

**THE UTILIZATION OF DRAMA IN SCRIPTURE PRESENTATION FOR THE
PURPOSE OF ENHANCING PARTICIPANTS' ABILITY TO RECALL,
COMPREHEND, AND APPLY PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURE TO THEIR
LIVES**

by
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and Apply Principles of Scripture to Their
Lives**

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ABSTRACT

THE UTILIZATION OF DRAMA IN SCRIPTURE PRESENTATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING PARTICIPANTS' ABILITY TO RECALL, COMPREHEND, AND APPLY PRINCIPLES OF THE SCRIPTURE TO THEIR LIVES

The following hypothesis was tested in the thesis study. The presentation of Scripture through the utilization of literal dramatization of the Scripture will increase the participant's comprehension, recall, and application of the Scripture in comparison with only hearing a formal reading of the Scripture.

A review of the literature included: dramatic events of the Bible, a history of religious drama, dramatic approaches in historical worship, the impact of media on learning, effectiveness of the use of drama in the church, effect of the postmodern era on the impact of drama and on the receptivity to the use of drama in the church, and research on drama. No research was found on the effectiveness of dramatizing Scripture in a church service nor on the impact of dramatic approaches on learning.

The first part of the study was conducted with "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11:32) being read at the Lutheran church (the control group) and acted out at the Episcopal church (the treatment group). The 59 participants completed a pretest and a post-test questionnaire. There was no significantly valid statistical difference between the results of the two groups. It was speculated that the Scripture was so familiar that there was not enough room for improvement.

The second half of the study was changed from "The Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37) to "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight" (Luke 11:1-13), which was thought to be less familiar. The Lutheran church (the treatment group) saw

a dramatized version, while the Episcopal church (the control group) heard the Scripture read in the traditional manner. The Lutheran church's mean score increased 5.25, more than two-and-one-half times greater than the Episcopal church's mean score increase of 2.09. The difference was statistically significant ($P = .014$) and substantiated the hypothesis.

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Wanda Vassallo
Dallas, Texas

THE TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE INTRODUCTION	1
Background for the Study	
The Topic, Title, and Purpose of the Thesis	
Definition of Terms	
The Need for the Study	
The Importance of the Study	
Hypothesis	
Dissemination of Results	
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	17
Dramatic Events of the Bible	
A Brief History of Religious Drama	
Dramatic Approaches in Historical Worship	
Impact of Media on Learning	
Research on Drama	
Effectiveness of the Use of Drama in the Church	
Effect of the Postmodern Era on the Impact of Drama on and Receptivity to the Use of Drama in the Church	
III. RESEARCHER'S UTILIZATION OF AND INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF DRAMATIC METHODS IN INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE	81
The Researcher's Background in and Experience with Drama	
Results of Congregational Survey	
Results of Survey for Drama Ministry Participants	
Results of a Survey of Those Who Participated in Bibliodrama	
Salient Points and Findings from the Writer's Research Paper, "An Exploration of the Use of Drama (Set in a Biblical Context and/or in a Contemporary Context) to Interpret Biblical Texts"	

Changes Made for Second Part of the Study
 Parables Used in the Study
 Plays Presented
 Time Lines for the Study
 Selection of Participating Churches
 Population of the Study
 Uniform Aspects of the Study
 Design of the Questionnaire
 Administration of the Study
 Questionnaires for Clergy and Actors
 Resources for the Study
 Interpretation of the Data

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

134

Approaches Utilized
 Hypothesis of the Study
 Description of the Study
 Hypothesis Validated
 Preference Between Two Methods of Presentation
 Play Productions
 Questionnaires for Clergy, Actors
 Implications for Theological Education and the Church
 Additional Research Needed

APPENDICES

142

- A. Questionnaire Related to The King's Company Drama Ministry and Results of Responses from The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection (Dallas, Texas) Congregation
- B. Questionnaire for King's Company Drama Participants and Results of Responses from Participants
- C. Bibliodrama - Format for Using Psychodramatic Approaches with Stories from Scripture
- D. Questionnaire about Participation in Bibliodrama and Results of Responses from Participants
- E. Script of The Parable of the Prodigal Son
- F. Script of The Parable of the Friend at Midnight
- G. Questionnaire to Pre-Test and Post-Test Participants' Knowledge of the Prodigal Son Scripture

- G. Questionnaire to Pre-Test and Post-Test Participants' Knowledge of the Prodigal Son Scripture
- H. Pretest and Post-Test Results of The Parable of the Prodigal Son Questionnaires
- I. Questionnaire to Pretest and Post-Test Participants' Knowledge of The Parable of the Friend at Midnight Scripture
- J. Pretest and Post-Test Results of The Parable of the Friend at Midnight Scripture
- K. Questionnaire and Results for Participating Clergy Regarding the Use of Dramatized Scripture
- L. Questionnaire and Results about Playing a Role in The Parable of the Prodigal Son
- M. Questionnaire and Results about Playing a Role in The Parable of the Friend at Midnight

BIBLIOGRAPHY

223

CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

Background for the Study

The art of the drama is specially related to religion: the imagination is more powerfully affected and shaped by dramatic events than by anything else. Just as our private imaginations never quite cease to act over again certain "dramatic" experiences of our individual childhoods, so the imagination of a religious community is forever rehearsing again the sublime play between celestial and earthly beings from which it traces its origin, and in terms of this drama it understands its present world.¹

Drama has proven to be a powerful, compelling medium down through the ages. In the early Christian church, drama was used to make religion clearer to the common people who had little understanding of what was going on in the unintelligible Latin ritual. Due to unfortunate abuses, drama fell into disfavor and was finally generally banned by the church in about the 16th century. A brief history of religious drama will be discussed in Chapter II. Today drama is gaining in recognition as a valuable communication tool and making a resurgence in the church.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defined drama as "a composition in verse or prose intended to portray life or character or to tell a story usually involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical

¹Philip Mairet; quoted in Fred Eastman and Louis Wilson, *Drama in the Church* (New York: Samuel French, 1933), 20.

performance.”²

Religious dramatist Everett Robertson defined religious drama as “the enlightened portrayal of the basic human situation as interpreted through the Bible. It is the expression of man’s relationship to God as stated through the inspired writing of the Bible.”³

David Riemenschneider, pastor of Bloomingdale Church, Bloomingdale, Indiana, evaluated the effectiveness of the use of dramatizations as introductions to his sermons in his doctoral thesis. He shared these insights in his thesis.

Dramatic illustrations are slices of life that invite people’s full attention. . . . There are now two generations of adults in America that have grown up on a diet of network TV, video, and film. Today’s youth seem addicted to the visual story medium. Children, teens and adults often depend on the visualized story as the method of acquiring much of the information that they use every day. Even the evening news comes in the form of “stories.” Since we are in a quest to communicate well with the video generation (which also “watches” in church Sunday morning), we are wise to value the story medium. Specifically, we can capitalize on the acted out story (dramatic illustration) as a winsome friend that converses freely in a medium which people know, relate to, and enjoy.⁴

The Bible is replete with compelling stories. It includes everything from the dramatic narrative of the shepherd boy David slaying the giant to the imagination-capturing parables told by Jesus.

The role of the story in learning retention is recognized by learning experts. For example, Dr. Roger C. Schank, director of the Institute for the Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, stated that “Human memory is story-based. Our knowledge

²Henry Bosley Woolf, ed., *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Meriam Company, 1977), 345.

³Everett Robertson, *Introduction to Church Drama* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1978), 4.

⁴David Riemenschneider, “‘Life Illustrated’ Stories Offer Added Focus to Sermons,” *Preaching*, July/Aug. 1997, 30.

of the world is more or less equivalent to the set of experiences that we have had, but our communication is limited by the number of stories we know to tell. In other words, all we have are experiences, but all we can effectively tell others are stories.”⁵

The impact of mass media on learning also cannot be overlooked. Lloyd J. Averill, faculty member, University of Washington, and adjunct professor of theology and preaching, Northwest Theological Union Seminary, Seattle, Washington, made this observation.

The mass media have irrevocably altered the way we receive information, and the church must pay attention to these changed modes of communication if it is to be heard. Notice how TV operates. For one thing, it tells a lot of stories. TV programming is filled with situation comedies, dramas of various sorts, soap operas, and feature films. And there is a reason for this. People like stories. They always have and they always will. Jesus knew this, so he told a lot of stories during his ministry.⁶

In his book, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Neil Postman, professor of communications at New York University, wrote about the impact of technological advances in the media and prevailing influence of television. He claimed that America has become an image-addicted culture as a result and postulated that a major shift has occurred in the way that information is received. He observed, “. . . on television, discourse is conducted largely through visual imagery, which is to say that television gives us a conversation of images not words.”⁷

Certainly drama combines the visual image with the aural approach and action to tell its stories even as television does. While drama predates television by centuries, it contains the same basic advantageous elements that television offers with

⁵Roger C. Schank, *Tell Me a Story* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 12.

⁶Lloyd J. Averill, “The Art of Saying Something,” *Christianity Today*, 21 Oct.1988, 29-32.

⁷Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking, 1985), 7.

what the author considers the extra attention-keeping dimension of the use of live actors rather than smaller images on a screen. She also believes that, because of the constant visual conditioning on everyone's senses by television and other media, drama has become an even more powerful medium than it was in the past.

A careful reading of many of the rich narratives found in the Bible reveals that they are nearly already written in dramatic form. Much dialogue is contained in passage after passage. It is often a simple matter, then, to turn a Biblical text into a script for a dramatization of that text by using a narration to set the scene and provide the continuity and by removing the "he said," "she said" from the dialogical passages.

In this manner, the integrity of Scripture in whatever translation is desired can be maintained with the added dimension of dramatic interpretation. Also, due to its simplicity, this approach enables even a small church without the services of a playwright or director with extensive theatrical background to use dramatization within a church service effectively. A variety of approaches in presentation are possible, everything from pantomime and reader's theater to dramatizations and choral reading.

Paul M. Miller and Dan Dunlop, practitioners and seminar leaders in the use of drama in the church, declared in their book, *Create a Drama Ministry*, "Religious drama is capable of taking all of these elements of good story-telling, and then adds another dimension: the capacity of captivating an audience and forcing them to identify so strongly with the situation that every viewer is compelled to transfer what he hears and sees on the stage to his own life."⁸

Miller and Dunlop went on to observe that "Drama has the innate capacity of immediacy; it attracts attention and involves the audience. Drama relates spiritual

⁸Paul M. Miller and Dan Dunlop, *Create a Drama Ministry* (Kansas City, Mo.: Lillenas Publishing Company, 1984), 15.

concepts to everyday life in non-threatening terms.”⁹

The Title and Topic of the Project Thesis

The title of the Project Thesis is: “The Utilization of Drama in Scripture Presentation for the Purpose of Enhancing Participants’ Ability to Recall, Comprehend, and Apply Principles of Scripture to Their Lives.” The topic of this research study is a comparison of the effectiveness of presenting a literal dramatization of the Scripture with the traditional formal reading of the same passage from a lectern or pulpit in a liturgical service. The effectiveness of the study will be determined by evaluating the participants’ ability to recall the content of the passage which was read, to understand the principles contained in the passage, and to make application of those principles or the relevance to their lives.

Definition of Terms

“Recall” means the ability to remember the details of the story. Who were the main characters? What were the key points in the plot of the story? How did it end?

“Understand” means the participant demonstrates her or his ability to express the meaning of the story. What was the teller trying to get the listener to see or take from the story?

“Make application” means the participant demonstrates his or her ability to take a story told hundreds of years ago, presented in an ancient time and setting, and relate the expressed principles to his or her oh-so-different life today. Can the participant make this vital connection?

“Liturgical service” is a church service using a set, prescribed form of worship. This includes reading from the Old Testament, New Testament, Psalms, and Gospel;

⁹Ibid., 16.

statements by the minister; prayers read together; The Apostle's Creed; and the rite of the Eucharist.

The Need for the Study

A paucity of research exists on the results of the use of drama in the church. Researchers have conducted a number of studies on using creative and participatory dramatic techniques in teaching subjects such as English literature. However, they have given little attention to determining the impact of drama on an audience's retention of information and understanding of story and principles contained in dramatic presentations. No research is available on the use of dramatized Scripture as an effective approach. This finding led the writer to a realization of the vital importance of investigating this area through research.

David Riemenschneider conducted the study closest to the researcher's project in 1993. However, his study did not relate to the evaluation of drama in interpreting Scripture. His purpose was to discover whether the use of enacted illustration as a visual introduction to the sermon had a significant effect on the listener's level of retention of the sermon. His thesis was titled "Do Enacted Drama Sketches That Introduce the Sunday Morning Sermons Significantly Enhance the Level of Cognitive Retention of the Primary Lesson and the Practical Application of the Sermon for Attenders of the Sunday Morning Services at The Bloomingdale Church?"¹⁰ Pages 60-62 in the Review of the Literature summarize his major findings.

In 1994 David S. Thompson conducted a second study that has some relationship to this project. The title of his dissertation is "An Analysis of the

¹⁰David Riemenschneider, "Do Enacted Drama Sketches That Introduce the Sunday Morning Sermons Significantly Enhance the Level of Cognitive Retention of the Primary Lesson and the Practical Application of the Sermon for Attenders of the Sunday Morning Services at The Bloomingdale Church?" (D.Min. thesis, Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1993).

Effectiveness of the Dramatic Monologue Compared with the Traditional Sermon.” His purpose was to compare the effectiveness of first person enacted narratives with the traditional sermon for attentive listening, comprehensive knowledge, and volitional action in communicating the truth about sin (its meaning, its consequences, and its conquest) in order to determine which method, if either, is superior. Pages 63-64 in the Review of the Literature summarize his findings.

Major denominations are experiencing shrinking membership. While the reasons for this development are difficult to pinpoint, they are obviously numerous and complex. Churches are searching for ways to reverse this trend. Perhaps drama, with its ability to provide variety, interest, and involvement, may be one approach in worship that might help to stem the tide of the shrinking membership being experienced by major denominations. While an investigation of this possibility lies beyond the scope of the present study, this thesis study will relate to this feasibility with the hope that it will prompt further research on this point. The second part of the study will give participants the opportunity to compare their experience between hearing Scripture presented as a formal reading and seeing Scripture enacted as a literal dramatization. Comparison will be made in four areas: interest, memory of detail, understanding the message, and relevance to life.

An excerpt from a study conducted by researcher Reginald W. Bibby for the United Church of Canada in 1994 points out, typically, what is happening. He painted his scenario from the then-current situation and said that it is that of a dying church, with membership rolls shrinking from a then-current level of 700,000 to perhaps 50,000 by the middle of the twenty-first century. He wrote, “As things stand, it’s precisely what is going to happen to the United Church during the next century. If critics want to ‘get literal,’ the denomination will continue to exist--but in dramatically

diminished form.”¹¹

Based on their research and study, Ronald E. Vallet and Charles E. Zech, recognized experts in the field of stewardship and church finance, in their book *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis*, made several pertinent observations. These are some of their conclusions.

1. . . . many denominations are experiencing restructuring, reduced staff and programming, lower staff morale, program retrenchment, relocation of “headquarters,” and a loss of vision and clarity about their mission.
2. Biblical illiteracy is a major concern at many levels of the church.
3. In the minds of many observers, the very identity of denominations is at stake.
4. Denominations must change in faithful ways if they are to survive.¹²

The impact of television and other media is something the church can no longer afford to ignore. Without compromising its message, the church can capitalize on the heightened impact of and familiarity with multi-media approaches so prevalent in today's society.

“Media in the Home,” a study conducted by the Annenberg Public Policy Center in 2000, produced these findings.

* Almost half of all families with children ages 2-17 have a television, a VCR, a computer, and a video game player in the home.

* For the first time in the five years that Annenberg has been tracking media in

¹¹Reginald W. Bibby, *Unitrends: A Summary Report Prepared for the Department of Stewardship Services of the United Church of Canada* (Toronto: Department of Stewardship Services of The United Church of Canada, in association with the Department of Sociology of The University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta, 1994), 74-75; quoted in Ronald E. Vallet and Charles E. Zech, *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis: Issues & Possibilities* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 148.

¹²Ronald E. Vallet and Charles E. Zech, *The Mainline Church's Funding Crisis: Issues & Possibilities* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995), 160.

the home, internet subscriptions surpassed newspaper subscriptions by 10 percent.

- * Children are likely to spend 4.5 hours per day in front of some form of video screen--television, computer or video game.¹³

The following information is based on "Is the Three-Hour Rule Living Up to Its Potential?" This was an analysis by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the core educational programs on ten commercial broadcast stations in the Philadelphia area during the 1999/2000 season.

- * For families with children 2 - 17 years old: 97 percent have a VCR; 70 percent have a computer; 68 percent have video game equipment; 52 percent have online access; and 42 percent have a newspaper subscription.

- * In the bedrooms of children between 8 and 16 years old: 57 percent have a television set; 39 percent have video game equipment; 36 percent have cable service; 32 percent have a telephone; 30 percent have a VCR; 20 percent have a computer; and 11 percent have access to the Internet.

- * Of all media surveyed, children spend the most time with the television, more than two hours per day.

- * The more time children spend watching TV, the more time they spend using other media.¹⁴

TV Guide magazine reported the following data that reflect the extent to which television permeates American culture.

- * Prior to kindergarten, the average child will have seen 5,000 hours of television.

- * Children may have watched up to 22,000 hours of TV by the time they

¹³Annenberg Public Policy Center, "Media in the Home" study (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, June 26, 2000) [news release, Internet].

¹⁴Annenberg Public Policy Center, "Is the Three-Hour Rule Living Up to Its Potential?" study (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, June 26, 2000) [news release, Internet].

graduate from high school.

- * A favorite children's video is watched an average of 13 times.

- * Seventy percent of TV viewers say they tune in for escape; only 1 in 10 look to television for intellectual stimulation.

- * Fifty percent of Americans regularly watch TV while eating dinner.¹⁵

For some, apparently one medium is not enough to keep their attention. A Cyber Dialogue study recorded that "Over 8.5 million 'media junkies' in the U. S. report going online while watching TV. Such viewers are more likely to use advance technologies such as Shockwave or chat."¹⁶

From a survey conducted by the National Institute on Media and the Family and the University of Oklahoma, one may conclude that teens like interactive opportunities with their video. Eighty-four percent of the 137 teens of both genders in grades 8-11 who were surveyed said they play video/electronic games. The number rose to 92 percent for the boys. Eighty-nine percent (91 percent of the boys) responded that their parents never put limits on how much time they may spend playing video games.¹⁷

The immersion of our culture in images has resulted in a greater dependency on sight for learning, attention keeping, and stimulation. While drama is an ancient medium, it has many commonalities with more recent multi-media developments. Drama is multi-sensory in its approach and, therefore, newly contemporary in its impact. People have become what might be termed "visual addicts." As a result, drama, in a sense, has had a "makeover," resulting in a renewed and improved allure for the masses.

¹⁵"Digital-Age Data," *TV Guide*, 26 Oct. - 1 Nov. 1996, 68.

¹⁶Cyber Dialogue study (cited on CNN, 29 Oct. 1998, Internet).

¹⁷David Walsh, "Whoever Tells the Stories Defines the Culture," Media and the Family study (Norman, Okla.: National Institute on Media and the Family) (Internet), n.d.

"How much of the appetite for drama is the result of the dominant media culture in American life?" Steve Pederson, drama director at Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois, was asked this question in an interview for *Leadership* magazine. He responded that "No question the media have helped create a taste for drama. People today are so bombarded with images and fast-paced appeal that we have to speak that language to be fully understood. It's one of those 'cultural cues' the church needs to read and take advantage of in reaching people."¹⁸

William J. Bausch, based on his experience as a priest in the Diocese of Trenton, New Jersey, and many years of observation, confirmed this phenomenon.

Our audience is--like us all--incessantly shaped by the media in every way and therefore are [*sic*] a highly visual generation. Video games, computers, the ever-present and ever-watched television, books shape their perceptions. Therefore, they are a tough audience because they already have been brainwashed with sophisticated, glossy, secular images . . .

. . . they are not used to listening, not much tuned in to lecture, debates, and homilies. They want action. Teachers all over the land lament the shorter and shorter attention span of children and the need to constantly entertain them. Thus, we must make the most of our short time with them. Third, they--and we--are consequently highly susceptible to "visual" stories, image stories. They are a visual, not audio, people.¹⁹

Last, but not least, is the need to explore possible ways to make Scripture seem more relevant to the problems and challenges of contemporary life. How can events that took place in ancient times be made vital to a person living in the twenty-first century?

¹⁸Steve Pederson, "What's Drama Doing in Church?" interview, *Leadership*, Summer 1993, 52

¹⁹William J. Bausch, *Storytelling the Word: Homilies and How to Write Them* (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications, 1996), 23-25.

The Importance of the Study

Since Scripture is central to the beliefs and understanding of the principles of Christianity, exploring possible approaches for making Scripture more memorable, more comprehensible, and more applicable to daily life would be a worthwhile and beneficial project. Reg Grant, professor of drama at Dallas Theological Seminary, made this comment. "Drama invites participants into the worship event. It prompts them to say, 'I never saw it that way before.' Drama doesn't bring the Bible to life, but it reveals the life that's already there."²⁰

This research study will determine the impact and effectiveness of using dramatic approaches to interpreting Scripture as compared with the formal reading of Scripture as it is traditionally presented in a church service. The research results could be of tremendous value to individual churches and ministers who are searching for ways to make Scripture more understandable and relevant to the lives of their congregants and to the Christian church in general.

The study will present a model of the way drama may be used within a church service for the enhancement of Scripture. The appendices will contain descriptions and scripts of the dramatizations used in the study.

Using actors from the congregation can provide an opportunity for people to use their God-given gifts in ministry in the church. While the study itself does not specifically address the spiritual impact on those who participate, findings described in the "Review of the Literature" and other investigation done by the author speak to the positive results that are frequently experienced.

