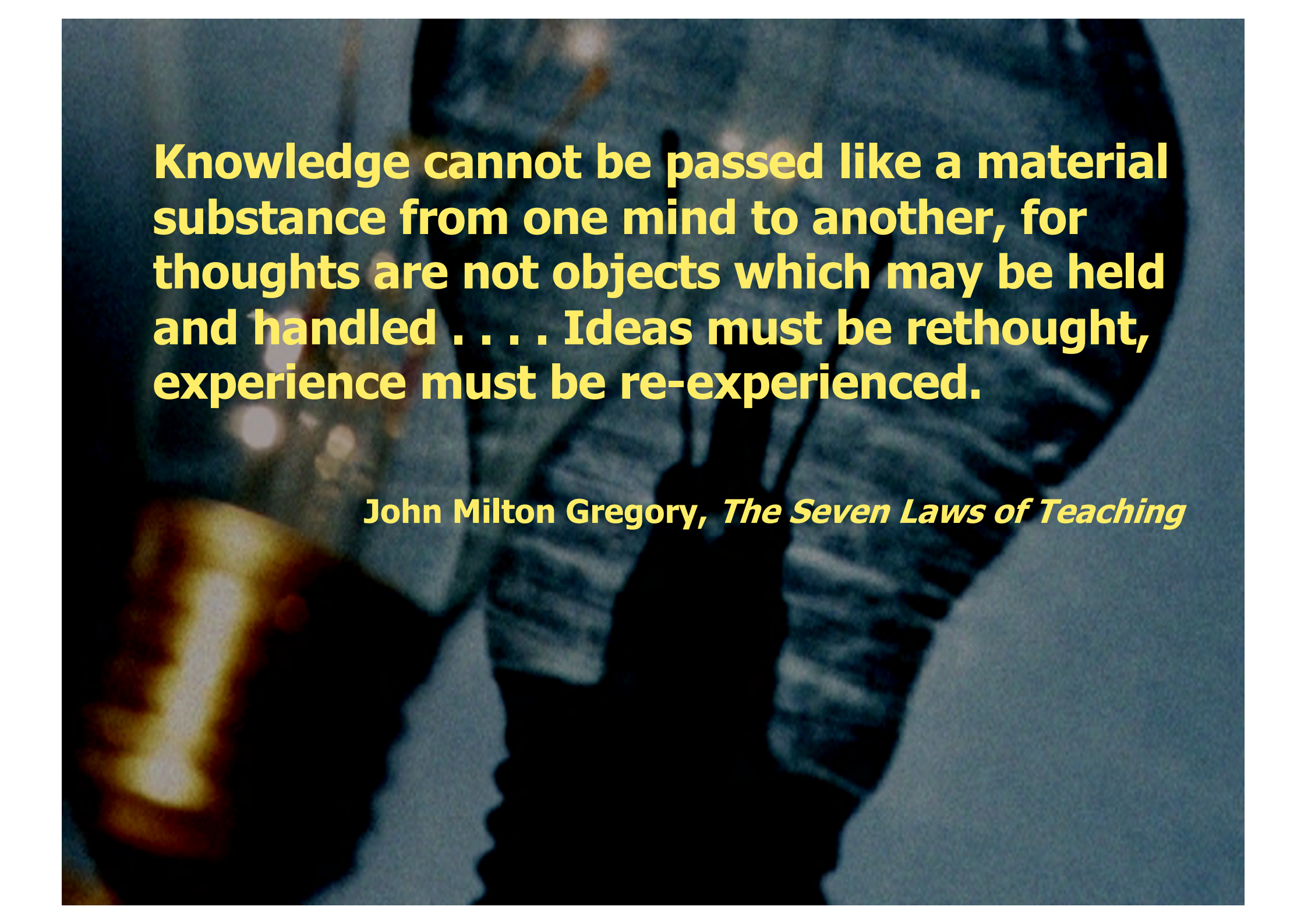
A stylized illustration of five diverse individuals (three men and two women) shown from the chest up. They are rendered in various shades of gray and black, with some faces highlighted in a lighter gray. The background is a dark gray. The overall style is graphic and modern.