Churches that already use drama in other ways, such as an Easter dramatization or as a sermon illustration, might be interested in expanding their use of drama to include the acting out of Scripture if the study substantiates its effectiveness.

²⁰Reg Grant, interview by author, 3 Nov. 1998, Dallas, Tex.

Also, if the assumptions are proven to be true, Christian educators might see an advantage in using dramatization in teaching Biblical principles to both children and adults.

The findings will compare the impact of dramatization on males and females, different age groups, the time devoted to Bible study, and the length of involvement of participants in the church. This information should be of value to church leaders in planning events such as retreats and activities for various groups.

A far-reaching, positive result from this study might also impact theological education. Perhaps it will prove to be a beneficial influence in persuading more seminary administrators to consider offering courses in drama in their curricula.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis will be tested as part of the study. The presentation of Scripture through the utilization of literal dramatization of the Scripture will increase the participant's comprehension, recall, and application of the Scripture in comparison with only hearing a formal reading of the Scripture.

Literal dramatization refers to using a narrator to set the scene and props and costumed actors to act out the story and speak the words using the language from the Scripture as it is written in the Bible. Formal reading refers to the Scripture being read from the Bible by a layreader or minister in the traditional manner.

The Hypothesis suggests that literal dramatization is more effective than a formal reading. The purpose of this research study is to discern the validity of the hypothesis by evaluating the participants' ability to comprehend, recall, and make application of the Scripture to their lives.

Dissemination of Results

The researcher's motivation for exploring this topic and conducting this research is to share the results with ministers, denominational and seminary leaders, and other interested persons for their consideration of the worthwhileness of using dramatic approaches in presenting Scripture. Possible methods in disseminating the results of the study might include these approaches.

1. Holding a colloquium of liturgical leaders in the Dallas-Fort Worth area to review the research study, findings, and applications for ministry.
2. Writing a book on the use of drama in the church that would include information concerning the study
3. Conducting workshops for interested church leaders on methods of presenting Scripture in dramatic form
4. Including pertinent information regarding the parameters and outcomes of the study in articles to be submitted to national magazines for ministers, religious educators, and worship leaders
5. Making the outcomes available to denominational headquarters and newsletter editors
6. Making the results of the study known to seminary heads and encouraging them to consider the possibility of including a course in the use of drama in the church in their curricula.

Parameters of the Study

The study will be conducted in two liturgical churches of similar size with congregations of comparable socio-economic levels. Members of the two churches will serve as participants in the study. Other members will be actors in the dramatizations to be presented of two of Jesus' parables.

Participants from one church will serve as the control group and will hear a formal reading of the Scripture as it is traditionally presented in a liturgical church. Participants from the other church will form the treatment group and will see the same Scripture presented in the form of a literal dramatization, using a narrator, costumed actors to represent the characters, and simple props and set pieces.

Participants in both churches will complete the same pretest questionnaire anonymously before the service to determine their knowledge of the facts of the story, their understanding of the meaning of the Scripture, and their belief as to how well they are able to make application of the message of the passage to their lives. After the service, participants in both churches will complete the same post-test questionnaire anonymously to once again determine their knowledge of the facts of the story, their understanding of the meaning of the Scripture, and their belief as to how well they are able to make application of the message of the passage to their lives.

Results will be tabulated, and the data from the two churches will be compared in the three categories outlined above. Results will also be broken down into subgroups, such as sex and age, to determine what the impact might have been in certain categories of respondents. Responses to certain types of questions, for example, those requesting information based on visual cues, will be isolated to find out what other pertinent findings may be discerned.

Various elements, both past and present, will, no doubt, impact the importance and the success of this study. These include perusing events of the Bible to determine ways dramatic approaches are recorded in Scripture and studying dramatic techniques that have been used in historical Judeo-Christian worship. Reviewing research studies that have been conducted on the use of drama and on the impact of media on learning should also provide valuable insight. Experiences and opinions of

church drama professionals can contribute beneficial understanding and successful methods in using drama in the church. Also, attempting to relate the dynamics of the postmodern era to the specific dimensions of a dramatic presentation should be illuminating and helpful. Therefore, attention is now focused on dramatic approaches found in the Bible, the history of drama as it relates to religion, what others have learned from past investigation and practice, and how drama may pertain to the dynamics of contemporary society.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Drama is often said to have originated in worship. However, the Bible is replete with instances of divine interaction with humans in what might be termed creative dramatizations or dramatic incidents. *Roget's Super Thesaurus* lists the following synonyms for the word dramatic: "intense, exciting, emotional, striking, vivid, melodramatic, climactic, moving, tense, histrionic, suspenseful, electrifying, gripping, riveting."²¹ Encounters, such as God's designation of a rainbow to signify his covenant with Noah not to destroy the earth with another flood (Gen. 9:8-17), Moses' hearing God speak from the burning bush (Ex. 3:1-6), and God's rain of manna and quail to feed the Israelites on their journey to the Promised Land (Ex. 16) are only a few of the examples that could be cited that demonstrate the myriad ways that God physically and emotionally involved the people in those events and appealed to their five senses.

Many of the Judeo-Christian observances and rituals involving the senses and resulting in participatory action have their origin in Scripture. These have been practiced or "acted out" in Jewish and Christian religious ceremonies and services through the ages.

Dramatic Events of the Bible

Certainly Hollywood producers have recognized the dramatic value of stories related in Scripture. Movies based on the Bible, such as *The Ten Commandments*,

²¹Marc McCutcheon, *Roget's Super Thesaurus* (Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1995) 166-67.

David and Bathsheba, Esther, The Robe, and Samson and Delilah, were tremendous box office hits and reaped great financial rewards even though they sometimes strayed from the Biblical account.

Various scholars have also recognized and addressed the intensely dramatic aspect of divine interaction with human beings. Many Biblical commentaries note the emotionally gripping approaches of God and Jesus in communicating with men and women as revealed in Scripture. The writer, in researching these sources, did not discover any scholarly or theological statements that negated this concept.

Walter Brueggemann, Professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia, commented eloquently on these methods as they related to Yahweh's relationship with Israel in the sacrificial system which he instituted.

What strikes one repeatedly in this exposition of tabernacle, priesthood, mercy seat, and sacrificial system is the visual, material quality of everything that is authorized and proposed. . . . The tabernacle and all of the vehicles for presence are designed to appeal to the senses, and especially to visual sensibility.

This is matched by a recognition that the tabernacle evokes a sense of dramatic participation, so that the active verbs of making and doing, bringing and offering require Israelites to be actively, physically engaged in the practice of presence. I suggest that the visual power of the sanctuary is to be all-containing and all-consuming, so that any reservation of disbelief is overwhelmed, and the participant is able to give self wholly and fully and without qualification to this relationship. . . . Worship that is visual, active, dramatic, and all-comprehending was a thing of joy for Israel, not a burden. . . . This worship is theater and play, . . . whereby practice generates reality.²²

Other scholars have noted this dramatic phenomenon in relation to specific Biblical passages. They have used the terminology of drama to describe what occurred.

²² Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 668-9.

The Plagues of Egypt (Exod. 5:1-11:10)

Brueggemann observed that as early as 1940, Johannes Pedersen, former Professor of Semitic Philology at the University of Copenhagen, related the plague narrative found in Exod. 5:1-11:10 as reflecting a "liturgic drama."²³ Pedersen discussed this insight in a 10-page discourse in his book, *Israel--Its Life and Culture, III--IV*.²⁴ He said, in part, "The legend purposes to describe the mythical fight between Yahweh and his enemies and this purpose dominates the narrative to such a degree that it is impossible to show what were the events that have been transformed into this grand drama."²⁵

Brueggemann makes this dramatic analogy repeatedly in his discussion of what he terms "The Narrative of Liberation" (Exod. 1:1-15:21). These are some of his insights.

* "At the center of this narrative, as its key actor, is Yahweh, a God known provisionally in the book of Genesis, and now known fully by God's proper name (3:14; 6:2)."²⁶

* "There is no secondary or alternative language by which this tale of God and Israel can be told. It must be kept, transmitted, and received precisely in its dramatic form."²⁷

* "... the text requires listeners (participants in the liturgy) to imagine and construe themselves through the actions of this drama, so that we know ourselves as

²³Walter Brueggemann, *Exodus*, in vol. 1, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. David L. Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 722.

²⁴Johannes Pedersen, *Israel--Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 3 and 4, 728-37.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 730.

²⁶Brueggemann, 690.

²⁷*Ibid.*

offspring and children of this narrative.”²⁸

* “This first episode only introduces an extended drama of the plagues. Nothing yet is resolved here; therefore, too much should not be claimed at this beginning point in the drama.”²⁹

* “This most dramatic narrative of the departure is arranged in a sequence of quite distinct scenes.”³⁰

Like Brueggemann, the writer recognizes the events described in the deliverance of the Israelites as though they were scenes in a play. They are practically written in the Bible in dramatic form with much dialogue and action. But the question, of course, is how could they possibly be enacted on a church platform?

The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:1-22)

One of many other examples that could be given of God’s use of drama is when God provided for the Israelites the ceremony of the day of atonement that would dramatize what Christ would do for humankind (Lev. 16:1-22). On that day two young goats were taken to the gate of the tabernacle and presented to the high priest as a sacrifice. The two animals had to be of equal weight, height, and purity. A lot decided which goat would be used for the blood sacrifice. The other goat would become the scapegoat and be kept outside the holy place.

The first goat was taken to the altar and killed. Its blood was taken into the holy of holies in a bowl and was presented with incense. The resulting smoke represented the presence of God. Then the priest sprinkled the blood on the mercy seat once and in front of it seven times. Outside, where they could not see, every person in the camp

²⁸Ibid., 691.

²⁹Ibid., 740.

³⁰Ibid., 792.

lay prostrate throughout the entire sacrificial procedure which meant that atonement was being made for their sins.

The second part of the ceremony revolved around the scapegoat, which in Hebrew means "removal." The priest, dressed in his regular priestly clothes, laid both hands on the scapegoat's head. This symbolized the transference of the sins of the whole camp, which he confessed, to the head of the animal. Then a strong, physically-fit man would lead the scapegoat into the wilderness, place it in a spot surrounded by ledges from which it was impossible to escape.

David Wilkerson, pastor of Times Square Church, New York City, described the scene like this. ". . . what a sight that was to the people! All of Israel stood watching, cheering, rejoicing as the scapegoat was led away. '. . . Not only are our sins forgiven--but they are taken away from us!' The people knew that as the goat was led out of their midst, it would never be seen again. And neither would the Lord remember their sins. So, a mighty shout went up from the camp!"³¹

Old Testament Prophets

Later, Old Testament prophets, according to God's directions, often acted out and dramatized their prophetic messages. Some of their approaches might be termed eccentric, deviant, or even bizarre. However, they no doubt commanded instant attention and resulted in continued involvement from those they were trying to reach.

Herbert Sennett, professor of theater arts at Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Florida, wrote this statement. ". . . the messages that the prophet tried to convey were more effectively communicated through the use of his unorthodox, and even comical, dramatics than had he simply tried to 'preach' to the highly discouraged

³¹David Wilkerson, "The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving!" *Times Square Church Pulpit Series*, 21 July 1997, 3.

people around him. And his actions became symbolic of God identifying with His people--a sort of 'life-involvement'. In other words, God was more interested in the 'word' being received than He was in how the 'word' was presented."³²

The author finds Sennett's assessment of the prophets' approaches as being symbolic of the way God identifies with humans fascinating indeed. Since God formed men and women, the Creator understands their mental processes and what it takes to get and hold their interest. God's creativity also extends to using myriad approaches in communicating his message in particularly effective ways with different people. Today one might say that God is the ultimate expert in individualized instruction.

Isaiah (Isa. 20)

Isaiah walked naked and barefooted for three years. His purpose was to signify how the king of Assyria would lead away the Egyptians as exiles. Certainly no one could ignore that spectacle.

Gene M. Tucker, Professor of Old Testament, Emeritus, Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, wrote that "The behavior is bizarre, but that is what prophets do." Commenting on the style of the chapter, which he termed "remarkably matter-of-fact, given the shock and embarrassment expected from such behavior," he wrote this analysis. "The importance of this chronological information is both to set the stage and to indicate from the beginning the outcome of the events. . . . Isaiah's strange public nakedness does not simply dramatize something, although it does do that. It is more than a visual device to communicate a message; it is a 'sign and a portent' (v.3)."³³

Willem A. Van Gemeren, Professor of Old Testament, Reformed Theological

³²Herbert Sennett, *Religion and Dramatics* (New York: University Press of America, 1995), 44.

³³Gene M. Tucker, *Isaiah*, in vol. 6, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. David L. Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 182.

Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, commented on the meaning of Isaiah's actions, "The prophet dramatizes his empathy to portray the sudden fall of Babylon."³⁴ Tucker continued with this insight into the role that Isaiah and other prophets played.

It is difficult to ignore the story of Isaiah walking around naked and barefoot, but what are we to make of it? It is not surprising to hear of bizarre actions by many of the other prophets, given their place in society and what we know of their personalities. These would include Jeremiah, always on the outer fringes of power, or Ezekiel, who sees weird visions, or Amos, a man from the country in the capital city, or Hosea, who married a prostitute. But Isaiah? He was among the urban elite, with access to kings, often in and around both the court and the Temple.

The persistence of such reports about such diverse prophets calls attention to two points. First, the performance of symbolic actions was deeply rooted in the institution of prophecy and not in the individual prophets' personalities or social locations. Second, the acts were not about the prophets but about their messages and vocations. They were not preoccupied with themselves. None of these prophetic symbolic actions is self-serving.³⁵

Tucker's insight into Isaiah's influence and elite position in society helped the writer to understand more fully just how much Isaiah risked in reputation and standing by his shocking behavior. Tucker's view of the prophets' actions growing out of the institution of prophecy rather than their own personalities appears to clash with the contemporary emphasis placed on the personality and charisma of the conveyor of God's word.

Elijah (1 Kings 18:19-40)

Elijah certainly staged an electrifying drama to prove that God was indeed the only true and living God. Sparks flew when he confronted the 450 prophets of Baal

³⁴Willem A. Van Gemeren, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989), 488.

³⁵Tucker, 183.

and the 400 prophets of Asherah at Mount Carmel.

He asked that a bull be given to the prophets and also that a bull be given to him. Each bull was then laid on the wood with no fire. He then told them to call on the name of their god and he would call on the name of the Lord. He said, "The god who answers by fire is indeed God." The prophets cried to their gods from morning until noon and cut themselves, but there was no response.

Elijah then built an altar unto the name of the Lord, made a trench around the altar, put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. Three times he had four jars of water poured on the burnt offering and the wood, so that water ran all around the altar and filled the trench.

Terry L. Brensinger, professor at Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania, described this portion of the story in this manner. "Elijah's sense of the dramatic is further seen when, given his turn, he has the bull thoroughly drenched with water. Yet, without any further theatrics or arm-twisting, he prays and Yahweh sends fire to consume the bull. At the sight of such a demonstration, the entire community affirms that Yahweh, not Baal, is indeed the true God (v.39)."³⁶

Choon-Leong Seow, Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary, termed the observers "the audience" and reflected, "This is an enormously entertaining chapter. Here we find a story of a high government official furtively subverting a quasi-state-sponsored pogrom and paying homage to the most wanted dissident in the country. We have an account, too, of a confrontation between a king and a prophet . . . Above all, we have the high drama of a mountaintop contest between the representatives of two different religions, each

³⁶Terry L. Brensinger, *1 and 2 Kings*, in *Asbury Bible Commentary*, ed. Eugene Carpenter and Wayne McCown (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 406.

trying to prove the superiority of its deity.”³⁷

Jeremiah (Jer. 19)

Jeremiah broke a clay jar to represent the destruction of the city of the elders of the Valley of Ben Hinnom. F. F. Bruce, Emeritus Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, wrote, “The prophetic sign is followed by the prophetic word; action and speech together constitute the prophecy.”³⁸

Patrick D. Miller, Professor of Old Testament Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary, observed, “Like the preceding chapter, chap. 19 opens with a parable centering around the work of a potter as the vehicle for symbolic action. The prophet is commanded to act out a judgment speech against the people of Judah and Jerusalem. . . . This time, however, Jeremiah is not an observer but the actor. The action builds in two stages, each followed by an announcement of judgment by the Lord.”³⁹

Miller had this to say about the communication approaches of the prophets. “Prophetic speech is rich in its communicative power, often using word play with other forms of communication to vivify and impress. The audience sees and hears at the same time. Before the final stage of this symbolic action (the breaking of the pot), the point of the clay jug has been scored.”⁴⁰ Motivational speakers as well as ministers and teachers would do well to study the ways of Jeremiah and the other prophets’ approaches, which Miller ably pointed out.

³⁷Choon-Leong Seow, *The First and Second Book of Kings*, in vol. 3, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. David L. Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 135-36.

³⁸F. F. Bruce, *Ezekiel*, in *The International Bible Commentary*, ed. F. F. Bruce (Carmel, New York: Guideposts, 1986), 815.

³⁹Patrick D. Miller, *Jeremiah*, in vol. 6, *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. David L. Petersen (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 721.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 722.

Ezekiel (Eze. 5)

Certainly one of the most extravagant dramatizations was Ezekiel's extended, complex pantomime. His histrionics included cutting off his hair and beard with a razor, burning a third of it inside the city of Jerusalem, cutting another third in smaller pieces all around the city, and scattering the remaining third to the wind to symbolize the fate that awaited the people of Jerusalem.

Ralph H. Alexander, Professor Hebrew Scripture, Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon, described the various steps in the enactment.

The Lord showed Ezekiel the methods he was to use in warning of the impending siege of Jerusalem and the resulting exile. Though Ezekiel was mute, God directed him to act out the warnings (probably just outside Ezekiel's house; cf. 3:24-25). The exiles had observed Ezekiel's unique seven-day consecration (3:15-16). Now they would wonder what strange thing he would do next. The parables Ezekiel acted out demanded an audience.

Ezekiel took a clay brick and scratched on it a diagram of Jerusalem. Then he simulated a siege of the city with "siege works," "ramp" (or "mounds"), battering rams, and military encampments. With an iron plate between him and the city, Ezekiel played this war game with determination for 430 days while prophesying against Jerusalem (vv. 6-7). All this was "a sign to the house of Israel" of the coming siege of Jerusalem.⁴¹

Other parts of the pantomime involved food and its preparation. Alexander made these observations. "God used an acted parable to convey this truth in a way that would surely be understood . . . Ezekiel completed the drama begun in ch. 4 by shaving his head and beard, weighing the hair, and dividing it equally into three groups. This final act also pictured defilement . . . humiliation and disgrace. . . . The hair symbolized the inhabitants of Jerusalem." He also explained, "A judgment

⁴¹Ralph H. Alexander, *Ezekiel*, in vol. 1: Old Testament, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 1280-81.

speech--with accusations against Jerusalem enumerated and a verdict pronounced--reinforced the monodrama."⁴²

George Kufeldt, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, School of Theology, Anderson University in Anderson, Indiana, also wrote about Ezekiel's use of theatrical approaches. ". . . Ezekiel's silence (3:26) was demonstrated throughout the four acted parables in which he never spoke to the exiles who gathered to watch his pantomimes. . . . The props used in this dramatic skit vividly illustrate the meaning of this parable. . . . Ezekiel portrayed the doctrine of the remnant which most preexilic prophets taught . . . Having finished his silent acted parables, Ezekiel spoke to the people, describing God's judgment."⁴³

Geoffrey W. Grogan had these perceptions about the progression in acted prophecy. "The sign is given first and then its significance is clarified in spoken prophecy. Acted prophecy occurs frequently in the OT (e.g. 1 Ki 11:29-32; Jer 13:1-11; Eze 4). The act normally requires verbal interpretation before it becomes a true prophecy with a specific meaning."⁴⁴

The action got attention and demonstrated the meaning of the message, and, as Grogan pointed out, the prophet's words clearly defined its intent. The writer sees a vital, contemporary point in the prophets' approaches that goes beyond the messages the prophets were attempting to communicate. As today's audiovisual expert might say, "Showing and telling together make the message clear and result in greater impact."

⁴²Ibid., 1282.

⁴³George Kufeldt, *Ezekiel*, in *Asbury Bible Commentary*, ed. Eugene Carpenter and Wayne McCown (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 689-90.

⁴⁴Geoffrey W. Grogan, *Isaiah*, in vol. 1: Old Testament, *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary*, ed. Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 1078.

Jesus' Use of Dramatic Approaches

Many other examples could be given of the way that God used dramatizations and vivid visual and aural methods in communicating essential messages to people. In his earthly ministry, Jesus followed God's example with numerous dramatic approaches.

The Cleansing of the Temple (Matt. 21:12-13)

Certainly Jesus' action commonly referred to as "the cleansing of the temple" is a prime example of an attention-getting episode. Jesus, whip in hand, did what was necessary to get and keep the attention of the crowd, make his point, and accomplish his purpose. He also enraged the chief priests and scribes to the point of their wanting to get rid of him--permanently. This story appears in all four gospels: Matt. 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-19, Luke 19:45-48, and John 2:13-16.

Thomas G. Long, professor at Columbia Theological and Princeton Theological seminaries, wrote about this event, "Jesus' first act upon entering the city is dramatic indeed. He creates a scene in the area of the temple, the sacred center of Jerusalem."⁴⁵

Gail R. O'Day, Associate Professor of Biblical Preaching, Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta, commented on the account of this incident in John. "John's picture of Jesus in the Temple is large and dramatic, as Jesus herds animals and people out of the temple court, pouring out money and overturning tables as he goes."⁴⁶ Indeed, it would be difficult to overlook the histrionics of this scene.

⁴⁵Thomas G. Long, *Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 236.

⁴⁶Gail R. O'Day, *John*, in vol. 9, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 543.

Entry into Jerusalem Riding on a Donkey (Luke 19:29-38)

Prior to this, Jesus' very entrance into the City of Jerusalem crackled with dramatic intensity (Luke 19:29-38). R. Alan Culpepper, Dean, The McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University in Atlanta, pointed out the theatrics of the event.

. . . Jesus' entry into Jerusalem stirs emotions that should not be denied. It was a moment filled with possibility. The thought of what might be exhilarated all who followed Jesus. Might this be the king who would deliver them from the Romans? Might this be the Messiah who would usher in the blessing of the age to come and the return of all the children of God who had been scattered abroad? This was the moment on which the wheel of history would turn. Either God's kingdom would be established on earth, or the people's hope would be forever shattered.⁴⁷

Entrance processions were a familiar ceremony in the first century. Many anointed kings and conquering generals had entered Jerusalem over the years, but never had they seen a king like this one. The triumphal entry, staged on a donkey, is a prophetic sign, an acted out parable.⁴⁸

Culpepper provided illuminating insight into the emotions and thoughts that were doubtless triggered by Jesus' dramatic actions and visual symbols. He also stimulates the writer's thinking to consider the provocative possibilities of taking a familiar, traditional act and adding an unexpected twist.

Cursing of the Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14; 20-24)

The next day Jesus created another incident that no doubt riveted the attention of his "audience" by cursing the fig tree and making it die. Royce Gordon Gruenler, Professor of New Testament, Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, provided this insight on Jesus' action.

⁴⁷R. Alan Culpepper, *Luke*, in vol. 9, *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), p. 370.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 366.

Jesus' shocking destruction of the fig tree (11:12-14) is an acted parable that prophesies what is in store for a people who have proved faithless and whose temple, the very symbol of their faithless religiosity, will be destroyed along with the city of Jerusalem (a prophecy fulfilled in A. D. 70).

. . . Jesus' second act of violence is an acted parable that accompanies the withering of the fig tree (11:15-19). By his violent expulsion of the merchants from the Court of Gentiles Jesus anticipates the terrible consequences of turning God's space into a place for traffic in human guilt.⁴⁹

Washing the Feet of the Disciples (John 13:3-15)

In the washing of the disciples' feet, Jesus acted out the principle of servanthood and his desire to have a mutually close relationship with him and with God. O'Day pointed out that his action combined the roles of servant and host. "When Jesus wraps himself with the towel, he assumes the garb and position of the servant, but the act of hospitality that he offers is the prerogative of the host. . . . The foot washing is 'a symbolic act of eschatological hospitality,' through which Jesus shares his home--that is, the Father's home (cf. 1:1; 14:2)--with his disciples. The foot washing is an *eschatological* act because through it Jesus manifests the unity and intimacy of God, Jesus, and the believer that marks full relationship with God (e.g., 15:1-10)."⁵⁰ O'Day's comments were helpful in expanding the writer's understanding of the purpose, symbolism, and meaning of the foot washing scene.

Use of Wine and Bread to Symbolize His Body and Blood (Matt. 26:26-29)

Certainly one of Jesus' most moving enactments was at the last supper he had

⁴⁹Royce Gordon Gruenler, *Mark*, in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989), 788.

⁵⁰O'Day, 720-21.

with his disciples. Sennett provided this explanation of the last supper. "When Jesus picked up the unleavened bread and broke it, he was pointing to the ancient Passover legend with his words, 'This is my body broken for you.' And when he told them to 'take, eat,' he was dramatizing for them the power of the physical act of participation which leads to identification. The modern congregation can identify with the spiritual truths being represented in the simple 'reenactment' dramatically of this historical event."⁵¹

Jesus' final meal with his disciples utilized numerous real objects with symbolic meaning. Douglas R. A. Hare, Professor of New Testament, Emeritus, at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, explained that even the disciples' posture of reclining as they sat at low tables in the Roman fashion eating the Passover meal was significant. Eating in this manner instead of at their customary tables was considered a requirement at Passover to symbolize the freedom that God had granted Israel at the exodus.⁵² Hare noted these enlightening insights.

The Passover meal was a communal recollection of God's saving action in the exodus from Egypt. . . . It was thus a liberation meal, and as such it was both a reenactment of the first Passover meal (Exod. 12:1-28) and an anticipation of the future liberation in God's end-time salvation. Messianic excitement grew in intensity at Passover, because of the belief that the Messiah would appear on the anniversary of the first liberation. Attributed to a first-century rabbi is the saying "On this night they were saved; on this night they will be saved." Perhaps Jesus' disciples, convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, fervently hoped that this would be the night when God would powerfully install Jesus as rescuer of his people, despite his predictions of suffering and death.⁵³

This is the order of the festal meal.

⁵¹Sennett, 45-6.

⁵²Douglas R. A. Hare, *Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 185-86.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 187-88.

1. A cup of wine over which the leader spoke a prayer detailing the sanctity of the occasion
 2. A vegetable dipped into a bowl of salt water which symbolized the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 14:21-22)
 3. A piece of unleavened bread, mazzah, reminiscent of the haste with which Israel left Egypt (Exod. 12:39)
 4. A pungent vegetable or "bitter herb" (Exod. 12:8), symbolic of the bitterness of Egyptian slavery
 5. The main course of a roasted lamb or goat, which had been ritually sacrificed that afternoon in the temple with its blood having been thrown against the great altar by a priest and portions of its fat burned on the altar
 6. A second cup of wine followed by a telling of the exodus story with an explanation of the symbolic meaning of each element of the meal (Exod. 12:26-27) and prayers for the future redemption of Israel
 7. A third cup, followed by the grace after meals
 8. The fourth cup with the singing or reciting of certain psalms⁵⁴
- Hare described this most unusual Passover in this manner.

According to verse 22 (Exod. 12), Jesus took "a bread," that is, a flat *mazzah*, uttered the blessing, . . . broke it, and interpreted the action. Imagine the astonishment of the disciples when Jesus, instead of reciting the usual interpretation of the mazzah, declared instead, "This is my body!" . . . In a meal of liberation, celebrating the first redemption at the exodus and joyfully anticipating the final redemption at the coming of God's rule, Jesus announces, in effect: "As this bread has been broken, so will my body be broken in violent death, and God will use my death in his plan of redemption."

It was customary to use red wine at Passover, presumably in recollection of the blood sprinkled on the doorposts in Egypt so that God's avenging angel would "pass over" Israelite homes (Exod.

⁵⁴Ibid., 188.

12:21-23) . . . Again Jesus astounds his disciples with a startling interpretation of the red wine: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (v. 24).⁵⁵

At the Last Supper, then, the reader "sees" Jesus taking symbolic, visual elements and giving them new meaning that Christian churches continue to observe today with powerful impact. Sennett provided this insight.

At the moment, the best place to look for exciting and dynamic dramatic literature for use in the worship setting is the Holy Scriptures. . . . this book contains those writings already accepted by persons of all faiths to be appropriate for use in praise, doctrine, reproof, and edification. Second, this book is the source book for all truth pertaining to the church. Thus, it is a source of safe material which should not be controversial. And third, it is a source of some of the most dramatic literature ever written . . .

The strongest reason for using the Bible is because this literature is steeped in oral tradition. . . . For centuries, the children of Israel were required to commit great portions of the Hebrew Bible to memory. With the rise of the Christian movement, the need for instruction prompted the Apostles to write down their memoirs, sermons and letters for congregations. There were no multiple copies available, so the "word" was passed on through reading the copies in worship. Since the Scriptures were intended to be orally transmitted, the church today has an obligation to teach modern Christians to appreciate the orally-presented Word of God. Perhaps that may be what is meant by "the hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2, 5).⁵⁶

Acting out the stories of the Bible continues the oral tradition handed down through the ages and helps church members in "the hearing of faith" with the added enhancement of visual reinforcement. By participating in baptism, communion, foot washing, and other rites of the church, Christians continue to act out, internalize, and make the messages first presented by Jesus in dramatic form an integral part of their lives.

⁵⁵Ibid., 188-89.

⁵⁶Sennett, 67-8.

A Brief History of Religious Drama

John Gassner, American dramatic theorist and former chairman, Play Department, Theatre Guild, expressed the basis for the beginning and continuation of drama this way.

The drama arose out of fundamental human needs in the dawn of civilization and has continued to express them for thousands of years. It represents humanity in moments of maximum tension, conflict, and crisis, and it tries to resolve them in broadly human terms. It brings the life of man visibly before mankind and levies tribute upon all the arts in order to achieve this purpose. Out of the word, the dance, music, and the plastic arts it builds one mighty synthesis of humanity's creative faculties. . . . drama addresses itself not to isolated individuals but to mankind assembled in groups as if for a public function. It must be set down as the greatest collective enterprise that projects and interprets our common humanity.⁵⁷

Long before the emergence of Christianity, elaborate Passion Plays developed in Egypt and Mesopotamia with Osiris, the corn god, tree spirit, patron of fertility, and lord of life and death, as the hero. The best known of these was *Abydos Passion Play* of Egypt, which featured actors lamenting Osiris' death, finding his body, restoring it to life, and greeting the resurrected god with great pomp and rejoicing. Syria's dramas revolved around the kindred figure of Tammuz or Adonis, god of the waters and of the crops. The Passion Play developed most completely in Greece, facilitated by the rapid rise of Greek poetry, adding dialogue to the presentations.⁵⁸

Glenn Hughes, founder and former director, School of Drama, University of Washington, gave this summary of the importance of the Greek theater.

It can be readily seen that the theatre held an important place in Greek life. Its motives were religious, patriotic, educational, and aesthetic. Devoted in its early days to mythology, it came soon to

⁵⁷John Gassner, *Masters of the Drama* (New York: Random House, 1954), xix.

⁵⁸Ibid., 8-13.

embrace recorded history, and finally to interpret and evaluate contemporary life. Its tragedies plumbed the very depths of human emotion; its comedies subjected life to the most penetrating rays of human intelligence. Rising from orgiastic ritual during the sixth century B. C., it developed in the course of a hundred years into magnificent combination of poetry, acting, and pageantry. After the fifth century B. C. tragedy declined, but comedy persisted and flourished until the end of the fourth century B. C., when culture moved from Athens to Alexandria, and Greek civilization gave way to Roman.⁵⁹

Harold Ehrensperger, former drama professor at Northwestern University and drama lecturer, pointed out that the classics of the Greek stage were performed in Rome with alterations to include more spectacle and entertainment. By the fourth century after Christ, the Roman calendar contained 175 holidays for plays, chariot races, and gladiatorial contests. He wrote, "Rome loved the pantomime with the actors in masks and the mime which degenerated into a bawdy show that satirized almost everything."⁶⁰

Debra Bruch, Associate Professor of Theatre, Michigan Technological University, described their approach in this manner.

The licentiousness of the mimes offended the moral sense of Christians. With the mime, Roman society attacked Christian morality by focusing on behaviors repugnant to Christian believers. For instance, the *Iude Florales* honored the goddess Flora who was a prostitute. During the festival, actors undressed onstage, goats copulated in the circus, and audience members were in a constant state of inebriation. Entertainers prided themselves for their lewdness and violence, and pointedly attacked Christian beliefs. Mimes often ridiculed Christian sacraments such as baptism and communion.

. . . The violent massacre of the Christian ideology as entertainment soon changed to the violent massacre of the Christian people as entertainment. Soon, the government and society used

⁵⁹Glenn Hughes, *The Story of the Theatre* (New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1928), 8.

⁶⁰Harold Ehrensperger, *Religious Drama Ends and Means* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 86-

Christians rather than actors to supply theatrical entertainment. . . . the Roman idea of entertainment became partly to watch Christians die in the arena.⁶¹

Bruch continued with "To say that Christianity and the theatre became disparate is an understatement." Theologian Tertullian (c. 155-c. 220 A. D.) forbade Christians to attend theatre performances. The Council of Carthage in 398 A. D. voted to excommunicate anyone who attended the theatre instead of church on holy days, and Christian actors could not partake of the sacraments unless they denounced their profession.⁶²

Ehrensperger described the progression of events from the days of Roman theater to the beginnings of Christian drama.

From the Greek theater--a place of worship in the time of Aeschylus--to the arena orgies of the later Roman theater is a long development. . . . When the theater had degenerated until its effect was only to divert man, a new force had arisen in the world. In the catacombs of Rome little bands of men and women formed an underground movement that advocated a new way of life that stood above any government which might try to impose limitations upon its adherent. In the struggle that was to grow around the early Christians the world was to see the material for new drama.⁶³

Christine Catharina Schnusenbergr added further enlightenment in a book based on her dissertation at the University of Chicago.

. . . the ecclesiastical polemics surrounding the Roman theatre and lasting for nearly 500 years, were part of a deep religious conflict. From 364 B. C. to 600 A. D., the Roman theatre was performed in conspectu dei; its sacredness was stressed by its connection with the temple of Venus. . . . the gods of the Romans were for the Fathers of the Church not only false gods or dead objects but were understood to be living daemons, i.e., apostate angels using the Roman stage to

⁶¹Debra Bruch, "The Prejudice Against Theatre," (paper presented at the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, 1991), 2 [Internet].

⁶²Ibid., 2-3.

⁶³Ibid., 87.

penetrate and pervert the entire world of the Roman Empire.

. . . in the Church of the Near East the theatre was designated as an evil mystery. A vivid imagery of religious metaphorical language was particularly evident in the polemics of the Syriac Fathers. However, we could observe that side by side with the negative attitude towards the theatre, a vision of a new theatre began to emerge and soon the Church was seen as a counterpart of the pagan meeting place. Such a vision, for example, had already been expressed in the writings of Clement of Alexandria. While Tertullian and Augustine conceded that there were also positive sides to the pagan drama, John Chrysostom described the liturgy itself more specifically as a "theatrum non fictitium et spirituale". This view formed a positive counter image of the existing theatre which was thought to be of diabolic origin.⁶⁴

Gassner described the reemergence of theater this way.

By the time the Roman empire collapsed under the weight of its economic contradictions and its glories crumbled away in corruption, only pantomimists and jugglers or acrobats, known as *mimes*, were left. Little better than vagabonds, they satisfied a crude desire for entertainment during the Dark Ages but remained beyond the pale of respectability. The theatre in Europe had to be built anew, out of fresh material and with new forces, and it was ironically the historic task of the Catholic Church to foster beginnings in an art which it was the first to despise but which it could not ultimately resist. Once more, as in Greece, Rome, and almost everywhere on man's planet, the drama had to be cradled anew in the rites of religion.⁶⁵

Bruch commented on the progression of events.

Church officials had problems promoting beliefs in society, for most common people could not read in order to study the Scriptures. Neither could people speak or understand Latin, yet Mass was conducted in Latin. The church came to realize that people did not know very much about doctrine. Instead, people treated religion as a kind of superstition.

The problem was how to educate people as part of the Mass

⁶⁴Christine Catharina Schnusenberg, *The Relationship Between the Church and the Theatre* (New York: University Press of America, 1988), 40-1.

⁶⁵Gassner, 103-04.

experience, yet maintain the traditional way of conducting Mass. The answer to the problem was to show people either through a kind of dialogue, moving around the sanctuary from mansion to mansion, or acting it out. An important beginning of liturgical drama was the *Quem Quaeritis* trope given at Easter time. From this beginning, people added mimetic action, properties and costumes, and more complex plots.⁶⁶

Schnusenberg went on to make these observations of this period.

An examination of a cross-section of writing starting with the earliest liturgical texts of the church . . . will confirm that the church herself began to develop a representational dramatic liturgy . . . centering around the dramatic nucleus of the Passion of the protagonist Jesus Christ.

. . . In a slow process there developed a Christian drama, that is to say, a representational form of the Life, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, grouped around and emerging from the First Liturgical Act of Jesus, the Last Supper.⁶⁷

Liturgical dramatizations grew out of antiphonal singing with texts, called tropes, written from them. Simple movements to accompany the texts were added, proving so popular that the dialogue was enlarged, and real dramatic action was included. Then the action was divided into scenes, and additional characters were included in the performance. The tropes proved to be increasingly popular. Finally, to give more room for staging and to allow more people to see them, the priests had the dramatizations given on specially erected platforms in the open yard. When these spaces overflowed, the plays were moved to the streets and market places. The church could not contain the crowds nor prohibit secular and humorous material from being introduced.⁶⁸

Ehrensperger gave this explanation. "When the plays left the church, they

⁶⁶Bruch, 5.

⁶⁷Schnusenberg, 106.

⁶⁸Ehrensperger, 89-91.

began to include a great many scenes that had no place in the church. The separation of the Church and drama was taking place. For many hundreds of years thereafter, the drama, which had begun originally in religious rites and had been resurrected in the worship of the Church stayed out of the Church."⁶⁹

Guilds, composed of groups of men in the same crafts, gained control of the plays. They chose to enact play scenes in keeping with their crafts. For example, the shipwrights did *The Building of the Ark*; the fishmongers and mariners, *The Flood*; the goldsmiths, *The Adoration*; and the bakers, *The Last Supper*.⁷⁰

These plays, now loosely based on Scripture, were known as miracle plays and spread all over western Europe in the thirteenth century. They formed an essential part of the life and entertainment of medieval Italy, Spain, France, Germany and especially flourished in England for three more centuries. At York, Chester, Coventry, and other English centers, the guilds joined forces to produce a series or cycle of plays for presentation of the major stories in the Old and New Testaments. In York, the cycle grew to more than fifty plays.⁷¹

Each play in the cycle was staged on a movable platform, a broad, long wagon called a "pageant." According to Robert Rogers of Chester, a sixteenth-century eye witness, the pageant-wagon was a two-story wooden scaffold set on four wheels. It was "a high-place made like a house with two rooms," but "all open on the top." In the lower, curtained room actors "apparelled and dressed themselves; and in the higher room they played." Audiences remained at a single location or "station" all day, while the pageant-wagons, pulled by members of the guild, arrived in sequence to present

⁶⁹Ibid., 91.

⁷⁰Ibid., 92.

⁷¹William Smith Clark II, *Chief Patterns of World Drama: Aeschylus to Anderson* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946), 187-88.

their particular play and then moved on to perform at the next station.⁷²

William Smith Clark II, former professor at the University of Cincinnati, wrote this description of the plays' content and approach. ". . . the serious devotional spirit of the Biblical stories and of the saints' legends was by no means strictly preserved in the miracle play cycles. . . . the cycle plays contain side by side the sacred and the secular, the serious and the comic." As an example, he described Noah and his wife, portrayed as a scolding nag, tussling with each other in front of the ark, while God's deluge was wiping sinful mankind from the face of the earth. He continued with "The prevalent crudity of sentiment and manners, and the mirthful atmosphere surrounding the religious festivals combined to induce this peculiar medley of the holy and the burlesque in the English religious drama generally."⁷³

Ehrensperger made this observation. "No sooner had the liturgical drama been taken up by secular groups than the Church began to realize the danger in what had happened. Opposition was set up and grew in intensity."⁷⁴

An anonymous sermon in 1375 posed the following arguments against miracle plays. "Played not to the worship of God but to the approval of the world." "More people perverted than converted." "Wicked deeds of actors and spectators prove plays' worthlessness."⁷⁵

Ehrensperger presented this perspective. "Thus we see the play which began as part of the Mass pass through a popularization and secularization until it becomes a completely secular play. The farcical material which was used to enhance the religious part became the purpose of the play. With the plays of John Heywood, who

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., 189.

⁷⁴Ehrensperger, 89-91.

⁷⁵Ibid., 92-3.

was born before 1497 and died before the time of Shakespeare, the drama became the instrument of pleasure without serious or religious responsibility.”⁷⁶

Robert Speaight made these observations on the demise of medieval drama. “The medieval drama died of inanition, but its demise was notably hastened by the Reformers. In 1575 an Act of the General Assembly of the Scottish Kirk declared:”

Forasmuch as it is considered that the playing of clerk-plays, comedies or tragedies, upon the canonical parts of the Scriptures, induceth and bringeth with it a contempt and profanation of the same, it is thought meet and concluded, that no clerk-plays, comedies or tragedies, be made upon canonical Scriptures, either New or Old, in time coming, either upon the Lord’s Day or upon a workday; that the contraveners, if they be ministers, be secluded from their functions, and that others be corrected by the discipline of the Kirk.⁷⁷

The Jesuit theatre, developed from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth century, became the successor to the medieval stage with the Lutherans producing their own plays. These were simpler in style and more Biblical in subject matter. It was not long before Jesuit schools and colleges added theatres to their classrooms. Performances could last up to seven hours; dramatic festivals featured a cycle of plays that would be given over three successive days. Initially plays were written in Latin, but as they gained in popularity, certain adaptations were made. However, for the most part, drama did not enjoy the favorable attention of other branches of the church.⁷⁸

Speaight wrote of this period that “It was already clear by the middle of the seventeenth century, or even earlier, that although an occasional dramatist might arise who would not disclaim the title of Christian . . . the theatre would continue to be what it has so often claimed to be--the servant of the public. The Christian community was

⁷⁶Ibid., 94.

⁷⁷Robert Speaight, *Christian Theatre* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960), 37.