- To express godly creativity.
- To follow the example of preachers in the Bible.
- To serve the listeners.
 - Learning styles.

Experience...

Key to Effective Teaching





Knowledge cannot be passed like a material substance from one mind to another, for thoughts are not objects which may be held and handled Ideas must be rethought, experience must be re-experienced.

John Milton Gregory, *The Seven Laws of Teaching*

A stylized illustration of five diverse people (three men and two women) in the background, rendered in shades of gray and black. The title 'Why Preach With Variety?' is overlaid in yellow text.

Why Preach With Variety?

- To express godly creativity.
- To follow the example of preachers in the Bible.
- To serve the listeners.
 - Learning styles.
 - Culture.

Compare Cultural Adaptation in Two Ford Commercials (1956 and 2003)

- ◆ How did culture change in the 47 years between these commercials?
 - ◆ How did Ford adapt?


North American Listeners

- 1985: First year more videos checked out of library than books.
- 2004: Sound bytes of presidential candidates—8 seconds.
- May 2010: 145 million monthly visitors to YouTube. 900,000 in 2005.
- 2010: 2,900 texts per month by average cell phone user.

(source: Commonsense Media).

North American Listeners

- Average age of “gamers”: 30.
 - (source: *Boston Globe*).
- TV channels received in average US household in 2007: **104**. (**33** in in 1990).
- Percentage of US kids, third grade, who have a TV in their room: **70**.
 - (source: *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine*).
- 2006: 41% of teens said there were too few entertainment options available to them.
 - (source: *Los Angeles Times*, Bloomberg Poll).
- Average American adult spends 17x as much time watching TV as all reading (books, magazines, newspaper, etc.).
 - (source: *Why Johnny Can't Preach*, Gordon, p. 35).



**The ratio of
illiterates to
literate is
unchanged from
a century ago,
but now the
illiterates can
read and write.**

**Italian novelist Alberto
Moravia in Leonard Sweet, *Soul
Tsunami*, 23.**



C.S. Lewis on the Need for Cultural Adaptation

It is absolutely disgraceful that we expect missionaries to the Bantus to learn Bantu but never ask whether our missionaries to the Americans or English can speak American or English.¹

If you were sent to the Bantus you would be taught their language and traditions. You need similar teaching about the language and mental habits of your own uneducated and unbelieving fellow countrymen.²

¹In Griffin, *Clive Staples Lewis, A Dramatic Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 401.

²Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 94.

Adapting a Verbal Medium to a Visual Culture

In 1938 playwright and novelist Somerset Maugham advised playwrights to adapt to the new epistemology created by the cinema:

“It is very different now, and the difference, I suppose, has been occasioned by the advent of the cinema. Today, audiences . . . have learnt to see the point of a scene at once and having seen it want it to pass on to the next; they catch the gist of a speech in a few words, and having caught it their attention quickly wanders His [the playwright’s] dialogue must be a sort of spoken shorthand. He must cut and cut till he has arrived at the maximum of concentration.”

W. Somerset Maugham, *The Summing Up* (Doubleday, 1938), 126.

A woman with dark hair is shown in profile, looking intently at a glass flask. The flask contains a vibrant green liquid and is held by a hand. The scene is lit with warm, golden light, creating a focused and contemplative atmosphere. The background is a soft, out-of-focus orange-brown color.

Homiletic form is usually *experimental*, because preachers are developing rhetoric to match the shape of a new, forming human consciousness.

David Buttrick, *A Captive Voice: The Liberation of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994), 67.

Why Preach With Variety?

The background of the slide features a stylized, grayscale illustration of five diverse individuals. In the top left, a woman with dark hair looks slightly to the right. In the top center, a man with a beard and short hair looks forward. In the top right, a woman with long dark hair looks slightly to the left. In the bottom left, a man with glasses and a mustache looks forward. In the bottom center, a man with short hair looks forward. In the bottom right, a woman with long dark hair looks slightly to the left. The illustration uses bold outlines and flat shading to create a modern, graphic look.

- To express godly creativity.
- To follow the example of preachers in the Bible.
- To serve the listeners.
 - Learning styles.
 - Culture.
- To be an expository preacher.

Expository preachers ask not only *what* a text means but also *how* it communicates. The Bible is a literary and rhetorical document.



Why Preach With Variety? (review four reasons)

- To express godly creativity.
- To follow the example of preachers in the Bible.
- To serve the listeners.
- To be an expository preacher.

Variety . . . How?

- Visual Communication

Group Discussion:

Describe some good examples you have seen of preachers/teachers who have used visual communication.



Two Groups.

Leader = person who went to a movie most recently.

Communication Methods and Recall

Method	Recall 3 hours later	Recall 3 days later
Telling Alone	70%	10%
Showing Alone	72%	22%
Showing and Telling	85%	65%

Francis M. Dwyer, *Strategies for Improving Visual Learning: A Handbook on Effective Selection, Design, and Use of Visual Materials* (State College, PA: Learning Services 1978) in Liftin, *Public Speaking*.

An art gallery with several framed paintings on the walls and a wooden floor. The gallery is brightly lit with track lighting on the ceiling. The paintings are displayed on white walls, and the floor is made of light-colored wood. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark rectangle in the center of the image.

“Human brains seem to have virtually limitless capacity for memory of pictures.”

Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, 25: 207-222.



A Good Word for Low-Tech Visuals

- **Technical:** Easily managed.
- **Rhetorical:** Does not create a split focus. These are visual *aids*, not visual distractions.
- **Pastoral:** reduces misunderstanding.
- **Theological:** Supports the verbal communication; modeled in Scripture.

LOW TECH: GIVE IT A TRY

- ◉ Read Psalm 32:4-5.

When I kept silent my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin.”

- ◉ Think of three ways to use two chairs to teach/illustrate the psalmist's relationship with God as described in this text.

- E.g. v. 3 (“when I kept silent”): move one chair away from first chair and make it face away.

Variety . . . How?

- **Visual Communication.**
- **Dialogue.**

Why Dialogue?



1. The Model of Our Lord.

The NT records 153 questions our Lord asked people.

Our Lord's Use of Questions

1. *Provide a point of contact.*

- Why do you weep? (John 20:15).
- Friends, haven't you any fish? (John 21:5).

2. *Arouse interest and guide thought.*

- Which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven or rise up and walk? (Luke 5:23).