⁷⁸Ibid., 89-90.

itself divided or indifferent, and it ceased to demand its services.”⁷⁹

A few playwrights, such as Henrik Ibsen with *Brand* and George Bernard Shaw with *Saint Joan*, wrote on Christian themes. In 1928, Canterbury Cathedral took an important step toward returning drama to the sanctuary. The Cathedral sponsored Poet Laureate John Masefield, a dramatist of proven accomplishment, and composer Gustav Holst in the production of *The Coming of Christ* at Whitsuntide. As a result of the success of this performance, the “Friends of Canterbury Cathedral” were formed. This group organized an annual festival of music and drama up to the outbreak of World War II. Productions included: *Everyman*, Marlowe’s *Dr. Faustus*, Tennyson’s *Becket*, and a play about the martyrdom of St. Thomas.⁸⁰ Speaight commented, “The Christian theatre was re-discovering its ancient formula.”⁸¹

Part of the funds raised by the first performances of *The Coming of Christ* were used to commission plays and to guarantee their performance. T. S. Eliot was invited to write a new play on the old theme of St. Thomas’ martyrdom. The resulting *Murder in the Cathedral*, produced in June 1935, marked what Speaight noted as “a turning point in the history not only of the Canterbury Festival, but of the revival of the Christian theatre.”⁸²

In the United States, Ehrensperger pointed out the impact of the founding of the Drama League of America in reviving the use of drama in the church. He also noted the importance of The National Catholic Theatre Conference, the Religious Drama Project of the American Educational Theatre Conference, and the drama committees in two divisions of the National Council of Churches in strengthening and giving

⁷⁹Ibid., 120.

⁸⁰Ibid., 121-25.

⁸¹Ibid., 125.

⁸²Ibid., 126.

impetus to the movement.⁸³

Today many churches have moved beyond the traditional Christmas pageant and are welcoming drama into their sanctuaries as an integral part of the worship experience. However, that is not to say that chancel drama is universally accepted nor being done. The growing number of church staffs employing a director of fine arts responsible for drama, dance, and music in the church, though, testifies to a greater recognition of drama's value as a part of religious worship.

Dramatic Approaches in Historical Judeo-Christian Worship

Various liturgical approaches, ceremonies, administration of the sacraments, and employment of sacramental rites have been an integral part of Jewish and Christian worship from ancient times. Many of these have been rich in dramatic flair and impact.

For example, the commemoration of the Jewish Passover has a distinct dramatic flavor, and the centuries-old tradition continues to be performed year after year. It symbolizes for the people the night that Pharaoh released the Israelites from Egypt after the death angel took the lives of all first-born sons in homes that were not protected by the blood of the lamb.

Riemenschneider described this rich observance.

With visual support and a specific "plot," they reaffirmed consequential truths of God's character and his provision for his people. Exodus (chapter 12) presents the intended procedure and explains the significance of the elements of the event to the people. There were specific "staging" directions given concerning the carrying out of the remembrance meal. This included the eating of the Passover lamb, the bitter herbs, and the unleavened bread. Each element had symbolic significance. They were instructed to eat in haste with their cloaks tucked into their belts, their sandals on their feet, and their staff in hand (Exodus 12:11). This was to remind them

⁸³Ehrensperger, 96.

of the haste with which they left Egypt. Later, God reemphasized this commemorative event via Moses' instructions in Numbers 9:1-14 and in the Levitical regulations (Leviticus 23:4-8). This yearly reenactment of the Passover's symbolic elements provided a graphic rehearsal of God's involvement with his people. These "acted-out" events of Passover were a vital part of Jewish religious life.⁸⁴

Sennett made this observation.

Drama has been an important part of Jewish worship even from its beginnings. The Seder is a dramatic recreation of the Passover meal dating back to the Exodus of Moses' time. The lighting of the Menorah is a reenactment of the miracle of the Menorah that would not go out during the rebellion of Judas Maccabbeas. In both cases these reenactments are also representations of actual human conflict situations that were dramatic. The retelling of these and other events became part of the worship. Later, the leaders made the retelling more "dramatic" through the addition of elements that would aid the congregation to more clearly understand and maybe "see" the events happening.⁸⁵

The early Christian church also capitalized on the dramatic form in helping the mostly uneducated people understand various aspects of the gospel message.

Playwright Esther Willard Bates provided insight in this regard.

Ritual, the litany, and the liturgy all are close to the drama in one way or another. The liturgy in English-speaking countries has come to denote any or all of the various services of the church bound up together. The litany is a responsive service of devotion or penance or supplications, calling upon God, and sometimes, in former days, upon the saints, or saintly qualities personified . . . Dramatic values were enhanced by chanting the litany in sackcloth and ashes, or in processional, bearing the cross, or by sevenfold procession of worshipers, clergy, laity, monks, virgins, matrons, widows, poor, and children.⁸⁶

Ehrensperger pointed out that "Part of the ritual of the early church is

⁸⁴Riemenschneider, 35-6.

⁸⁵Sennett, 11.

⁸⁶Esther Willard Bates, *The Church Play and Its Production* (Boston: Walter H. Baker Co., 1938),

characteristically dramatic. The ritual of Gallican origin, used at the dedication of a church, is an interesting example of this early dramatic form.” He described that scene this way.

The bishop and his procession approach the closed doors of the church from without, but one of the clergy, representing the evil spirit is inside. Three blows with a staff are given on the door and the anthem is raised: “Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.” From within comes the question: “Who is this King of glory?” The reply is given: “The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.”

Then the doors are opened, and as the procession sweeps through, the evil spirit who was concealed within slips out. The dramatic expulsion of the spirit of evil takes place so that the church is consecrated to God and purified through the use of holy water and incense. The host is then introduced and the altar becomes a sacred place. In the Roman Catholic Church such was and still is the finely dramatic service that opens a church.⁸⁷

Robert Howard Clausen, pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Palatine, Illinois, and former director of drama at Concordia Teachers College, addressed the pageantry that has grown out of Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

The Procession of Palms on Palm Sunday, celebrating Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, was known in Jerusalem in the fourth century, and was common to the West by the tenth century. A procession set forth from a hill or elevated place outside of town and proceeded to the town gate, where those in the procession and the choir boys stationed on the gate tower sang the hymn “All Glory, Laud, and Honor.” The procession passed through the gate into the town, singing in appropriate antiphon. Members of the congregation raised palm branches aloft and threw garments into the path of the procession.

As the ceremony developed, other features were added, such as the carrying of the Gospel book to symbolize the person of Christ. At Winchester in England, a question and answer dialog was included at the gate. The procession divided at that point and a group with the bishop asked the question, “Who is there?” The people clustered

⁸⁷Ehrensperger, 89.

around the host (the Communion bread, another symbol of the person of Christ) answered as disciples of Christ: "This is he who was to come for the salvation of all people." A second question followed: "How is this?" and again an answer: "Here is our salvation and the redemption of Israel."⁸⁸

O. B. Hardison, Jr., former Professor of English, University of North Carolina, and former Chairman of the Southeastern Institute of Medieval and Renaissance Studies, described this observance in another part of the world.

In the West a greater degree of symbolism was necessary. "The procession could, and frequently did, leave the gates of the town and re-enter them, but it was also common for the precincts of the church or the cloister to stand for the Mount of Olives, and the church itself, for Jerusalem. The ninth-century ceremony begins with a formal blessing of palms or olive branches at the altar. After they are distributed, a procession leaves the church, proceeds to whatever spot symbolizes the Mount of Olives, and returns. When it reaches the church, the doors are closed. The priest must strike the doors three times. They are then opened, and the procession enters to the responsory *Ingrediente Domino*. From later practice it appears likely that the procession included a Christ symbol. This would normally be a cross, but could be the Gospels, carried on a bier (*feretrum*), or some other sacred object--a phylactery, reliquary, and/or a consecrated Host in a capsa."⁸⁹

Clausen wrote this about the Holy Week service of Tenebrae. ". . . the part of it (Tenebrae) which is commonly used, and which has a great appeal for worshipers, is the gradual extinguishing of lights, and the carrying of that last lighted candle out of the chancel and nave, representing the death of Christ, and then, after an interval, the return of the hidden candle to its place in the church."⁹⁰

Speaight told about a dramatized visit to the tomb. "Already, by the tenth century," he wrote, "dramatic embellishment was coming to the aid of liturgy. We have

⁸⁸Robert Howard Clausen, "Using Drama in Worship," *Concordia Journal*, Nov. 1977, 249.

⁸⁹O. B. Hardison, Jr., *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1965), 112.

⁹⁰Clausen, 249.

Bishop Ethelwold's stage directions:"

While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third response is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument, and the women with spices coming to anoint the body. (Trans. Sir E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*.)⁹¹

Ehrensperger detailed a special dramatic observance in the church in Spain.

La Festa el Missterio, held yearly at Elche in Spain on the day celebrating the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, is an event in the life of the Spanish church. Anyone who has been present to see the Virgin taken to heaven by being drawn up through the dome of the church and has been part of the shouting, laughing, and crying mob knows that for that time, at least, something has happened, something has been vividly alive for several thousand people. *The Mystery of Elche* is a dramatic reality, and it cannot be forgotten no matter what may be one's attitude about its theological implications.⁹²

E. K. Chambers, medieval drama scholar and former president of the English Association, wrote about early evidence of dramatic approaches to worship.

Dramatic tendencies of Christian worship declared themselves at an early period. At least from the fourth century, the central and most solemn rite of worship was the Mass, an essentially dramatic commemoration of one of the most critical moments in the life of the founder. . . . Some scholars attempt to show that the earlier gospel narratives of the passion, those of Saints Matthew and Mark, are based upon a dramatic version . . . on classical lines, and to have been performed liturgically until about the second century, when it was dropped in deference to the ascetic views of the stage then prevalent. The gospel narrative is, no doubt, mainly a "presentation of dramatic action and dialogue. . . ."⁹³

⁹¹Speaight, 10.

⁹²Ehrensperger, 99.

⁹³E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1903), II, 3.

Impact of Media on Learning

It is evident that drama historically has played a significant role in religion and the life of the church and its congregations. But how can the value and effectiveness of drama be measured? Little scientific research has been conducted to determine the effectiveness of drama on cognitive processes. However, since drama combines action with visual and aural approaches similar to those found in television, looking at the results of studies conducted to assess the effectiveness of multi-sensory approaches in learning is appropriate.

First of all, it would be well to consider the question: How does learning take place? Robert B. Kozma, director of the Center for Technology in Learning at SRI International, Menlo Park, California, in his article, "The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues," drew on the expertise of several learning experts to define the learning process. He argued that

"... learning is an active, constructive, cognitive, and social process by which the learner strategically manages available cognitive, physical, and social resources to create new knowledge by interacting with information in the environment and integrating it with information stored in memory."⁹⁴ "From this perspective, knowledge and learning are the result of a reciprocal interaction between the learner's cognitive resources and aspects of the external environment."⁹⁵ "Moreover, this interaction is strongly influenced by

⁹⁴Thomas Shuell, "The Role of the Student in Learning from Instruction," *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, July 1988, 276-95; quoted in Robert B. Kozma, "The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues," *School Library Media Quarterly*, Summer 1994, 233.

⁹⁵James Greeno, "Situations, Mental Models, and Generative Knowledge," in *Complex Information Processing*, ed. D. Klahr and K. Kotovsky (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1988); Roy Pea, "Practices of Distributed Intelligence and Designs for Education," in *Distributed Cognitions*, ed. Gavriel Salomon (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); David Perkins, "Person Plus: A Distributed View of Thinking and Learning," in Salomon, *Distributed Cognitions*; quoted in Robert B. Kozma, "The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues," *School Library Media Quarterly*, Summer 1994, 233.

the extent to which internal and external resources fit together.”⁹⁶

Kozma went on to point out that “. . . learning with media is a complementary process within which a learner and a medium interact to expand or refine the learner’s mental model of a particular phenomenon. The question then becomes not “*do* media enhance learning but *how* do the capabilities of a particular medium facilitate particular kinds of learning?”⁹⁷ Specifically referring to the impact of video, he made this observation.

Several aspects of video media seem to have particular effects on learners’ cognitive mechanisms: the simultaneous presentation of auditory and visual information, the processing pace required by transient presentations of information, and the ways in which dynamic qualities might affect a learner’s mental models.

Most studies of the roles of audio and visual presentations show that the combined use of the two symbol systems results in more recall than visual-only and audio-only presentations.⁹⁸ Additionally several studies suggest that each source provides information that retains some of the characteristics of the original symbol system; children recall sounds and expressive language from the audio track

⁹⁶Richard Snow, “Aptitude Theory: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow,” *Educational Psychologist*, Winter 1992, 5-32; quoted in Robert B. Kozma, “The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues,” *School Library Media Quarterly*, Summer 1994, 233.

⁹⁷Robert B. Kozma, “The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues,” *School Library Media Quarterly*, Summer 1994, 234.

⁹⁸Patricia Baggett and A. Ehrenfeucht, “Information in Content Equivalent Movie and Text Stories,” *Discourse Processes*, May 1982, 73-99; Patricia Baggett and A. Ehrenfeucht, “Encoding and Retaining Information in the Visuals and Verbals of an Educational Movie,” *Education Communication and Technology Journal*, winter 1983, 23-32; Jessica Beagles-Roos and Isabelle Gat, “Specific Impact of Radio and Television on Children’s Story Comprehension,” *Journal of Educational Psychology*, February 1983, 128-37; Laurene Meringoff, “What Pictures Can and Can’t Do for Children’s Story Understanding,” paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, March 1982; quoted in Robert B. Kozma, “The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues,” *School Library Media Quarterly*, Summer 1994, 235.

and visual details from the visual track.⁹⁹ It also appears that the representations derived from the visual symbol systems are more elaborate, making the visual component of the presentation particularly memorable.¹⁰⁰ Audio may be sufficient for those who are knowledgeable about a topic and can draw on previous knowledge for their mental models, but the visual symbol systems supply important situational information for those who are less informed.¹⁰¹

Patricia Baggett, professor, Psychology Department, and Andrzej Ehrenfeucht, professor, Department of Computer Science, both at the University of Colorado, Boulder, conducted a study, "Encoding and Retaining Information in the Visuals and Verbals of an Educational Movie," that examined how well college students watching an educational movie encoded the information in the visuals versus that in the verbals and how well they retained information from the two different media over a delay. Results showed that there was no competition for resources when related information is presented simultaneously in two media: visual and verbal/auditory.¹⁰² They wrote in their report that the

. . . synchronous visual and verbal/auditory input is an efficient way to present information. It is 8% better than presenting the visual information first, followed by the spoken verbal information second, and better by far (18%) than spoken information first followed by visual information second. . . . information from visual and verbal sources is encoded and retained differently. Lots of linguistic information is encoded, but only half of it is retained over a week. Far less visual information is encoded, but it all lasts over a week. . . . the findings of this study answer three important questions and have practical application. Namely, in a show and tell presentation, one should not tell first and show second. To improve encoding and

⁹⁹Beagles-Roos and Gat, "Specific Impact of Radio and Television on Children's Story Comprehension, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, Feb. 1983, 128-137, quoted in Robert B. Kozma, "The Influence of Media on Learning: The Debate Continues," *School Library Media Quarterly*, Summer 1994, 235.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Kozma, 235.

¹⁰²Baggett and Ehrenfeucht, "Encoding and Retaining Information in the Visuals and Verbals of an Educational Movie," 23.

retention, one should either show and tell in synchrony, or show first and tell second.¹⁰³

Much more research has been done on the impact of various media on the learning of younger children than on college students or adults. A study conducted by Jessica Beagles-Roos and Isabelle Gat, professors at University of California, Los Angeles, compared the impact of radio versus television on comprehension for elementary school children with interesting results. Their study, "Specific Impact of Radio and Television on Children's Story Comprehension," provides a cross-media comparison of television and radio that elucidates the specific strengths of each medium for transmitting explicit and implicit story content. They summarized their findings this way.

Elementary school children were exposed to an animated audiovisual (television) and an audio (radio) story. The design was counterbalanced for story-medium combinations and orders. Except for the inclusion of characters, recall of the explicit story content was equivalent across media. However, recall of details from the story was improved with a television presentation. Recognition of expressive language was facilitated by a radio story, whereas picture sequencing was augmented by a television story. The radio story also elevated the use of knowledge unrelated to the story for inferences by younger children and verbal sources for both ages, whereas the television story enhanced inferences based on actions. These findings emphasize the need to consider the differential impact of media for conveying explicit and implicit content.¹⁰⁴

They concluded that the format of presentation did affect specific aspects of comprehension. They wrote, "Since recall was equivalent under each medium and the televised story elevated knowledge of audiovisually presented details and the number of inference justifications, the television story promoted a similar if not higher degree of

¹⁰³Ibid., 30.

¹⁰⁴Jessica Beagles-Roos and Isabelle Gat, "Specific Impact of Radio and Television on Children's Story Comprehension," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 75, No. 1 (1983): 128.

mental processing relative to the radio story.” They pointed out that, in order to make an informed selection of media for educational or other purposes, it is necessary to know the relative strengths of radio and television.¹⁰⁵

Laurene Krasny Meringoff, media professor at the University of Oregon, also used children, twenty-four with a medium age of 7.6 and twenty-four with a medium age of 9.6, in her study, “influence of the Medium on Children’s Story Apprehension.” An article, based on her doctoral dissertation submitted to Harvard Graduate School of Education, was published in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*. The study compared children’s apprehensions of an unfamiliar story either read to them from an illustrated book or presented as a comparable televised film. Children were randomly assigned to one medium condition and individually presented the story. Response measures examined recall of story content and inferences about characters and events.

Meringoff wrote the following about her study.

Children exposed to the televised story remembered more story actions, offered estimates of shorter elapsed time and distance traveled for carrying out a repeated story event, and relied more on visual content as the basis for inferences. In comparison, children who were read the story in picture book form recalled more story vocabulary, based their inferences more on textual content, general knowledge, and personal experience, and made more use of the storytelling situation as an opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the story. To the extent that children have repeated experience with specific media, such differential medium effects on apprehension suggest important implications for children’s cognitive development.¹⁰⁶

Meringoff concluded that children who view a lot of television stories may develop a strong visual memory for and sensitivity to stories, while experiences with

¹⁰⁵Beagles-Roos and Gat, 136.

¹⁰⁶Laurene Krasny Meringoff, “Influence of the Medium on Children’s Story Apprehension,” *Journal of Educational Psychology* 72, No. 2 (1980): 240.

stories from books, radio, and other less visual media may foster better listening skills and the application of more self-generated knowledge in interpreting their meaning. She also said that "Conceivably, development of specific perceptual skills may be affected by the balance of visual and auditory information available in the media to which children are exposed."¹⁰⁷

Another study involving young children was completed by Jane Gibbons, Daniel R. Anderson, Robin Smith, Diane E. Field, and Catherine Fischer, professors at the University of Massachusetts, and was titled "Young Children's Recall and Reconstruction of Audio and Audiovisual Narratives." The experiment examined the effects of input modality while controlling the complexity of the visual and auditory content and while varying the comprehension task.

Brief stories were presented to 4- and 7-year-olds through either audio or audiovisual media. The audio version consisted of narrated character actions and character utterances. Narrated actions were matched to the utterances on the basis of length and propositional complexity. The audiovisual version depicted the actions visually by means of stop animation. The character utterances were identical in both versions. The results of their study garnered these outcomes. "Audiovisual input produced superior performance on explicit information in the 4-year-olds and produced more inferences at both ages. Because performance on utterances was superior in the audiovisual condition as compared to the audio condition, there was no evidence that visual input inhibits processing of auditory information."¹⁰⁸

The authors noted some interesting outcomes. For instance,

Because visually presented actions produced performance better

¹⁰⁷Meringoff, 248.

¹⁰⁸Jane Gibbons, Daniel R. Anderson, Robin Smith, Diane E. Field, and Catherine Fischer, "Young Children's Recall and Reconstruction of Audio and Audiovisual Narratives," *Child Development* 57 (1986): 1014.

in the younger children than the same actions described by a narrator, a weak form of the visual superiority hypothesis cannot be rejected. . . . For children in the present study, audiovisual input not only led to better memory for explicitly presented actions and dialogue, it produced more elaborations, especially relevant constrained inferences. Such inferences are required to form connected logically consistent representations of narrative discourse.¹⁰⁹

A study examining the relationship between children's cognitive processing of video and audio information on television was conducted by Kathy Pezdek, Psychology Department, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California, and Ellen Stevens, Stanford University. "Children's Memory for Auditory and Visual Information on Television" examined ninety-six 5-year-old children who viewed a videotaped segment of *Sesame Street* followed by a comprehension test and a recognition test. Equal numbers of children viewed an experimental segment in which (1) the audio and video tracks were from the same segment (A/V match), (2) the audio and video tracks were not from the same segment (A/V mismatch), (3) the video track was presented alone, or (4) the audio track was presented alone. The authors commented thus.

This design allows unconfounded comparisons of modality-specific processing. In the A/V mismatch condition, memory for audio information was reduced more than memory for video information. However, comprehension and recognition of audio information was similar in the audio-only and A/V match conditions. These results suggest that in regular television programs, the video information does not interfere with processing the audio information, rather, the video material simply appears to be more salient and more memorable than the audio material.¹¹⁰

They also concluded that

In the A/V mismatch condition, comprehension and recognition

¹⁰⁹Gibbons et al, 1021.

¹¹⁰Kathy Pezdek and Ellen Stevens, "Children's Memory for Auditory and Visual Information on Television," *Developmental Psychology* 20, No. 2 (1984): 212.

of audio information were reduced more than video information. When subjects had to choose which of two incompatible channels to process, the video channel was favored, and memory for the audio information was reduced to chance. Together, these results suggest that in typical television programs the video information does not interfere with processing the audio information, rather, the video material simply appears to be more salient and memorable than the audio material.¹¹¹

Overall the research examined revealed positive effects on learning of the use of multi-media approaches. However, Richard E. Clark, University of Southern California, took a very negative view of the research that's been completed and indicated there is no need for further research on the subject. In his article, "Reconsidering Research on Learning from Media," he blasted these methods.