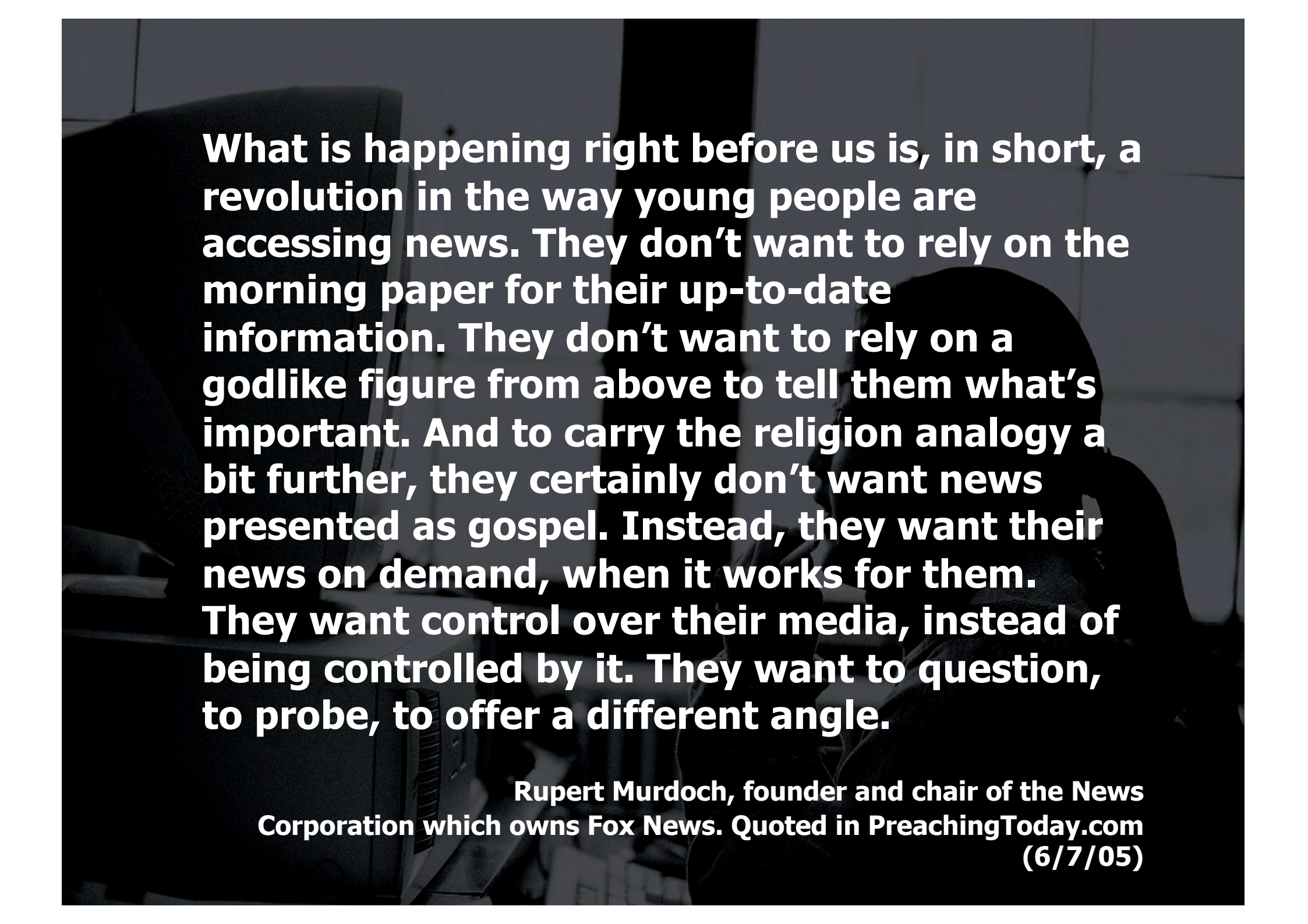
3. *Examination.*

- Whom do you say that I am? (Matt. 16:15).
- Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?
... He asked this only to test him (John 6:5-6).
- Do you love me more than these? (John 21:15).

Why Dialogue?



1. The Model of Our Lord.
2. The Model of Our Lord's Servants (like the Apostle Paul).
3. The Text.
4. Culture.



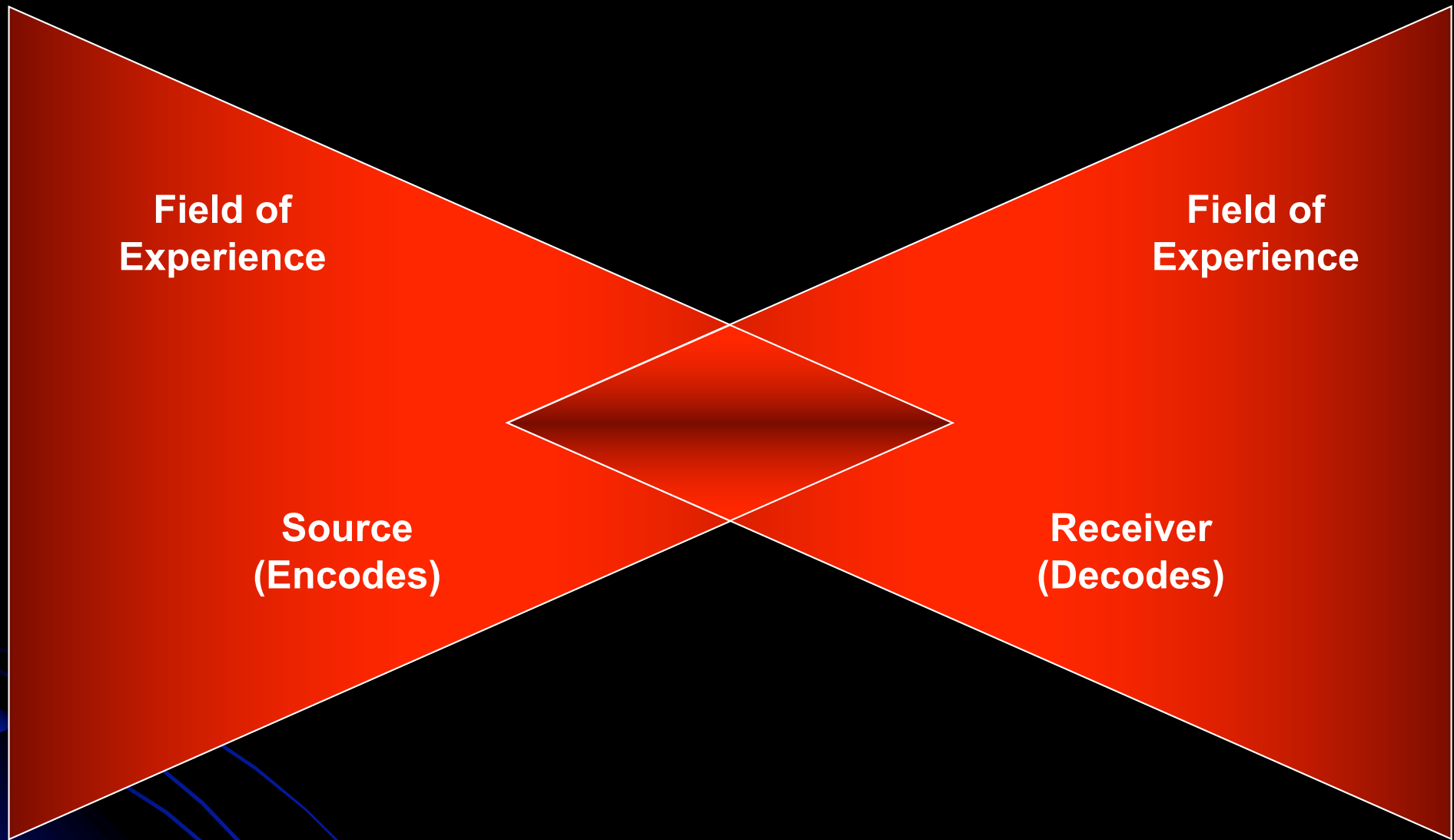
What is happening right before us is, in short, a revolution in the way young people are accessing news. They don't want to rely on the morning paper for their up-to-date information. They don't want to rely on a godlike figure from above to tell them what's important. And to carry the religion analogy a bit further, they certainly don't want news presented as gospel. Instead, they want their news on demand, when it works for them. They want control over their media, instead of being controlled by it. They want to question, to probe, to offer a different angle.

**Rupert Murdoch, founder and chair of the News Corporation which owns Fox News. Quoted in PreachingToday.com
(6/7/05)**

Why Dialogue?



1. **The Model of Our Lord.**
2. **The Model of Our Lord's Servants (like the Apostle Paul).**
3. **The Text.**
4. **Culture.**
5. **Communication Theory.**



Adapted from *The Process and Effects of Communication*, ed. Wilbur Schramm (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1954), 3-26.