. . . most current summaries and meta-analyses of media comparison studies clearly suggest that media do not influence learning under any conditions. Even in the few cases where dramatic changes in achievement or ability have followed the introduction of a medium, . . . it was not the medium that caused the change but rather a curricular reform that accompanied the change. The best current evidence is that media are mere vehicles that deliver instruction but do not influence student achievement any more than the truck that delivers our groceries causes changes in our nutrition. Basically, the choice of vehicle might influence the cost or extent of distributing instruction, but only the content of the vehicle can influence achievement. While research often shows a slight learning advantage for newer media over more conventional instructional vehicles, this advantage will be shown to be vulnerable to compelling rival hypotheses. Among these rival explanations is evidence of artifact and confounding in existing studies and biased editorial decisions which may favor research showing larger effect sizes for newer media.¹¹²

Clark continued with:

¹¹¹Pezdek and Stevens, 217.

¹¹²Richard E. Clark, "Reconsidering Research on Learning from Media," *Review of Educational Research* 53 (Winter 1983): 445.

One might reasonably wonder why media are still advocated for their ability to increase learning when research clearly indicates that such benefits are not forthcoming. Of course such conclusions are disseminated slowly and must compete with the advertising budgets of the multi-million dollar industry which has a vested interest in selling these machines for instruction . . .

An equal contributor to this disparity between research and practice is the high expectation we have for technology of all kinds. Other machine-based technologies similar to the newer electronic media have revolutionized industry and we have had understandable hopes that they would also benefit instruction. And, there is the fact that many educators and researchers are reserved about the effectiveness of our system of formal education. As environments for learning, media seem to offer alternative and more effective features than those available from the conventional teacher in the conventional classroom.¹¹³

Clark went on to recommend that “researchers refrain from producing additional studies exploring the relationship between media and learning unless a novel theory is suggested.”¹¹⁴

Robert B. Kozma responded to Clark’s challenge with his article, “Learning with Media” in which he reviewed research studies that have been conducted about various media. In the section on television, he discussed the simultaneous processing of two symbol systems. “An important attribute of video is the ability to use both auditory and visual symbol systems. Within the window of cognitive engagement, how do these symbol systems work, independently and together, to influence comprehension and learning with television? Can either symbol system convey the meaning of a presentation? Does the presentation of both at the same time inhibit or facilitate learning?”¹¹⁵

¹¹³Clark, 456.

¹¹⁴Clark, 457.

¹¹⁵Robert B. Kozma, “Learning with Media,” *Review of Educational Research* 61 (Summer 1991): 191.

He summarized a study conducted by P. Baggett, a sociology professor at Carroll College in Helena, Montana, in 1979 that found that either pictorial or linguistic symbol systems alone can carry semantic information, such as a story line. He explained that

In this study, college students were presented with either a dialogueless movie, *The Red Balloon*, or an experimentally derived, structurally equivalent audio version. They wrote summaries of episodes within the story either immediately after the presentation or after a week delay. An analysis of the summaries by trained raters found that those written immediately after viewing the dialogueless movie were structurally equivalent to those written immediately after listening to the story. Subjects could construct a semantic macrostructure (i.e., summary) from either medium, but information obtained visually was more memorable. Summaries written a week after viewing the movie were judged to be more complete than those written a week after listening to the audio version.¹¹⁶

Meaning can be conveyed by either symbol system. However, Baggett (1989) concludes that information presented visually and linguistically is represented differently in memory. She contends that visual representations contain more information and are *bushier*. Whereas the phrase *red leaf* contains only the name of an object and a modifier, a mental representation of a red leaf obtained from a picture carries with it information about size, color, and shape. Also, the visual representation has more pegs that can be used to associate it with information already in long-term memory. These additional associations also make it more memorable.¹¹⁷

Kozma then cited a number of studies that compare a video program with its decomposed audio and visual presentations to determine the role of these two sources of information, individually and together (Baggett & Ehrenfeucht, 1982, 1983;

¹¹⁶P. Baggett, "Structurally equivalent stories in movie and text and the effect of the medium on recall," *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior* 18 (1979): 333-356, quoted in Robert B. Kozma, "Learning with Media," *Review of Educational Research* 61 (Summer 1991): 191.

¹¹⁷P. Baggett, "Understanding visual and verbal messages," in H. Mandl & J. Levin (eds.), *Knowledge acquisition from text and pictures* (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Elsevier, 1989), 101-124, quoted in Robert B. Kozma, "Learning with Media," *Review of Educational Research* 61 (Summer 1991): 191.

Beagles-Roos & Gat, 1983; Gibbons, Anderson, Smith, Field, & Rischer, 1986; Meringoff, 1982; Nugent, 1982; Pezdek & Hartman, 1983; Pezdek, Lehrer, & Simon, 1984; Pezdek & Stevens, 1984). He analyzed the findings in this manner. "In none of these studies did the combination of audio and visual information result in lower recall than recall from either source alone. In most of these studies, the combined use of visual and auditory symbol systems resulted in more recall than visual-only and audio-only presentations. This compels the rejection of the hypothesis that simultaneous presentation of audio and visual information necessarily competes for cognitive resources at the expense of comprehension."

He further showed that

People can construct a mental representation of the semantic meaning of a story from either audio or visual information alone, but it appears that when presented together each source provides additional, complementary information that retains some of the characteristics of the symbol system of origin. Children recall sounds and expressive language from the audio track and visual details from the visual track. It also appears that the bushier nature of representations derived from the visual symbol systems are better for building mental models of the situation than are representations based on audio-linguistic information.¹¹⁸

The results of a study conducted by T. Tsuneki in 1988 speak to the impact of the visual in television programming on human emotions. His study included a broad variety of subject matter, including financial news, cooking, sports, historical dramas, employment guides, election news, traffic news, and ads. He measured both affective and information impact in five modality conditions: video and natural sound, natural sound alone (the audio track of a television program), printed text (of audio track), narration of audio track, and narration of audio track plus the text of the narration. Overall the differences were quite small on informational impacts but favored sound

¹¹⁸Kozma, 191-2.

and sound combined with video over text. On emotional impact (as perceived by the subjects), however, video with sound had higher levels of impact than audio or text.¹¹⁹

In her book, *Processing the News*, Doris Graber wrote about the findings from an experiment on television content involving 48 adults who were asked to comment on what the pictures had contributed to the television stories they had just seen. The subjects reported that the pictures made the stories more "realistic," helped to clarify the stories, and had an emotional impact.¹²⁰

Religion researcher George Barna, Barna Research Group, wrote that "The product of a heavy diet of mass media, the uncritical embrace of computer technologies and the national shift in morals and values has been an entirely new filter through which Americans receive and interpret information. Whether we applaud or oppose that filter is not the issue at hand: the mere emergence of the new filter mandates a new style of sermon development and delivery."¹²¹

Quentin Schultze, professor of communications, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, commented on the effect of the new technologies--cable, VCR, especially the remote control--on people's willingness to patiently listen to and view things around them. "Reflective ability, silence, meditation are all things that are disappearing in peoples' lives and this affects the church significantly. People do want a fast-moving liturgy, they want a pastor who has some flair in general, otherwise they

¹¹⁹T. Tsuneki, "An experimental study on the measurement of the amount of information," *KEIO Communication Review*, 1988, 33-51, quoted in Ann N. Crigler, Marion Just, and W. Russell Neuman, "Interpreting visual versus audio messages in television news," *Journal of Communication*, Autumn 1994, 133.

¹²⁰Doris Graber, *Processing the News: How People Tame the Information Tide* (2nd ed.), (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1988), quoted in Crigler, Just, and Neuman, 133-34.

¹²¹George Barna, "The Pulpit-meister: Preaching to the New Majority," *Preaching*, Jan./Feb. 1997, 12.

become bored; this is especially true of younger people."¹²²

Research on Drama

A review of the literature produced only one research project related to the use of drama in a church service that closely corresponds to the purpose and intent of the author in the research project that she wished to undertake. "Do Enacted Dramatic Sketches That Introduce the Sunday Morning Sermons Significantly Enhance the Level of Cognitive Retention of the Primary Lesson and the Practical Application of the Sermon for Attenders of the Sunday Morning Services at the Bloomingdale Church?" a thesis by Pastor David J. Riemenschneider, was completed in 1993 at Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary in Denver, Colorado.¹²³

Riemenschneider's primary focus in his Doctor of Ministry project was to evaluate the impact of using short dramatic sketches as the introduction to sermons in the Sunday morning services at the Bloomingdale Church in Bloomingdale, Illinois, where he is pastor. He wished to discover whether the use of enacted illustration as a visual introduction to the sermon had a significant effect on the listener's level of retention of the sermon.

The research process extended over 12 weeks with two breaks of one week each, making a total of 10 testing Sundays. The breaks were used to minimize exposure to repetition of the same teaching method. Each service group heard only half of the 10 dramas that were a part of the project. The research plan called for the presentation of a thematically related four-to-seven minute dramatic sketch

¹²²Quentin Schultze, "Television and the Pulpit: An Interview with Quentin Schultze," *Preaching*, July-Aug. 1993, 2, 4.

¹²³David J. Riemenschneider, "Do Enacted Dramatic Sketches That Introduce the Sunday Morning Sermons Significantly Enhance the Level of Cognitive Retention of the Primary Lesson and the Practical Application of the Sermon for Attenders of the Sunday Morning Services at the Bloomingdale Church?" (D. Min. thesis, Denver Conservative Baptist Seminary, 1993).

immediately before the sermon in one service and the absence of the dramatic sketch in the other Sunday morning service on the same Sunday. Questionnaires regarding the primary lesson of the sermon for both groups were administered following the service. Then, a week later, congregants were once more asked to complete a questionnaire about the sermon preached the previous Sunday. About 1,400 detailed responses were gathered over the three-month testing period.¹²⁴

The study showed little difference between the ability of those who saw the drama and those who only heard the sermon to recall the primary lesson. However, the two youngest age groups (ages 8-12 and 13-20) did score better in their ability to repeat the summary sentence of the sermon the day when they also viewed the drama. One week later, the total sample showed no strong distinction between those who viewed the drama and those who did not.

There was a larger difference in the percentages when it came to the recall of the sermon application. All except two of the individual age groupings, ages 21-30 and 31-40, reported an observable difference in regards to the positive effect of the drama on the viewers' ability to report the suggested application of the sermon. A similar strong showing of differences occurred in the viewers' ability to repeat the sermon application one week later.¹²⁵

From his study, Riemenschneider concluded that ". . . drama appears to be a useful tool for communicators who desire to present their message with vividness and interest. The results of the project testing would suggest that there is some correlation between enhanced cognitive retention and the use of enacted dramatic visualization." He also noted that there was strong support for the use of the drama in the survey participants' self-evaluation of the effect of the drama. Based on his research, his own

¹²⁴Ibid., 133-34.

¹²⁵Ibid., 127-28.

experience, and the reactions from members, he said that they will continue to use drama in the Bloomingdale Church. He commented that "Studying the literature on this subject and seeing the results of the project itself reaffirm its practical value. At a personal level, the congregation of the Bloomingdale Church has been very affirming concerning its use in the Sunday morning church service context, despite its more novel character. The researcher has received a lot of personal feedback from the congregation concerning the value of the dramatic sketches to them in the Sunday morning services."¹²⁶

The author found only one other research project related to drama per se. It was conducted in an educational setting.

Margaret Hoffman O'Brien wrote a dissertation titled "'The Play's the Thing': The Effect of Performance-Based Teaching Methodology on Student Attitudes Toward Shakespeare Study (Drama, Acting)" at The American University. The purpose of her study was to determine whether learning about plays through performance-based methodology influences secondary school students' attitudes positively and significantly, as compared to students who learn Shakespeare through traditional, nonactive classroom methods.

Results of the study showed that

Students who learn Shakespeare by means of active, performance-based methodology have a more positive attitude toward Shakespeare study than do students who learn through traditional methodology. Affected most powerfully and most positively were students' attitudes concerning their own ability to understand Shakespeare's language and to master Shakespeare as a school subject, and their belief that the study of Shakespeare can be enjoyable. This study supports change from traditional nonactive classroom strategies to active, performance-based methodologies in

¹²⁶Ibid., 135-36.

the teaching of Shakespeare and other literature.¹²⁷

A third study has some bearing on the researcher's project although it related to the use of dramatic monologues rather than plays. The topics were religious rather than secular; however, they were not featured in a regular church service. The study was conducted by David S. Thompson in 1994 for his dissertation "An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Dramatic Monologue Compared with the Traditional Sermon" for the D.Min. degree at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas. The study consisted of a series of six sermons/dramatizations that taught on the Doctrine of Sin. The effectiveness was indicated by maintaining the attention of the listener, clearly articulating the principle so that it was fully comprehensible to the listener, and emotively challenging the listener to carry out the intended action. The study, conducted on Cayman Brac, a British Crown Colony island in the Caribbean Sea, utilized two groups who received alternate exposure to Biblical truth through sermons and dramatic monologues.¹²⁸

From results of pretests and post-tests administered to participants, the researcher concluded that both methods were effective in keeping and holding the attention of the listeners; both methods were successful in motivating the listeners to carry out the objectives of the lessons; and both methods were able to influence the thinking of the listeners. Thompson stated that "However, the data does not indicate that one method was more effective than the other."¹²⁹

He also concluded that the results do "not indicate that dramatization should be

¹²⁷Margaret Hoffman O'Brien, "'The Play's the Thing': The Effect of Performance-Based Teaching Methodology on Student Attitudes Toward Shakespeare Study (Drama, Acting)," (Ph.D. diss., The American University, 1994) [Dissertation Abstracts Online], 2.

¹²⁸David S. Thompson, "An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Dramatic Monologue Compared with the Traditional Sermon" (D.Min. diss, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1994).

¹²⁹Ibid., 61.

excluded as a means to communicate the truth of God's Word. Rather, it demonstrates that dramatization is a viable method that should be used by the church. It cannot replace the sermon. It can be and should be used as another means to reach this modern culture."¹³⁰

Effectiveness of the Use of Drama in the Church

Little scientific research has been done on the use of drama in the church. However, much has been written about its use and impact in the worship setting.

James S. Kerr wrote in his book, *The Key to Good Church Drama*, "Chancel drama is not a play, Biblical or contemporary, moved into the church. Chancel drama is not entertainment. It is seldom educational, though it may add to one's education. Chancel drama is worship. It is an act of devotion and worship on the part of the entire cast; it is worship for the director as much as a choir hymn is worship for the choir director. Furthermore, chancel drama is an act of worship for the audience."¹³¹

Olav Hartman, the Swedish playwright, commented, ". . . church drama presupposes the cooperation of a worshiping congregation which is something quite other than a body of observers who happen to be present in the pews of the church. The presence of a worshiping congregation is, indeed, a theological necessity." Hartman continued, "Since . . . church drama is in the service of the Christian message, its distinctive aim is to proclaim God's Word to the congregation and to express the congregation's intercessions before God."¹³²

Robert Howard Clausen spoke of the actor's role in religious drama. "The actor

¹³⁰Ibid., 81.

¹³¹James S. Kerr, *The Key to Good Church Drama* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1964), quoted in Robert Howard Clausen, "Using Drama in Worship," *Concordia Journal*, Nov. 1977, 250.

¹³²Olav Hartman, *Three Church Dramas* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), quoted in Robert Howard Clausen, "Using Drama in Worship," *Concordia Journal*, November 1977, 250.

in the chancel drama performs this priestly function, which is the privilege of every believer in Christ. In the drama which includes these elements of worship, the actor speaks God's Word to his fellow worshipers; but he also leads them in some response to God: be it confession, supplication, thanksgiving, or glorification."¹³³

Clausen continued with a quote by Eric Sharpe. "Liturgical drama knows of no 'audience.' In a sense it is a dialog between two persons: on the one side it is God and His Word; on the other side man, represented by the congregation."¹³⁴

Clausen commented, "Chancel drama . . . does not change what happens in the chancel. It heightens this action, deepens it, expands it, because of the peculiar power of drama to bring people into an action which calls for a response. In this way, chancel drama may indeed bring an added dimension to the worship experience."¹³⁵

Steve Pederson, nationally-recognized seminar leader and church drama consultant, in an interview for *Leadership*, reflected, "Drama is people revealing their hidden parts, enabling us all to understand better the human condition. It creates a beginning place for the Holy Spirit to work in people's lives."¹³⁶

In reply to the question, "How do you account for the great interest in church drama these days?" Pederson replied, "Drama has become an attractive option to those who are asking, 'How can we do a better job in reaching people, both the church and the unchurched, in a creative fashion without compromising the gospel?' For too long the church has relied on talking heads and robed choirs to reach people. Given the changes that have taken place in our culture, those two

¹³³Clausen, 250.

¹³⁴Eric Sharpe, quoted in Clausen, 250.

¹³⁵Clausen, 251.

¹³⁶Pederson, 52.

strategies won't work as well as they did in previous generations."¹³⁷

Lionel Basney, former professor of drama at Houghton College, Houghton, New York, wrote about the confrontational nature of drama and its power to elicit response from an audience.

When we go to a play, we watch characters--"people"--say and do all sorts of things: absorb information, react to other people, cope with their pasts, come to decisions and avoid them, come to hate, love, kill or marry their fellow characters. All this happens directly in front of us, a few feet away. We don't merely hear about it; we see it. It is one thing to read that Lear weeps over Cordelia. It is quite another to watch him do it.

What this immediate confrontation with experience does is to break down our conventional discretions and force us to respond. We are forced to make judgments, about the play, about our response to it. We lay ourselves on the line, cheering the hero, hissing the villain, or learning with Hamlet the difficulty of knowing which is which.

Plays allow us to adopt, briefly, the immediate, developing experience of others. Thus we learn sympathy, and with this grows our capacity for humility and compassion--we recognize that we need grace, and that others deserve it, whether it is the grace of God or merely the grace of friendly laughter.

The best presentations of the gospel have always confronted their auditors with the texture of their own experience as a first step toward self-knowledge and repentance. It is no wonder that today theater is proving an effective evangelistic medium among people who never darken a church door.¹³⁸

Likewise, Harold Ehrensperger described a dramatization's potential for a cathartic experience for the audience member. He stated that

This sharing (of experience and meaning of the play) takes place by empathy. A member of the audience does not feel merely sympathetic for the characters and identify himself as the observer of the crisis or problem; he is actually in the crisis to such an extent that

¹³⁷Ibid., 53.

¹³⁸Lionel Basney, "Why Christian Theater?" *Christian Herald*, Oct. 1976, 8.

the crisis is his, the problem is his, the dilemmas and the potentialities of the characters are his, and the actors are himself. . . . The spectator is so much a participant that he is emotionally aroused and later intellectually able to rise above passion to make a judgment. . . . By way of the experience cast in a creation of the dramatist, the member of the audience experiences its re-creation in and for himself. . . . The member of the audience leaves the theater as a re-created human being. Because of the creative work of the dramatist and performers the audience becomes changed human beings.¹³⁹

Ehrensperger went on to comment that

Fraulein Schmidt in Kaj Munk's *He Sits at the Melting Pot*, a vivid, melodramatic play written at the height of German occupation in Denmark, says: "Then let it be play-acting, and let this be the great idea of the play--that we may be allowed to come out of our narrow selves."

The capacity of drama as it comes alive in performance to let human beings "come out of their narrow selves" is one of its most important functions. This is what is meant by perspective, by vicarious experience that drama alone can give. It can also do this by "purgation," as Aristotle called it, or by release that can be found in delight and enjoyment. It is important to understand that significant drama or religious drama is characterized by its possibilities for *illuminating* the private world of the spectator--illumination that allows him to come out of his narrow self.¹⁴⁰

These opinions are confirmed by local church practitioners. Paul Avery, director of drama at Meadow Creek Community Church in Mesquite, Texas, is delighted to see drama return to the church. He feels that the "world captured and kidnapped the fine arts from the church" but now there is "truly a movement toward recapturing and harnessing the fine arts for God's purpose."¹⁴¹

John Schelter, pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Mesquite, Texas, commented, "The task of drama is to help us to see ourselves. We're in this story. It

¹³⁹Ehrensperger, 23-24.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 75.

¹⁴¹Paul Avery, interview by author, 29 Oct. 1998, Dallas.

opens the door to enter. It says, 'Come in. Sit down. Share in my story.' People tend to sleep during sermons, but, if someone walks in wearing a costume, people will watch and pay attention. Drama draws the audience to become a participant instead of just an observer."¹⁴²

Theater pleases, wrote Samuel Johnson in the eighteenth century, not by being "mistaken for reality," but by "bringing realities to mind. The producer does not intend you to believe what you see literally--only to imagine for a moment, so that you may also participate in what is really 'real' about it all, the moral and emotional involvement."¹⁴³

Playwright Dan Neidermyer, founder of Maranatha Productions, points out drama's ability to let participants vicariously live out the stories told in the Bible: "The Holy Scriptures as the Word of God contain fascinating and exciting accounts of individuals, personalities, and peoples. The lessons and messages, though ancient, are still contemporaneous with modern people. Dramatizing these accounts provides an opportunity to relive these exciting lives and fascinating events of Holy Writ while simultaneously inspiring, edifying, and blessing an audience."¹⁴⁴

Church drama author and director Robert M. Rucker pointed out the capacity of drama to compel the viewer to transfer what he hears and sees to his own life.

"Religious drama," he stated,

is capable of taking all of these elements of good storytelling, and then adds another dimension: the capacity of captivating an audience and asking them to identify so strongly with the situation that every viewer is compelled to transfer what he hears and sees on the stage to his own life. Herein lies a major similarity between secular

¹⁴²John Schelter, interview by author, 2 Nov. 1998, Dallas.

¹⁴³Samuel Johnson, quoted in Basney, 10.