Preaching as “Quadruple-think”



1. “thinking out what I have to say,”
2. “then thinking out how the other man will understand what I say,”
3. “and then re-thinking what I have to say,”
4. “so that, when I say it, he will think what I am thinking!”

Variety . . . How?

- **Visual Communication.**
- **Dialogue.**
- **Story.**

J. Richard Middleton & Brian Walsh ask four questions which every world view attempts to answer:

1. *Where are we?*

- **What is real in the world where we find ourselves?**

2. *Who are we?*

- **What is the nature and purpose of human beings?**

3. *What's wrong?*

- **How do we account for evil and pain?**

4. *What's the remedy?*

- **How are we supposed to act in this world?**

See *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1984).

Narratives can be an effective vehicle for addressing these questions.

1. **Setting** relates to “Where are we?”
2. **Character** corresponds to “Who are we?”
3. **Plot conflict** deals with “what’s wrong?”
4. **Plot resolution** provides an answer to “What’s the remedy?”

Both our identity and sense of the world are based on the story we tell of evil (what’s wrong?) and redemption (what’s the remedy?).

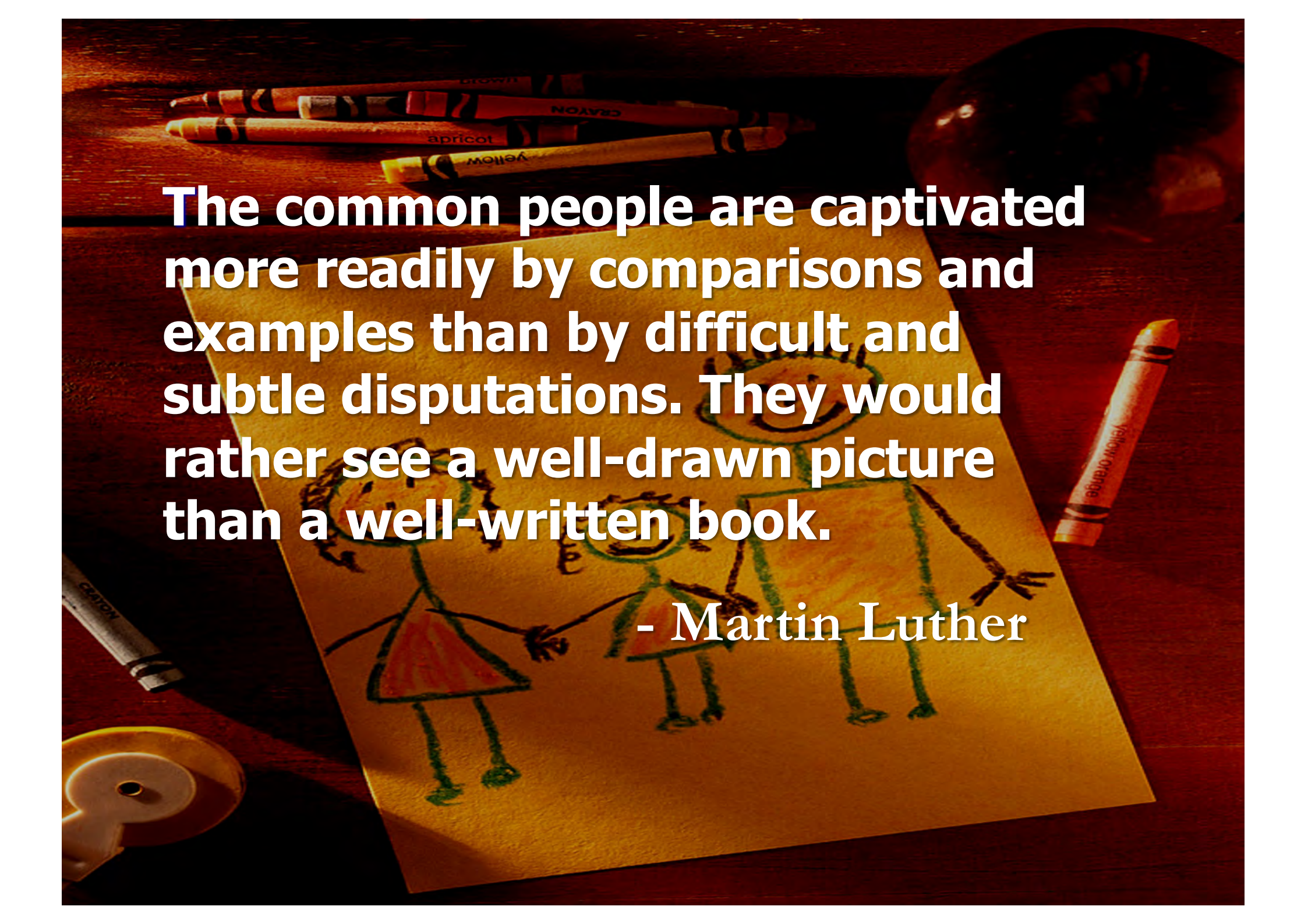
See Walsh & Middleton, *Truth Is Stranger Than it Used to Be: Biblical Faith in a Postmodern World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1995), 64.

Variety . . . How?

- **Visual Communication.**
- **Dialogue.**
- **Story.**
- **Experience/The Arts.**

No non-poetic view of
reality can be complete.

John Barrows, *Theories of Everything* cited in Miller, “The Theological Significance of Biblical Poetry,” *Language, Theology, and the Bible*, eds. Balentine and Barton (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 230.

A child's drawing on a piece of paper, showing two figures holding hands. The drawing is done with crayons and markers. The background is a wooden table with various art supplies like crayons and a paint palette.

The common people are captivated more readily by comparisons and examples than by difficult and subtle disputations. They would rather see a well-drawn picture than a well-written book.

- Martin Luther



Brainstorming:

Divide into two groups

Identify what sensory experience is here.

What could you do to recreate the impact *for yourself* as you study?

What could you do to recreate the impact *for listeners* as you preach?

Psalm 28:1

To you I call, O Lord my Rock;

do not turn a deaf ear to me.

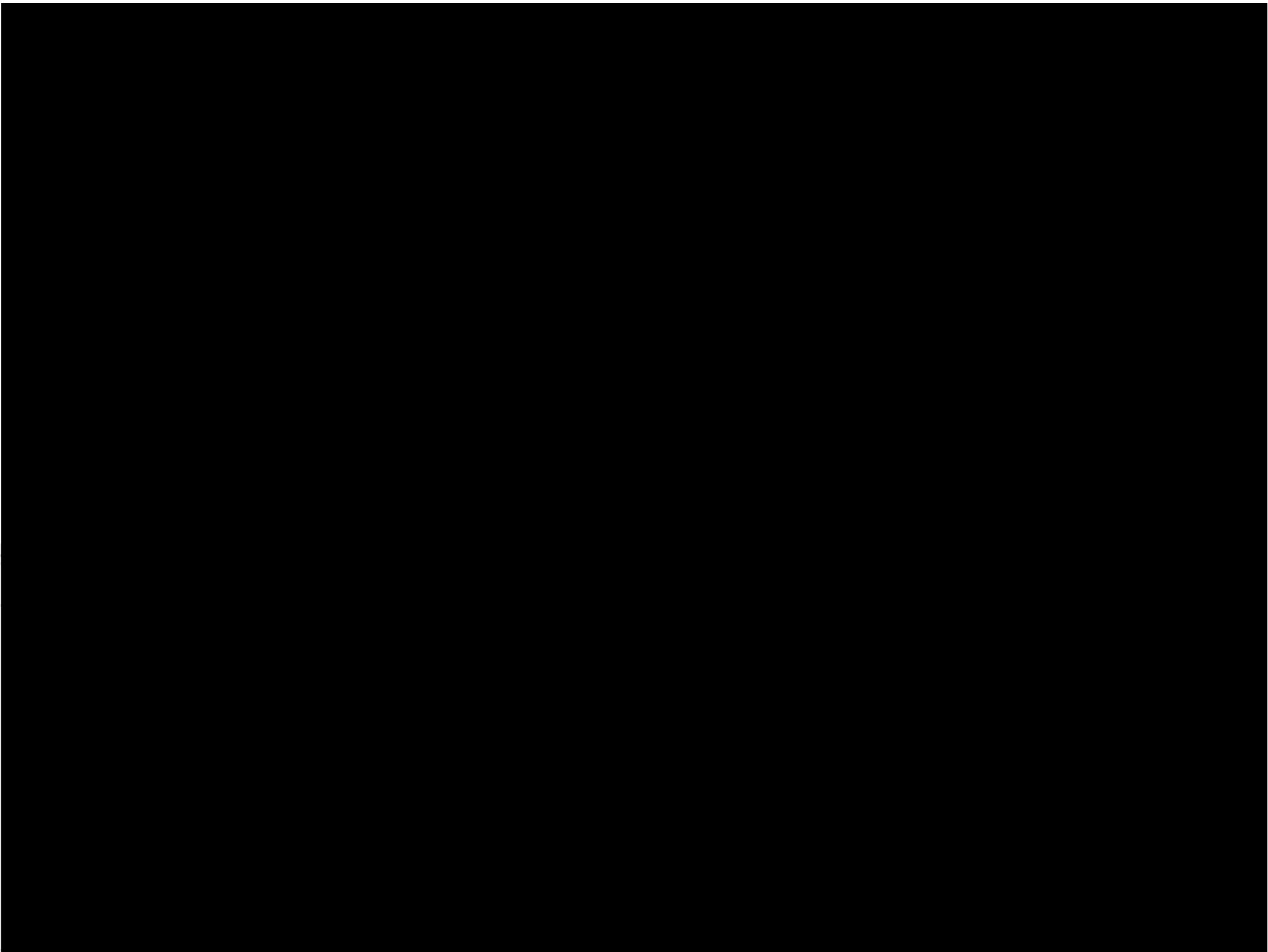
**For if you remain silent,
I will be like those who have gone down to the pit.**

**An example of the use of video
arts for ministry**

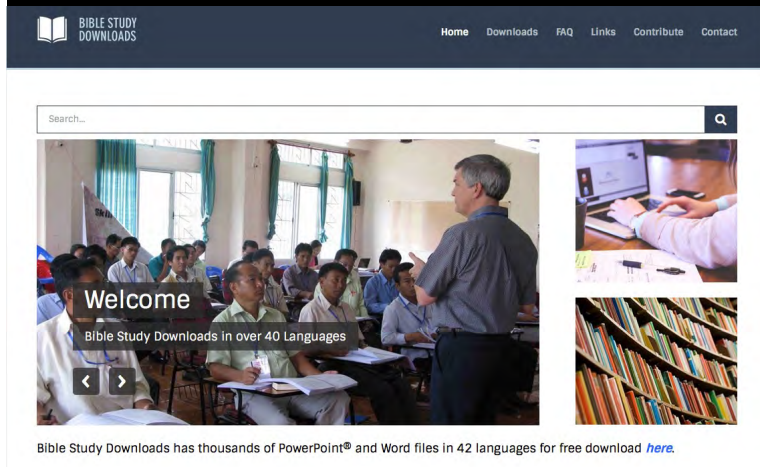
**“A Thousand Questions”
Amena Brown**

Variety . . . How? (review)

- **Visual Communication.**
- **Dialogue.**
- **Story.**
- **Experience/The Arts.**



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