¹⁴⁴Dan Neidermyer, *Scripture Plays: Ten Plays from the Holy Bible* (Colorado Springs: Meriwether Publishing Ltd., 1989), 3.

theatre and drama that is Christian; but the ends are not the same. Christian drama uses the strong identification factor as a means for allowing the spirit of God to convene and convict. As with Jesus' parables, church drama has the ability to take spiritual truth and couch it in an appealing narrative to which every person in the audience can respond.¹⁴⁵

Donald E. Miller, Graydon F. Snyder, and Robert W. Neff, all three professors at Bethany Theological Seminary in Richmond, Indiana, believe that acting out Scriptural events enables them "to be lived deeply, imaginatively, and intensely." Drama, then would seem to hold the potential to help those involved internalize Christian principles for their lives rather than regard those principles as propositional truth--a view espoused by their denomination, The Church of the Brethren. They elaborated with

Simulations are designed to help us feel the Biblical events, to identify with Biblical personalities, to sense their dilemmas and choices, their hopes and expectations. Their purpose is to encourage within us a trust that can tolerate conflict and a hope that finds God's kingdom breaking in among us. Their purpose is to let the past be present in order that the future may be ours. Simulation is based upon a hermeneutic of the lived moment permeated with historical understanding. When in the past people have been able to identify closely with Scripture, there has been a renewal of faith. Our hope for renewal again lies in a deeper understanding of the meaning and power of the Biblical message.¹⁴⁶

Sennett asked what it is that gives drama such special ability. In answering, he quoted Harold Ehrensperger, former chairman, Division of Theatre Arts, Boston University, who said that drama is "unique in that its substance is embodied in flesh, blood, bone, and voice." He explained that drama does not build a mere symbolic relationship between the audience member and the characters being portrayed. Rather, "he is actually in the crisis with a total identification" which Ehrensperger terms

¹⁴⁵Robert M. Rucker, *Producing and Directing Drama for the Church* (Kansas City, Mo.: Lillenas Publishing Company, 1993), 20.

¹⁴⁶Donald E. Miller, Graydon F. Snyder, and Robert W. Neff, *Using Biblical Simulations* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1973), 15.

“an organic whole” or something called “catharsis” in secular theater.¹⁴⁷

Sennett elaborated on Ehrensperger's comment.

But drama also draws people into a situation--a “slice of life” as it is often referred to. An audience witnesses people in familiar situations. They identify with what is “going on.” They feel the feelings that the situation would call for. They understand the reactions portrayed. And they realize that “there except for the grace of God go I.”

. . . So, in the moment of truth on stage, the truth of the Word of God can be interjected in a realistic and practical way to show those watching just how powerful God is in helping people overcome the difficulties in their lives. People cannot help but to think, “That just might work for me.”¹⁴⁸

Effect of the Postmodern Era on the Impact of Drama and Receptivity to the Use of Drama in the Church

The dynamics of the postmodern age may very well be setting the stage for a wider and more enthusiastic acceptance and a greater impact of the use of drama in the church. The author makes no claim to being an expert on the complex subject of postmodernity. Rather, in the following discussion, she has looked at what those who have established themselves as authorities in this field have said about this era and related their analyses and descriptions to the use of drama in the church. The writer believes that, while Scripture is and will always be universal, presentation of Scripture in dramatic form can localize its impact on and highlight its importance for the individual.

Stephen Toulmin observed that the reversal of the process of modernity moves from:

¹⁴⁷Harold Ehrensperger, quoted in Herbert Sennett, *Religion and Dramatics* (New York: University Press of America, 1995), 47.

¹⁴⁸Sennett, 37.

- * written to oral,
- * universal to particular,
- * general to local,
- * timeless to timely.¹⁴⁹

Considering these four points, the use of drama in the church seems to be appropriate and valid in the age of postmodernity.

- * Drama is an *oral* and a visual form.
- * A *particular* story is presented.
- * The drama is produced in a *local* setting for a particular group of people.
- * The message of the drama (while timeless in principle) relates to a specific locus in *time*. This may be especially true in the case of the contemporary dramatization.

Passing Biblical texts through the four interpretations of the playwright, producer/director, actors, and audience, a process inherent to the medium of drama, might have been considered far too perilous to the mindset of modernity. However, this probably would not be the case in the less rigid thinking of postmodernity with a more eclectic approach to meaning.

Stanley J. Grenz, professor at Carey Theological College and Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, explained the mindset of postmodernity in relation to meaning and reality.

Postmodern philosophers applied the theories of the literary deconstructionists (who say that the meaning of a text is dependent on the perspective of the one who enters into dialogue with it and has as many meanings as it has readers) to the world as a whole. Just as a text will be read differently by each reader, they said, so reality will be “read” differently by each

¹⁴⁹Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 186-92.

knowing self that encounters it. This means that there is no one meaning of the world, no transcendent center to reality as a whole.¹⁵⁰

Grenz, reflecting on the work of three leading postmodern philosophers, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and Jacques Derrida, cited their central dictum of postmodern philosophy as “all is difference” and the conclusion that “In the end, the postmodern world is merely an arena of ‘dueling texts.’” Grenz believes that the three philosophers form only a part of a larger shift in thinking reflected in Western culture.¹⁵¹

With the loss of the absolutes reflected in modernity thinking, men and women find themselves confused as to who they are, their purpose in being, and what they should do. In many cases, they are having a wilderness experience of the heart and mind and emotions as surely as the children of Israel did of the flesh. Too often they are calling out in desperation, “Who am I? Where am I? What should I do?” Instead of receiving satisfactory answers, they are hearing other voices calling, “Who am I? Where am I? What should I do?” While they *are* other voices, they sound like futile echoes of their own frantic whimpers. The other sounds filling the air are shouts of convoluted commercials touting a plethora of conflicting solutions and strategies.

As J. Richard Middleton, assistant professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York, and Brian J. Walsh, Christian Reformed Church chaplain at the University of Toronto, reflected “. . . it is clear that in a postmodern world, this autonomous self is effectively dismantled. . . . With the loss of our secure modern self-image, we are submerged in a postmodern identity crisis of immense proportions. . . . We are inundated by a multiplicity of

¹⁵⁰Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 6.

¹⁵¹Grenz, 6-7.

clamoring voices proffering alternative identities.”¹⁵²

John Dominic Crossan presented “lost at sea” as a metaphor for the postmodern ethical condition. “There is no lighthouse keeper. There is no lighthouse. There is no dry land. There are only people living on rafts made from their own imaginations. And there is the sea.”¹⁵³

Perhaps the resultant feeling of lack of direction and focus will energize a quest for meaning and purpose in life. Perhaps clergy will recognize that by breathing life into Biblical characters, the use of drama in the church may help to satisfy that yearning and point the way toward Christ and his principles. Then perhaps the seekers will say, “This worked for these people. Is it possible it might work for me, too?”

Another difference between modernity and postmodernity presents other opportunity for the use of drama, that is, rejection by the postmodernist of the concept that truth is certain and, therefore, purely rational. The postmodernist has come to the point of admitting that he or she does not have all the answers and perhaps does not even have all the right questions. There is a realization that everything cannot be figured out by even the most brilliant, logical minds, set in concrete, and settled once and for all.

Grenz observed that “The postmodern mind refuses to limit truth to its rational dimension and thus dethrones the human intellect as the arbiter of truth. There are other valid paths to knowledge besides reason, say the postmoderns, including the emotions and the intuition. . . . Knowledge cannot be merely objective, say the postmoderns, because the universe is not mechanistic and dualistic but rather

¹⁵²J. Richard Middleton, Brian J. Walsh, *Truth Is Stranger Than It Used to Be--Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter Varsity Press, 1995), 51-52 .

¹⁵³John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Toward a Theology of Story* (Niles, Ill.: Argus, 1975), 44.

historical, relational, and personal.”¹⁵⁴

Perhaps a dawning realization that the emotions and intuition of human beings are important and should be heeded will have the effect of opening the observer up to becoming emotionally involved with and touched by Biblical stories and truth expressed through dramatization. Perhaps they will, as a result, be ready and willing to receive what the Holy Spirit would speak to them through the message of this medium.

The postmodern generation is increasingly interested in the human person as a unified whole. Genz believes “. . . it involves integrating the emotional-affective, as well as the bodily-sensual, with the intellectual-rational within the one human person. . . . our gospel must also put the human person back into the social and environmental context that forms and nourishes us.”¹⁵⁵

Perhaps contemporary dramatizations that exemplify Christian principles as they apply to today's culture and challenges can be especially relevant and effective in this regard. Perhaps seeing characters in a play dealing with the same problems they face and must confront can be meaningful.

Middleton and Walsh described postmodernity as “a cable culture” in which people simply switch channels to sample other, readily available worlds. They claim that people are disoriented since more than one reality is being constructed and offered to them. They also used the metaphor of

. . . a carnival with a never-ending array of sideshows. There is no center to this production. Unlike even a three-ring circus, this carnival offers only the clamor of multifarious sideshow hawkers calling out for our momentary attention. . . . Since the old construction has been discredited and is in a process of decomposition, the season is open on the construction of new

¹⁵⁴Grenz, 7.

¹⁵⁵Grenz, 171-72.

realities which are produced with the same speed and ease with which temporary circus tents are raised.¹⁵⁶

They wrote that, as a result, we are presented with “a veritable smorgasbord of religious and world views for our consumption.”¹⁵⁷

The postmodernist's resultant disorientation and confusion may lead them to look for ways to bring meaning and direction to the wide collection of mixed signals they are receiving. Perhaps they will discover that the “merry-go-round” of this vast array of “isms” and ideas being thrust at them like so many “gold rings” is resulting in mental dizziness and emotional nausea.

When that moment comes, however, an intellectual exegesis of Scripture delivered from behind a foreboding pulpit is not likely to gain their attention. It will take something quite compelling and intriguing to catch their interest and capture their focus. Perhaps drama can provide the emotional intensity and involvement to draw them in and to constrain them to listen. And perhaps they *will* watch and listen since they are more open to new ideas and approaches and less optimistic about the future and their ability to control and make sense of it. Perhaps the postmodernists' outlook may help them to look at a character's onstage solutions based on Biblical principles with hope as a real possibility in solving their problems and shaping a better tomorrow.

Grenz related the lens through which this age sees the events of their lives to the progression of events as witnessed in a dramatization. “Postmoderns view life, like the story told on the stage, as an assemblage of intersecting narratives. That being the case, what better way to depict transience and performance than through the cultural medium that is intrinsically dependent on these two features.”¹⁵⁸ He wrote that “In a

¹⁵⁶Middleton, Walsh, 42-43.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 43.

¹⁵⁸Grenz, 26.

sense, the theater is perhaps the most appropriate artistic venue for the expression of the postmodern rejection of modernism.”¹⁵⁹

Grenz pointed out that “As theorists rethought the nature of theatrical expression, they called for the freeing of performance from its subservience to what they saw as the repressive power of the traditional authorities.” This included eliminating the script to make each performance “immediate and unique.” As a result, “Once performed, each work would truly disappear forever.” They also emphasized improvisation and group authorship. “And, moving against all classical conventions, they celebrated the resulting loss of the concept of the theatrical work as a unified production.”¹⁶⁰

Grenz presented this further explanation.

. . . postmodern theater displays a specific theory of performance—an “aesthetics of absence” in contrast to the older “aesthetics of presence.” The aesthetics of absence rejects the idea that a performance ought to evidence a sense of underlying, permanent truth. It maintains that the sense of presence that the performance evokes can be no more than an “empty presence.” In keeping with the postmodern ethos generally, the meaning of the performance can be only transient, dependent on the situation or context in which it occurs.¹⁶¹

While the mindset may claim that permanent truth may not be communicated through dramatization, it overlooks the power of Scripture, Scriptural principles, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Whether it is the Word of God being proclaimed from the mouth of the actor or actress or truth based on the Word of God, it *is* truth and, as such, has opportunity to penetrate to the core of the listener’s being. The writer believes that this is more likely to happen to a person of this persuasion through a drama than

¹⁵⁹Ibid.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ibid, 27-8.

through a sermon.

First of all, the postmodernist is much more likely to venture to see a play than to come to hear a sermon. From the writings of Grenz and other scholars of postmodernity, it appears that drama has particular appeal for the postmodernist. The dramatization can present truth in a less threatening manner than can more traditional approaches. It has the potential to engage the emotions and to involve the audience member who is likely to let down her or his defenses and become more vulnerable to the reception of the truth of Scripture.

Drama can also provide the opportunity to meet the need and quest that the postmodernist has for involvement as identified by Steven Connor. He wrote, "From rock music to tourism to television and even education, advertising imperatives and consumer demand are no longer for goods, but for experiences."¹⁶²

Drama appears to be a particularly well suited approach for meeting this desire of postmoderns for involvement and experiential opportunities. The encounter inherent in witnessing a well-crafted dramatization can evoke laughter, joy, tears, pain, fear, a feeling of empowerment--a wide range of emotions and experiences because it invades the lives, sensibilities, and feelings of the audience. It may serve as a catharsis to dredge up issues in audience members' lives that need to be resolved.

While this is an outcome of the emotional involvement that can result from witnessing a dramatization, participating in a production may elicit an even more profound involvement experience. Impromptu dramatization offers an especially rich opportunity for involvement as the participant becomes a partner in the development of the story and experience being offered. Perhaps having the opportunity to be a part of impromptu dramatization of Biblical stories and Scriptural principles can help to fulfill this desire of the postmodernist for experiences and active involvement in a spiritually

¹⁶²Steven Connor, *Postmodernist Culture* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 154.

impacting way.

Bibliodrama, an impromptu improvisation approach developed by the writer and her psychodrama professor Dr. Richard M. Fine provides direct audience participation and immersion in Biblical stories.¹⁶³ This is an experimental technique that seemed to the developers to hold much promise in helping individuals solve problems and bring revelation to the individual of Biblical truth and principle. Even though Dr. Fine and the author had limited time available to explore this approach, they were encouraged by the outcomes. They observed that Bibliodrama appeared to provide a technique that God can use to assist participants in resolving issues and bringing insight.

Certainly the author does not believe that we should look to psychodrama or any other psychological method for solutions; rather, we should look to God as God might choose to work through that approach even as God works through many other methods. While additional study and analysis are suggested, the approach does appear to hold promise.

Basically, this is how Bibliodrama works. Emphasis is placed on assisting each participant to “get inside” the character each person is portraying in an enactment of a story from the Bible. Careful attention is given to preserving the integrity of the Scriptural message of the story. Dialogue and action, however, grow out of impromptu characterizations by the participants. The director uses psychodramatic techniques to help each participant experience what it would be like to have been that person in those particular circumstances and to relate the portrayal to his or her own life, current situation, and spiritual growth. A discussion of the group experience by participants and audience members concludes each session.

Outcomes in the developmental sessions have been exciting and encouraging.

¹⁶³More detail about this technique and the outcomes is provided in Chapter III and in the Appendices.

Observable results for the participants have included: an expanded understanding of God and his relationship with women and men, new and fresh insights into particular Bible stories, a greater identification with and broader perception of Biblical characters, application to particular life situations of the participants, and a deepened interest in Scriptural passages being extemporaneously acted out and in Scripture as a whole. Bibliodrama appears to hold promise for involving participants in Scripture in a fresh way and helping them to relate Biblical principles to their lives.

Grenz made this insightful comment about the challenge the church faces in the postmodern age.

Our critical reflections must lead us to determine the contours of the gospel that will speak to the hearts of postmodern people. . . . Our task as Christ's disciples is to embody and articulate the never-changing good news of available salvation in a manner that the emerging generation can understand.

Imbued with the vision of God's program for the world, we must claim the new postmodern context for Christ by embodying the Christian faith in ways that the new generation can understand. In short, under the banner of the cross, we must "boldly go where no one has gone before."¹⁶⁴

Perhaps drama can become a major vehicle in helping God's people to make that journey successfully.

Drama has played a major role in the writer's personal journey throughout the years. Many meaningful and edifying spiritual and life-shaping experiences have resulted personally from her participation in drama as an actor, a technician, a teacher, a playwright, a director, and an audience member. Among those most treasured are having the opportunity to direct plays and to work with people of all ages in this art. She has observed with awe amazing spiritual and personal growth in many who have participated with her as actors, technicians, and audience members. These noticeable

¹⁶⁴Grenz, 174, 100.

outcomes have given her the desire to undertake various investigation projects to determine if those observations would be substantiated by measurable research results.

She has also tried to relate her experience in the field of audiovisual education to learning opportunities as they might be presented in dramatic form. Freedom was given in research papers in D.Min. degree courses to link the various topics to the use of drama in the church. As a result, much pertinent information has been garnered.

The next chapter will focus on results from surveys related to drama that were conducted by the author, and findings from research she did for a course in Christian Theology in the Modern Setting on using drama to interpret Biblical texts. Deductions based on her experiences and those of others with drama, from results from the surveys she conducted, and from related research for other courses at McMaster will also be drawn.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCHER'S UTILIZATION OF AND INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF DRAMATIC METHODS IN EXAMINING Scripture

In addition to the review of the literature, the researcher has drawn several deductions from her study of drama, her extensive experience in the field of drama, and several pertinent investigations she has conducted as a part of her work on the D.Min. degree at McMaster Divinity College.

Results of three surveys the writer conducted within her congregation have a bearing on this study. These are the descriptions of the three surveys.

1. A congregational questionnaire administered to determine the opinions about and impact of the plays presented by The King's Company Drama Ministry at The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Dallas, Texas.
2. A King's Company Drama Ministry participants' questionnaire administered to determine the opinions and impact of being a part of the drama ministry.
3. A questionnaire administered to participants in Bibliodrama, a innovative method of interpreting Scripture developed as a part of a course in Psychodrama.

In addition, a research paper titled "An Exploration of the Use of Drama (Set in a Biblical Context and/or in a Contemporary Context) to Interpret Biblical Texts " completed for a course in Christian Theology in the Modern Setting holds significance for the study.

The Researcher's Background in and Experience with Drama

The researcher has maintained a life-long interest in drama, starting in elementary school. She majored in drama on her bachelor's degree and minored in speech-drama on her master's degree. She taught drama and speech for several years and has directed plays and pageants for school, community, and church groups. She served as director of drama in two churches and had her own drama group that trouped to various churches, retirement facilities, prisons, and retreats. She has also written numerous plays, pageants, and dramatic sketches for performance by various community, school, and church drama groups. Several of her plays have been published, and she is the winner of two playwriting contests.

In addition, she majored in Audiovisual Education on her master's degree and learned much about the ways multi-sensory approaches enhance the ability of the participant to learn and recall information. During her three years as Coordinator of Instructional Television for the Mesquite (Texas) Independent School District, she had rich opportunity to develop imaginative ways to capitalize on the auditory, visual, and movement approaches offered by television to enhance and supplement instruction in the classroom. During that time, she afforded several hundred elementary school children the opportunity to participate in an actual television production through a devotional type morning program, "Top of the Morning;" instructional series, such as conversational Spanish; and several plays she wrote and directed for occasions such as the observance of Law Day.

Over the years the writer has observed the power and impact of dramatic presentations on sundry kinds of audiences. While she has had the opportunity to use various dramatic approaches in churches and other religious settings, she wishes to explore additional ways drama may be effectively employed. The foremost of these is

in the presentation of Scripture. She is convinced of the experiential truth contained in Heb. 4:12: "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." She, therefore, wants to determine through research if drama can provide additional impact to the word of God for members of a congregation. Since she is the director of drama in a liturgical church, she is particularly interested in determining the effectiveness of using drama as a means of helping to interpret Lectionary readings.

Results of Congregational Survey

In October 1999, 343 copies of a questionnaire related to performances of The King's Company Drama Ministry were mailed to every member (aged 10 or above) of the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, Dallas, Texas, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed for return. In addition, extra copies of the questionnaire were made available for visitors and non-members on the information table in the Parish Hall with notices of their availability placed in *The Good News*, the church newsletter. A copy of the questionnaire and an analysis of the results are in Appendix A. A total of 146 were returned with nearly all of them sent back through the mail.

All of the 12 plays that had been presented at the time the survey was made were either based directly on a Scripture from one of the Lectionary Readings or presented principles contained in one of the Scriptures. Several of the questions related directly to the use of drama in interpreting Scripture and its principles.

To the question: "I found the effectiveness level of the productions that dramatized Scripture from the Lectionary reading in making the passage memorable and understandable to be:" 44% checked "very effective;" 43%, "effective," 10%, "somewhat effective," and 2%, "not effective."

One question gave respondents nine possible choices to the statement:

"Please check the statement or statements that express your reaction to the use of drama in a church service." Respondents checked the following answers listed in order of frequency of response.

106 Make message memorable

102 Provides variety

97 Provides positive spiritual impact

91 Gets across a concept in a dynamic manner

64 Is interesting and exciting

13 Distracts from worship

6 Is inappropriate for use in church setting

1 Is boring

1 Has negative spiritual impact

Many respondents wrote comments and suggestions in the space provided for this purpose. Those that particularly pertain to this study included:

1. Six commented on the value of combining sight and sound in the presentation of the Scriptures, while two said they bring Scripture to life. Another said that the plays are a good way to convey a message.
2. Five commented on the plays' value in helping to understand Scripture, and five mentioned the special positive impact for children in this regard.
3. Four mentioned positive spiritual impact with comments such as:
 "Each production has found a way to touch my heart and soul."
 "They convicted me of changes I need to make in my life."
 "They are thought-provoking."
 "They have made a real impact on people's lives."

In addition to the responses from the survey, much additional feedback has

been received. A worshiper in one of the services told one of the actors that she had been out of fellowship with the Lord for some time, but, after seeing *The Challenge of the Cross*, she was ready to take up her cross once more and follow Jesus.

The father of teenagers who were in the Christmas play wrote this note to the director. "I'm an 'early service kind of guy' and tend to like my worship to be simple, quiet, and meditative. So I don't always have a wonderful first reaction to dance, drama, or other presentations that are 'out of the ordinary.' . . . The whole thing 'came together' in a way that held my interest and provided a significant impact."

A member of the congregation wrote, "The dramatizations make more real and bring more feeling to the Biblical Scriptures. I am touched and enlightened. What a joy and closer feel to God!"

Results of the Survey for Drama Ministry Participants

Some of the responses to the survey administered to drama ministry participants seem to have direct relevance to this study. In April 2000, 51 questionnaires were given or mailed to every person who had participated in The King's Company Drama Ministry with the exception of three whose addresses are unknown. A total of 31, or 60.8%, were returned. A copy of the questionnaire and an analysis of the responses make up Appendix B.

In response to the question "The impact of drama participation on my spiritual growth has been:" 23% said excellent, 39% very good, 23% good, 13% fair, and 3% slight. Those who completed the questionnaire were asked to cite what they liked best about participating in the productions. Twelve responses related to the opportunity for ministry and presentation of the Word of God to others; two mentioned the positive impact on them from a spiritual standpoint; and another said that what he liked most about participating was "Bringing Scripture 'alive'."

One participant later wrote about the impact of playing God from the rafters of the church in the story of Jonah that was done as a dramatization titled *Jonah, the Reluctant Prophet*. He said there were several aspects of his performance that had impact for him.

1. He had a greater realization of God's compassion and mercy.
2. He realized that Jonah loved the Lord and deep down wanted to please him, so God did not want to "zap him or write him off."
3. God really wanted the people of Nineveh back in fellowship with him and was "really touched when they repented."
4. He caught a glimpse of God's humor.

He ended by writing, "Also, I was able to watch the play and see what was going on in the audience as well as the play itself. Again, in a way, I was able to sort of see it from God's perspective."

A cast member in one of the Easter productions had a particularly dramatic experience. As she waited backstage to go on for her next scene, she heard the crowd shouting, "Give us Barabbus. Give us Barabbus." She said that in that moment, instead of Barabbus, she heard her name, Barbara, and she had a new revelation and realization of the way that Jesus took her place on the cross when she was the one who was guilty. Her final scene in the play, a very dramatic one, was played with a depth of emotion she had never before displayed.

Others have shared what they believe participation has meant in the life of a family member. For example, one lady said that for the first time her husband, who has been a member of The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection for 13 years, feels like he is really a part of the congregation. She commented that he has gained so much in confidence that he now is branching out to participate in the Music Ministry and to head up a 12-step program for those battling addictive behavior.

Results of a Survey of Those Who Participated in Bibliodrama

As a part of the course in Psychodrama taught by Dr. Richard Fine, Dr. Fine and Wanda Vassallo developed a new approach to exploring Scripture using psychodramatic techniques. Eight other members of The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection participated with them in the spontaneous dramatization of the following Biblical stories.

1. The healing by Jesus of the woman who had been bowed over for 18 years (Luke 13:11-16)
2. Esther's appearance before the king to try to save the lives of her Jewish people (Esther 4 - 7)
3. Jesus' visit to Mary's and Martha's home when Mary chided Martha for "sitting at Jēsus' feet" and not helping her (Luke 10:38 - 42)
4. Elijah's request that the widow feed him when she had only enough food left for one meal for her and her son (1 Kings 17:8 - 16)
5. David's slaying of Goliath, the giant (1 Sam. 17)
6. The first sin and its punishment (Gen. 3)
7. The Story of Athaliah and Joash, the Little King (2 Kings 11)
8. The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Wise and Foolish Virgins) (Matt. 25:1 - 13)

The format developed for conducting Bibliodrama sessions is Appendix C. The eight participants completed a questionnaire about their participation in the Bibliodrama sessions. The questionnaire and its analysis form Appendix D.

Highlights pertinent to this study are as follows.

* To the question "The impact of participating in the impromptu bibliodramas on my spiritual growth has been:" three responded "excellent," while five replied "very

good.”

- * To the question “My understanding of the stories I’ve participated in and their message has grown:” three responded “a lot,” and five said “a good deal.”

- * To the question “My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the stories have increased:” five replied “a good deal,” and three said “a lot.”

Participants indicated these things that they liked most about being a part of the sessions.

- * “Experiencing a variety of perspectives and personal relevancy of Scripture.”

- * “Having the opportunity to ‘walk into’ the characters of the Bible.” (two persons)

- * “Insights regarding spiritual teachings and my life.”

- * “Helps me see the Biblical characters as real people, feel ‘identified’ with them and empathize with their struggles and situations.”

- * “Scripture comes to ‘life.’”

The final question asked how participation in Bibliodrama impacted their spiritual and personal development. These were some of the replies.

- * “I have experienced the vulnerability of God in terms of struggle, pain, joy, and patience and mostly unconditional love. God’s vulnerability has allowed me to have a deep feeling of partnership with me.”

- * “I can understand the Bible characters more and why they acted and did what they did. Also, I can personally identify with them.”

- * “I believe it has given me greater insight into the depth and extent of God’s love and emotion and the anguish he experiences as a result of our disobedience and waywardness.”

In a discussion session following the enactment of the story of David and Goliath, the woman who played the part of David said that she had struggled with fear

all of her life. She recalled that many times fear had kept her from doing things she really wanted to do and things she felt God was calling her to do. She related that, in the role of David, she became absolutely terrified as she prepared to go up against Goliath. However, at a certain point, courage welled up in her soul, and she said, "I can do this, and, with God's help, I will defeat the giant." She believed that that experience was a significant victory in her struggle to defeat her personal enemy of fear.

Salient Points and Findings from the Writer's Research Paper, "An Exploration of the Use of Drama (Set in a Biblical Context and/or in a Contemporary Context) to Interpret Biblical Texts"

The researcher-explored three main challenges in using drama as a secondary text to interpret the primary text of Scripture in a research paper written for the course "Christian Theology in the Modern Setting." The three questions she posed with a brief summary of the points made in the paper follow.

1. Is there a possible distortion or skewing of the interpretation of the primary text when the secondary text is a drama because the main thrust may become "putting on a good play"?

The playwright, in writing a dramatization as a secondary source to interpret Scripture, is not usually likely to take a single text and make it mean whatever she or he wants it to, a temptation regularly faced by preachers and teachers of the Bible. However, there are other possibilities or temptations with the primary one being "improving" the story in order to highlight its dramatic impact.

The church drama director and dramatist must be constantly on guard against making changes that compromise the key elements of the story or distort its meaning.

Often we are not told another person's reaction to a statement or we must make up additional dialogue in a scene when only some of the characters' statements appear in the Biblical text. It is then that remaining true to the original author's intent and purpose must become a matter of serious study, prayer, direction by the Holy Spirit, and what the writer likes to call "anointed imagination."

While retaining the integrity of the Scriptural message and purpose, the playwright and director are also challenged to observe excellent dramatic principles. Elements of good drama, such as conflict, climax, consistent characterization, opportunity for emotional involvement on the part of the audience, believable acting, and competent direction, are a must.

This dual responsibility produces a certain tension between the integrity of Scriptural interpretation and viable drama. Both are important. Neither should be sacrificed for the other. Selecting the right story that can be staged with valid dramatic effect and retaining the integrity of the meaning and message of the story are critical in using drama to interpret Biblical texts effectively and accurately.

2. How does creating and/or selecting a concept and a plot affect the ability to faithfully interpret the primary text?

Perhaps an even greater challenge in the faithful interpretation of Biblical passages through dramatic approaches is in the use of contemporary dramatizations. Great wisdom is required in selecting a concept and a plot that will carefully interpret the intent or the basic tenet of a primary text. However, the contemporary drama, dealing with issues faced by church members on a daily basis, has the advantage of helping the congregation see how the principles of the Bible are timeless in application and have tremendous relevance in today's society.

Enactment of a faithfully and carefully thought through Scriptural passage, executed as a drama in a contemporary setting, can help the congregant make the

vital connection between the challenges faced by those in Biblical days and those we struggle with today. The reaction of two congregations in witnessing the story of “The Good Samaritan” staged with a contemporary twist confirmed this opinion. The basic Biblical story remained the same. However, in the play, the man was assaulted at a local mall rather than on the road to Jericho. The passersby who refused to help became the soloist in the church choir’s cantata, a member of the church baseball team, and a preacher who tried to get the man “saved” but offered no physical assistance. The Good Samaritan was the town’s ne’er do well who picked up tin cans in his wagon and sold them to make a few dollars. He placed the victim in his wagon and was taking him to a nearby clinic as the dramatization drew to a close. Reactions included surprise, laughter, and positive comments about seeing the story with “new eyes” and greater understanding of how it related to them today.

The dramatist seeking to express the principle or principles contained in a Biblical passage does well to seek the input of other Scripturally knowledgeable Christians in evaluating whether or not the plot of a proposed play will meet the goal effectively. Then, once the drama is completed, reactions to the finished product should once more be requested. Once the playwright feels reasonably sure that he or she has produced a faithful interpretation, it is then helpful to have the play read aloud by members of the church drama group or others who read well. Much can be learned by the playwright from such a reading. In addition, feedback from the actors may prove beneficial in polishing the script.

In the case of contemporary dramatizations used in interpreting a passage of Scripture, of course, the passage should be read before the presentation on the production day. It is also helpful for an introduction to the play and/or a brief message after the play to be given to assist the congregation in making the connection. This provides opportunity for some elaboration on the prime concept. In a seminar or

setting that is less formal than a church service, a modern day drama might be followed by a discussion by participants of the principles set forth in the drama, the choices the characters were called on to make, and ways the principles relate to their own lives.

3. What are the benefits and risks of using drama as a secondary text?

Throughout the Bible, we see example after example of the way that God and Jesus used dramatic approaches to get the attention of and to communicate vital principles that they wished to convey to people. Appeal to the senses, particularly the visual, and dramatic, physical participation apparently had significant impact for the Israelites and for those to whom Jesus ministered. Surely, this is even truer today when you consider the impact of contemporary culture on parishioners. The new technologies--cable, VCR, the remote control, video and computer games, the Internet--have negatively affected people's willingness to listen patiently and attentively.

As a result, the challenge is not only in ascertaining the meaning of Scripture and making it understandable and relevant to the lives of the listeners, but also in presenting it in a manner to gain and hold their interest and attention. The stories of the Bible are crammed full of conflict, excitement, emotion, intensity, and suspense. Telling those stories through dramatization can put flesh on the bare bones of Biblical characters, involve observers in their lives and challenges, and help them relate those tales of long ago to their daily lives.

Four Lenses of Interpretation

Certainly high on the "risk" list is the fact that the dramatization passes through at least four main interpretive agents or lenses: (1) the playwright, (2) the producer/director, (3) the actors, and, finally, (4) the audience. This process involves several persons over a period of time.

The Playwright

The playwright takes the words contained in a Scriptural passage, decides the writer's meaning and intent and interprets them in dramatic form, either in a retelling of the story or in portraying a principle presented in the passage of Scripture.

First of all, he or she must determine the format for the presentation from the possibilities: set in the period of the Scripture's origin or in a modern setting, use of a narrator to tie scenes together, reader's theater, choral reading version, a monologue, or a pantomime, to name some of the possible approaches. In making that decision, the playwright does well to consider the genre of the original text.

Frances Young pointed out that

. . . it is clear that the canon of Scripture likewise encompasses a range of genres--it is a kind of classic repertoire. It is fundamentally a library, or collection of books, a fact much clearer to the ancients who would read it from many rolls or codices . . . Being a library, not surprisingly it contained books of different types.

Awareness of the Bible as a canon of literature, representing different styles from different periods, must be the starting-point for appropriate interpretation. Each genre within the Bible will have its proper mode of performance. Narrative, poetry, prophecy, law, wisdom, hymns, prayers, visions--all these require different approaches.¹⁶⁵

A consideration of various dramatic approaches, in addition to the traditional staging of a play, in keeping with the texture of the Scriptural passage can result in bringing life, interest, and enhanced meaning to various genres of the canon. For example, passages from The Psalms, poetic passages from other books, and parts of Revelation can be presented in a powerful and memorable way in the form of a choral reading. A reader's theater approach to some of the compelling stories of Scripture

¹⁶⁵Frances Young, *The Art of Performance: Towards a Theology of Holy Scripture* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990), 26-7.

makes it possible to capture the excitement, pathos, and challenge of a passage that would not otherwise be possible due to the limitations of staging the chancel play. For example, the story of Simon Peter's astounding catch of fish after obeying Jesus' command to let down his nets could hardly be staged. Yet this passage from Luke 5 could be effectively presented as a reader's theater presentation.

Next, the playwright must take utmost care in the interpretation of the Scriptural passage. It is a sacred task--one which should not be undertaken by a writer who has not invested a lifetime of prayerful study of the Word of God. What is the meaning of the passage? What is its intent? What was the setting, the background? What was the writer's purpose? Was it Paul writing a letter to address a problem in a particular fellowship, or was it David singing a song of praise and thanksgiving to his Creator? The hope is that the Christian dramatist is committed to meeting these criteria to the best of her or his ability.

Nicholas Lash, Professor of Divinity at the University of Cambridge, also addressed this point.

In the first place, the range of appropriate interpretations of a dramatic or literary text is constrained by what the text 'originally meant'. . . . Good Shakespearean production, for example, presupposes an effective and abiding interest in what was originally meant. The author retains his authority if it is *his* text, and not some other, that we seek to interpret.

In the second place, in order to understand a text we have to understand the question to which it is an answer.

. . . To put it very simply: as the history of the meaning of the text continues, we can and must tell the story differently. But we do so under constraint: What we may *not* do, if it is *this* text which we are to continue to perform, is to tell a different story.¹⁶⁶

While the conscientious playwright will, no doubt, strive to maintain the original

¹⁶⁶Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1986), 41.

integrity of the story, the assignment is a challenging one. Young addressed some of the complexities involved. “. . . Word and sentences, gestures and intonation, mean what they mean within a cultural system. The texts with which we have to deal come from a cultural system different from our own. It is not simply a question of learning Greek or Hebrew in a somewhat mechanical way--it is trying to get into a cultural-linguistic whole which the author and his original addressees shared and which we do not.”¹⁶⁷

The Producer/Director

The producer/director takes the script and interprets the dramatist's script, based on Scripture and Scriptural principles. The producer/director also must be thoroughly familiar with the Bible and Scriptural principles. Otherwise, he or she may skew a faithfully written religious drama away from its Scriptural integrity. Also, she or he should be knowledgeable of copyright laws and abide by them.

Being knowledgeable of the mores and customs of the setting of a Biblical story is extremely important in directing the play and in helping to prepare the cast. For example, in staging the “Parable of the Prodigal Son,” knowing that an older person of that day and culture would not run to greet anyone because it would be considered a shocking loss of dignity shows the intensity of emotion and the humility the father demonstrated in running to meet the prodigal son. Sharing that information with the cast would be extremely helpful in assisting them to arrive at a faithful interpretation of that moment in the story.

Unless the playwright happens to be available to the director, the director is faced with many of the same types of challenges the playwright faced in developing the script. The director must decide on the basic approach that is appropriate. Further

¹⁶⁷Young, 12-13.

interpretation enters into decisions in casting the drama, blocking the action, determining the set, costumes, props, sound effects, lighting, and all other necessary aspects of the production. Next, the director must try to determine the playwright's intent and purpose even as the playwright attempted to determine the Biblical author's intent and purpose.

The producer/director also must make sure the production fits the occasion in several ways. These include the desired length, appropriateness for a particular season in the church year or a particular passage of Scripture reading, and logistical considerations. She or he, in consultation with the minister, must decide whether the play will be a part of a service or the entire event and whether it will take the place of a sermon or will be used as an illustration before or within a sermon.

The Actors

The actors present the third filter as they study their roles, the relationships of their characters with each other, nuances of meaning contained "between the lines," and work on the meaning, emotion, delivery of their lines, and appropriate body language. While the director provides guidance in these areas, actors are the ones who ultimately develop and bring their characters to life.

E. Martin Browne addressed the role of the actor in religious drama with "The actor who acts his part and does not just behave like it (the part) is performing the same sacred function as his prototype. He dedicates his own person to the showing forth of the soul of another; that is, to the discovery of the divine part of the character and its ultimate significance."¹⁶⁸

In portraying a Biblical character, it behooves the actor to become a student of

¹⁶⁸E. Martin Browne, "Religion and the Drama," *Being the Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the World Congress of Faiths* (London: Arthur Probsthain, 1938), 118.

that character. A faithful interpretation of a Biblical character is possible only by prayerfully reading accounts about that person in the Bible and consulting other resources about that character as well as studying the script. Only then is it possible for the actor to “bring to life” with integrity and authenticity a multi-dimensional person.

Robert Howard Clausen presented the ministerial role the actor plays in Christian drama in this way. “The actor in the chancel drama performs this priestly function, which is the privilege of every believer in Christ. In the drama which includes these elements of worship, the actor speaks God’s Word to his fellow worshipers; but he also leads them in some response to God: be it confession, supplication, thanksgiving, or glorification.”¹⁶⁹

Because the actor in religious drama does perform a priestly function, it is important for him or her to examine his or her motives on an ongoing basis. There is a fine line between “performance” and ministry which is important to maintain if church drama is to fulfill its highest purpose and calling. If it is being used as a showcase for talent or to receive applause and accolades, the motivation of the actor is amiss and the priestly function will remain unfulfilled.

Herbert Sennett pointed out the responsibility the actor assumes in accepting and performing a role in religious drama as well as the growth that may result from such participation. He stated that

The opportunity for growth not only extends to the persons viewing the drama, but also involves the people producing the drama. Their participation requires a deep study of the text, characters and background of the drama. A serious study of the Bible and its affiliate writings may be necessary to gain a complete understanding required for a successful and honest performance. Thus, the people playing the parts and providing the support grow spiritually. And they grow emotionally as well in their relationships with each other in the cooperative spirit that is required to produce a

¹⁶⁹Clausen, 250.

play.¹⁷⁰

The Audience

The audience member becomes the fourth interpreter of the dramatization. Viewers bring to the play who they are: their past experience, their hopes and dreams, their disappointments, their frustrations, their present spiritual condition, their current situation, and their knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of Scripture. Because of the wide spectrum of backgrounds and experience, the encounter with the drama is different for each person. In a congregation composed of 100 persons, the play will pass through 100 varied filters.

Harold Ehrensperger described the necessary relationship of the audience to a play and the dramatization's result for the viewers.

The play is an artistic expression that has reality, and it is more real than reality itself. The reality of a play is fabricated from the most meaningful and significant moments of many moments of many lives, of millions of words. It is a created nexus of movement, crisis, and language which has the power to condition the future living of those who experience the play. By way of living persons who interact upon each other in such a way that they interact with the audience it unfolds a story. The participating experience of the audience is so important that drama can be complete and alive only in the presence of an audience. A play is designed for performance, and it is born when it gathers more life to itself by way of the response of an audience. Response resulting from the sharing of the experience is integral to the reality of the drama. This sharing of the meaning of the play by the actors with the audience provides the essence of drama. The spectator ceases to be spectator as the play gets under way, because he projects himself imaginatively into a participation with the destiny of the characters in the performance.¹⁷¹

Robert M. Rucker described the impact on the audience.

Religious drama is capable of taking all of these elements of

¹⁷⁰Sennett, 15.

¹⁷¹Ehrensperger, 22-23.

good storytelling, and then adds another dimension: the capacity of captivating an audience and asking them to identify so strongly with the situation that every viewer is compelled to transfer what he hears and sees on the stage to his own life. Herein lies a major similarity between secular theatre and drama that is Christian but the ends are not the same. Christian drama uses the strong identification factor as a means for allowing the spirit of God to convene and convict. As with Jesus' parables, church drama has the ability to take spiritual truth and couch it in an appealing narrative to which every person in the audience can respond.¹⁷²

The response of the audience also plays a major role in the vibrancy and performance of the actors. Casts presenting the same play for several groups find that how well they do is dependent, at least in part, on how responsive and involved the audience is in the dramatization.

Frances Young presented a fascinating analogy with musical performance and the interpretation of Scripture that applies to dramatic performance as well.

. . . the 'performer' or 'interpreter' needs to be able to analyse the material and bring to consciousness what is there if the 'meaning' is to be communicated through the performance. No two performances are identical, and the response of the audience affects the outcome in ways which are not easy to define; . . . Musician and listener learn a shared communication system, but both have to transcend it: the performer needs to be more than technically competent, and the hearer has to respond by attending to and being taken up into what is happening. In other words both need inspiration.¹⁷³

So the message of the Scriptural passage makes a complex journey through four filters as it is transformed into a "presentation" medium involving both the aural and visual interpretation of the written word. The question is can the meaning and integrity of the message survive the perils of the trip? Another query might be is the destination worth the rigors of the journey?

¹⁷² Rucker, 20.

¹⁷³ Young, 22-3.

Dramatization helps the viewer to understand and make personal the stories of the Bible as illustrated by one of many personal experiences of the writer. In a sermon titled "For Such a Time as This," she hastily donned a regal robe and "became" Queen Esther in making the decision to risk her life and approach the king without permission and enter his throne room. After the service a young woman came up and said that she had never understood that story before and that she had felt as though she were the one going before the king.

Another advantage of the use of drama in the church is that people relax their guard and get involved. "Hard" issues may be addressed without church members feeling that they are being accused, reprimanded, talked down to, or scolded. From his experience and observation, church drama director Paul Avery commented, "Drama bypasses a person's normal defenses and shoots straight to the heart. They see people like themselves in situations like their own."¹⁷⁴

Herbert Sennett addressed this point with ". . . theater can picture for the congregation just how a Creator God of the Universe can be interested in and participate with the life of a human being. Is that not what preaching attempts to do? Instead of being 'lectured to,' drama affords the viewer/listener the opportunity to 'feel' like he is not being directly addressed. In the 'aesthetic distance' created by drama, a closer bond can occur which is the bond of identification."¹⁷⁵

However, a word of caution is in order. Since the medium of drama is very powerful in involving an audience in the story and helping them to experience the emotions and meaning of a story, it places a heavy responsibility on all those involved. It is crucial to do everything possible to remain consistently true to the message and intent of Scripture.

¹⁷⁴Avery

¹⁷⁵Sennett, 36.

Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, all those involved in the experience of religious drama may see Scripture, their relationship with God, and their own lives with “new eyes” in a fresh, compelling way. Nicholas Lash expressed this concept in this way.

At the end of a performance of *Lear*, the actors leave the stage, remove their costumes, “return to life”. But, for each Christian actor, the performance of the Biblical text ends only at death. The stage on which we enact our performance is that wider human history in which the church exists as the “sacrament”, or dramatic enactment, of history’s ultimate meaning and hope. If the texts of the New Testament are to express that which Christian faith declares them capable of expressing, the quality of our humanity will be the criterion of the adequacy of the performance. And yet this criterion is, in the last resort whose meaning for man we are bidden to enact.¹⁷⁶

Writer’s Deductions

Based on the research completed for this paper, the writer’s own research from the surveys done in her church, the experience of others involved in the development and production of church drama, and personal experience, these are the writer’s deductions.

1. Drama can be used in an effective manner as a secondary source in interpreting Scripture.
2. Those involved in producing church drama must be constantly aware of and guard against the possibility of distorting or even changing the Word for dramatic effect.
3. The importance of selecting appropriate texts to interpret dramatically and to choose the most effective form of interpretation must constantly be kept in mind.

¹⁷⁶Lash, 46.

4. The opinion of others with a solid background of Scriptural knowledge as to whether a script of a contemporary drama faithfully interprets the principles expressed in a particular passage should be sought.
5. Interpretation through drama can help the audience as well as the participants to understand Scripture and to relate Scriptural principles to their own lives.
6. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, all those involved in the production of religious drama may see Scripture, their relationship with God, and their own lives with "new eyes" in a fresh, compelling way.
7. Plays attract visitors, who otherwise would not come, to a service. Church members are more likely to invite friends and family to come to a play than to a regular service.
8. Context determines the readiness for change in adopting nontraditional approaches in worship, such as drama, in a particular congregation. Resistance to such innovations may be greater in highly structured liturgical churches utilizing a prescribed order for worship than in other denominational or independent congregations. On the other hand, the ceremony of the liturgical service and the use of sacraments provide visual, participatory reenactments for worshipers. Also, observances of the church year, such as the seasons of Advent, Christmastide, Lent, and Pentecost, provide ongoing reminders of the "story" of Jesus. From that standpoint, members of liturgical churches are accustomed to "dramatic" approaches. In one sense, then, congregants in liturgical churches may be quite open to drama but, at the same time, resistant to modifying the traditional order of service to include it.

These findings have further stimulated and enhanced the researcher's interest,

curiosity, and enthusiasm for pursuing further study related to the use of drama in the church. She felt that a formal study, conducted in accordance with professional research principles and interpretation of data, would produce more valid results.

Various subjects, such as the impact of participation in drama on the actors and the value of using a contemporary dramatization to interpret a Scriptural principle, were considered. With Scripture being central to the Christian faith, the decision was reached to investigate the effectiveness of using drama to interpret Scripture. Since the reading of Scripture is an integral part of a liturgical church service, the author thought that it would be interesting to compare Scripture presented as it traditionally is, as a formal reading, with the same Scripture being acted out in a literal dramatization. Being unable to discover any previous research that has been conducted on the use of drama in interpreting Scripture, her hope is that the findings will be of interest and value to church leaders. The parameters of the study, the approaches used, and the results of this investigation form the bases for Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PROJECT

The study involved two liturgical churches. Two different types of presentations of Scripture being given in each church in two separate Sunday church services were given.

Two Types of Presentations

For the purpose of this study, a dramatic presentation was selected in addition to the traditional reading of Scripture. Two types of presentations were given.

1. The first method of presentation, a formal reading, involved the Scripture being read from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible (the translation used by both participating churches in their services) in the traditional manner by a layreader or minister (control group).

2. The second method of presentation, a literal dramatization, delivered the same Scripture text exactly as it is worded in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible as a play. A narrator, using the Biblical text, set the scene and read portions of the passage of Scripture necessary for continuity. Costumed actors spoke the dialogue and acted out the scene using appropriate movement, props, and simple set pieces.

Parables Chosen for the Study

Two of Jesus' parables, "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32) and

“The Parable of the Good Samaritan” (Luke 10:25-37), were chosen for the study for practical rather than theological reasons. These included:

1. The two parables fell within the Lectionary readings within the time period appropriate for conducting the study.
2. Both parables were told by Jesus.
3. The two were comparable in dramatic value for staging.
4. They were believed to be approximately equal in familiarity to potential participants in the study.

Analysis of the results in the first part of the study involving “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” showed no statistically valid difference between the results of the questionnaires completed by those in the treatment group and those in the control group. Since no guidance was available in the literature, the approach used was exploratory in nature. The first part of the study proved to be a valuable tool in learning more about the dynamics at play. The plan for the second part of the study was revised based on that discovery.

The results of the first part of the study were discussed at length with Dr. Mark DeHaven, who holds a Ph.D. in International Behavior and Research Methodology. Dr. DeHaven is a research professional active in faith-health collaborations in the medical context and serves as Associate Professor and Vice Chair Chief, Division of Community Medicine at The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. His primary role is the development and direction of activities related to community-based participatory research. Dr. DeHaven and the author speculated that “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” may have been so familiar to both groups that there would not have been enough room for improvement to detect a statistically significant difference. On several questions, 100 percent of respondents from both groups had answered correctly on the pretest questions.

Changes Made for Second Part of the Study

Although background research of theological and Biblical writings had been completed and the script and questionnaires had been written for “The Parable of the Good Samaritan,” it seemed inadvisable to conduct the second part of the study using that parable. In light of the findings, it was decided that the choice of a less familiar parable might be more profitable. A search of the Lectionary listings for the near future revealed another parable that was believed to be significantly less familiar to the average church member than “The Good Samaritan” story.

The narrative selected is contained in the passage of Scripture found in Luke 11:1-13 and is known by several names, including “The Friend at Midnight,” “The Midnight Visitor,” and “The Parable of the Neighbor.” The researcher chose to refer to this story as “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight.”

Clergy at both churches had to be contacted for approval of the changes in dates for the second part of the study in their respective churches. A new script had to be written after researching the background and meaning of the passage, and new questionnaires had to be designed. Participants in the study from both churches had to be contacted and informed of the change of date for the second part of the study. It was felt that the extensive extra effort required would be well worthwhile in order to get more definitive results from the study.

Parables Used in the Study

The two parables, then, that were used in the study were presented on the Sundays as designated in the Lectionary. The two parables in the order of presentation were “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” and “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight.”

The same Scripture was presented in the main morning service at two liturgical

churches. These were The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Dallas, Texas, and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Mesquite, Texas.

In the first part of the study, the Scriptural passage of “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” was presented in the following forms.

- * In Our Savior Lutheran Church, the Scripture was presented in a formal reading from the Bible (control group).
- * In The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, the Scripture was presented in a literal dramatization (treatment group).

In the second part of the study, the Scriptural passage of “The Parable of the Visitor at Midnight” was presented in the following forms.

- * In The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, the Scripture was given in a formal reading from the Bible only (control group).
- * Two weeks later (due to the difference in dates of the Lectionaries used by the two churches) in Our Savior Lutheran Church, the Scripture was presented in a literal dramatization (treatment group).

Plays Presented

The literal dramatizations of the two parables were written by the researcher. Wording from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the translation used by both churches, was followed precisely in the development of the scripts. The exact wording was strictly adhered to for the following reasons.

1. Any change would have resulted in an interpretation of the Scripture text being compared with the read Scripture text.
2. Added or changed dialogue might have resulted in different responses to the identical questionnaires used in the two groups.
3. If the script were different from the Scripture, then clergy would have insisted

on having the passage read in the service in addition to its being acted out. This would have produced skewed results, since one group would hear the story twice, while the other group would only hear it once.

4. A major purpose of this thesis is to present a model for the use of dramatizing Scripture that could be emulated by someone with little or no formal training in drama. The simplicity of the scripts presents an example of how this may be done by a novice to the genre of playwriting.

Each play used a narrator to set the scene and provide transitions between scenes with the actors pantomiming the described action. Whenever possible, in the scenes between actors, dialogue from the Scriptural passage was used and was spoken by the actors. The two dramas were directed by the researcher.

The script of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" is Appendix E. The script of "The Friend at Midnight" is Appendix F in this study.

Time Lines for the Study

The plays were presented over a period of four months as the two selected parables fell in the Lectionary readings.

This was the schedule of dates and parables.

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| March 25, 2001 | - "The Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11 - 32) in
Lutheran church (formal reading) and
Episcopal church (literal dramatization) |
| July 29, 2001 | - "The Friend at Midnight" (Luke 11:1 - 13) in
Episcopal church (formal reading) |
| August 12, 2001 | - "The Friend at Midnight" (Luke 11:1-13) in
Lutheran church (literal dramatization) |

Selection of Participating Churches

The two participating churches were chosen in order to have similar characteristics, as nearly as possible, in these areas.

- * Both use a liturgical form of services.
- * Both follow the Lectionary in services.
- * The two churches in which the two methods of presentations were given periodically use drama within a regular church service (but not on a weekly basis).
- * The congregations of the two churches are of similar size.
- * The churches are located in similar geographic areas with congregations of comparable socio-economic levels.

Our Savior Lutheran Church, an affiliate of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was established in 1969 as the result of a merger of two churches, one in East Dallas and the other in Mesquite, now a suburb located east of Dallas. It has made the transition from being a small town church to one serving a bustling, urban suburb. Despite the mobility of its members and the three locations it has occupied, Our Savior has a stable membership of about 700. It is now located on a major street near a huge shopping and dining area. Its ministry focuses primarily on family and community outreach while maintaining a commitment to global concerns. The last several years it has sponsored refugee families, providing housing, financial assistance, and help with employment and in other areas, such as learning the culture and English language. Membership is primarily middle class with most congregants living in Mesquite or Garland, an adjacent suburb. While the church has no formal drama ministry, Pastor John Schelter often arranges impromptu dramatizations for illustrations in his sermons and for special observances during the church year.

The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection began in 1965 when thirteen

families, who had previously belonged to the same church, petitioned the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas to start a mission church. It is still located on its original permanent site on a major Dallas street, only three blocks from the Garland city limits and LBJ Freeway, one of Dallas' major traffic arteries. There are currently about 550 members, primarily from the middle class. In the 1980s Resurrection became a focal point of the Charismatic Renewal Movement in the area and far beyond. It is the only overtly charismatic church in the diocese and, as such, attracts members from throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Other unique features include a Healing Center (formerly called the Counseling Center) and a prayer rail ministry, composed of laypersons who lay hands on and pray for those desiring prayer for physical, emotional, and other needs. Adding to its uniqueness for an Episcopal church, Resurrection has dance and tambors ministries in addition to the King's Company Drama Ministry, started by the writer in 1998.

Population of the Study

Clergy were asked to provide a list of members by age, gender, and length of participation in a church categories. While a quasi-experimental study design having 10 to 15 members is generally considered adequate, it was decided to use 30 participants from each church for more demographic variety and to provide for possible attrition from the first part to the second part of the study.

Thirty members, reflecting a mix of ages, genders, and length of experience in church, were selected from each church, with a total of 60 participants from the two churches. Those who were chosen were contacted to see if they would be willing to make a commitment to being present in the service the scheduled dates of the two presentations. Appropriate contacts from the lists were made until 30 appropriate persons from each congregation responded positively.

Uniform Aspects of the Study

In order to make the parameters of the study as uniform as possible, the following procedures were followed.

- * Casts of the plays were selected from each of the participating churches to perform in their particular congregations. This was done so that both congregations would be familiar with those acting in the dramatizations.
- * Performance levels of the two groups of actors were made as comparable as possible for the presentations.
- * Dramatic values of the two plays were as comparable as possible.
- * Pastors were asked to choose a sermon text from one of the other two Lectionary readings for the day.

Design of the Questionnaires

Since a validated instrument for this study did not exist, it was necessary to create an instrument that had face validity. The questionnaires were developed in consultation with Dr. DeHaven who has designed and conducted hundreds of surveys.

An instrument for use in pretesting and post-testing participants' knowledge of the facts of the story and the meaning of the story was developed for each of the two parables. The instruments also gave participants the opportunity to rank the relevancy of the passages to their lives.

"The Parable of the Prodigal Son" Questionnaire

The questionnaire to pretest and post-test participants' knowledge of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" Scripture is Appendix G. The questionnaire gave the following instructions: "Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Please indicate the following information by placing a check mark on the correct line."

Participants were then asked to check the appropriate response in four demographic categories: gender, age, length of church membership, and approximate average number of hours spent in Bible study or reading in a week's time. They were also asked to fill in a blank asking for their occupations. This information enabled the researcher to isolate responses by different demographic categories. The information also enabled the researcher to match the pretest questionnaire with the post-test questionnaire for each participant to determine the improvement or lack of improvement made on the post-test while allowing them to remain anonymous. It was felt that this anonymity encouraged participants to be completely honest with all of their responses.

The questionnaire then instructed: "Please put a check mark in the blank opposite a, b, or c to indicate which you consider to be the correct answer for each of the following questions." This was followed by 20 questions based on the Scriptural passage found in Luke 15:11-32, each with three possible answers, one of which was correct. Question 21 asked the participant to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most and 1 being the least) how relevant he or she believed the story is to his or her life today as a person living in the 21st century. Participants were also given the opportunity in question 22 to write in what way the story was relevant or irrelevant.

Questions 1 through 15 were designed to pretest and post-test objectively the participants' knowledge of what took place in the story. Questions 16 through 20 were designed to pretest and post-test objectively the participants' knowledge of the meaning of the story. Questions 21 and 22 gave participants the opportunity to express their opinions as to the Scriptural passage's relevance to their lives today.

A summated rating index for questions 1 through 20 was created with each correct answer receiving one point and each incorrect answer receiving zero points. The score equaled the number of correct responses.

A pilot study was conducted among a small group of representative volunteers to test the clarity, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the questions. Afterwards, appropriate modifications to the questionnaires were made.

“The Parable of the The Friend at Midnight” Questionnaire

The pretest and post-test questionnaires for “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight” presentations may be found in the Appendices section as Appendix I. The questionnaire gave the following instructions: “Please answer all questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, place a check mark by the answer that you think is possibly the correct one. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Please indicate the following information by placing a check mark on the correct line.”

Participants were then asked to check the appropriate response in the four demographic categories of gender, age, length of church membership, and approximate average number of hours spent in Bible study or reading in a week’s time. They were also asked to fill in a blank asking for their occupation. This information enabled the researcher to isolate responses by different demographic categories. The information also enabled the researcher to match the pretest questionnaire with the post-test questionnaire for each participant to determine the improvement or lack of improvement made on the post-test while allowing them to remain anonymous. It was felt that this anonymity encouraged participants to be completely honest in all of their responses.

The questionnaire then instructed: “Please put a check mark in the blank opposite a, b, or c to indicate which you consider to be the correct answer for each of the following questions.” This was followed by 16 questions based on the Scriptural passage found in Luke 11:1-13, each with three possible answers, one of which was correct. Question 17 asked the participant to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being

the most and 1 being the least) how relevant he or she believed the story is to his or her life today as a person living in the 21st century. Participants were also given the opportunity in question 18 to write in what way the story is relevant or irrelevant.

Twelve of the questions were designed to pretest and post-test objectively the participants' knowledge of what took place in the story, while four of the questions were designed to pretest and post-test objectively the participants' knowledge of the meaning of the story. Questions 17 and 18 gave participants the opportunity to express their opinions as to the Scriptural passage's relevance to their lives today.

A summated rating index for questions 1 through 16 was created with each correct answer receiving one point and each incorrect answer receiving zero points. The score equaled the number of correct responses.

On the post-test questionnaire for "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight," four additional questions were posed to participants in the study. These questions gave opportunity for participants to compare the two methods of presentation--formal reading of the Scriptural passage and literal dramatization of the Scriptural passage, which they had experienced in the two parts of the study--in four different categories.

1. Interest in the story
2. Remembrance of the details of the story
3. Understanding of the Scriptural message
4. Relevance of the passage to the participant's life

A pilot study was conducted among a small group of representative volunteers to test the clarity, appropriateness, and effectiveness of the questions. Afterwards, appropriate modifications to the questionnaires were made.

Administration of the Study

On the day of the presentation, the 30 members from each church who were

pre-selected to participate in the study were asked to report to a specified location in their respective churches to complete the anonymous pretest questionnaire before the service began. After the service, those same participants in the study were asked to complete the anonymous post-test questionnaire. All 30 participated in the first part of the study at Our Savior Lutheran Church. However, at The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, only 29 participated in the first part since one had to work at the last minute. The second part of the study drew 20 participants at Our Savior Lutheran Church and 22 participants at The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection.

Questionnaires for Clergy and Actors

In addition to the findings from the 59 participants in the study, clergy of the two churches were asked to assess their experience of using the two methods of presentation in their churches. Also, actors in both dramatizations were asked to respond to ways they were impacted by their participation in the plays. While the results from these questionnaires are not a formal part of the study, it is believed that this information may be useful in helping church professionals and laity to understand how these methods of presentation may be used within the church and the potential impact for those involved.

The questionnaire and results of the questionnaire for clergy form Appendix K. The questionnaire and results of the questionnaire for actors playing a role in “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” form Appendix L, while the questionnaire and results of the questionnaire for actors playing a role in “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight” may be found in Appendix M.

Resources for the Study

Human, material, and technological resources were required to complete the

study.

- * Trained persons were needed to go to each of the churches and administer the questionnaires for the two parts of the study. Two members of the writer's Ministry-Based Committee, who were already familiar with and had expressed a commitment to the researcher's goals, functioned in that capacity.

- * The casts consisted of volunteers from the participating churches with clergy helping to identify those who were willing to assume roles in the productions.

- * Costumes and props were required for the dramas. Most of these were available from the director's costume wardrobe with a few small items having to be made and purchased.

- * Research professional Dr. Mark DeHaven provided counsel in the design of the study, the development of the questionnaires, and the presentation of the findings as well as the software for analysis of the data.

Cost of the study was reasonable because of the cooperation of ministers and the use of volunteers. The production of necessary materials by the researcher also reduced the expenses.

Interpretation of the Data

After the plays were presented, results of the pretest and post-test questionnaires completed by the selected sample from each of the two congregations were compared and analyzed. This was accomplished in the following manner.

Method Used

The study design used was a quasi-experimental design. A quasi-experimental design is the same as an experimental design except that study subjects are not randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. Instead, previously existing

groupings are used for the purpose of testing the study hypothesis. The technique used for data analysis was Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) with a single covariate. This is an extension of the basic Analysis of Variance model that adds a pretest measure from the quasi experiment into a basic linear regression. Data was analyzed using SPSS, ver. 10 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 10.0).

First Part of Study

The first part of the study was conducted on Sunday, March 25, 2001, at The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, the treatment group, and at Our Savior Lutheran Church, the control group.

Demographic Information of Participants in the First Part of the Study

<u>Category</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Episcopal</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>
Number of participants:		29	30
Gender:	Male	58.6%	53.3%
	Female	41.4%	46.7%
Age:	14-19 years	6.9%	16.7%
	20-34 years	6.9%	13.3%
	35-49 years	27.6%	20%
	50-65 years	34.5%	33.3%
	Over 65	24.1%	16.7%
Length of church membership	1 year or less	0%	0%
	2-5 years	0%	23.3%
	6-10 years	21.4%	16.7%
	11-20 years	32.1%	30%
	Over 20 years	46.4%	30%
Bible study per week	None	6.9%	16.7%
	1 hour	27.6%	40%
	1-2 hours	37.9%	26.7%
	Over 2 hours	27.6%	16.7%

Results

In the first part of the study, involving the use of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son," Episcopal church participants (the treatment group) registered higher scores on the postscore (19.14) than on the prescore (16.62) as did Lutheran church participants (the control group) who scored 18.90 on the postscore and 15.67 on the prescore. However, the Lutheran group showed slightly more improvement, 3.23 as compared with 2.52 for the Episcopal group, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

<u>Church</u>	<u>Prescore</u>	<u>Postscore</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Lutheran	15.67	18.90	3.23
Episcopal	16.62	19.14	2.52

The analysis of covariance showed no statistical difference between the results of the two groups. Dr. DeHaven and the author speculated that this was not due to the intervention but rather to the familiarity of the participants with "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." It was thought that, because the story was so well known, the scores on the pretest were too high to allow for sufficient differences between the pretest and post-test results.

This was particularly true with the Episcopal group. On three of the 20 pretest questions, 100 percent of participants marked the correct answer, while more than 90 percent got the right answer on six additional questions. Even though this same group got 100 percent correct on 13 questions and more than 90 percent correct on four of the others on the post-test, the increase did not prove statistically significant.

The Lutheran group also scored high on the pretest with four of the questions answered accurately by 100 percent of the participants and three others by more than

90 percent. There was somewhat more room for improvement with the control group than with the treatment group. A question-by-question statistical analysis of the responses by the participants at both churches to the questionnaire for “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” may be found in Appendix H.

These outcomes suggested that proceeding with the second part of the study as planned using “The Parable of the Good Samaritan,” which was considered of equal or even greater familiarity, would also produce inconclusive results. The decision was then made to change to “The Parable of the Visitor at Midnight,” another of Jesus’ parables, which was believed to be less well known, for the second part of the study.

Second Part of the Study

The second part of the study was conducted on Sunday, July 29, 2001, in The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, the control group, and on Sunday, August 12, 2001, in Our Savior Lutheran Church, the treatment group.

Demographic Information of Participants in the Second Part of the Study

<u>Category</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Episcopal</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>
Total participants:		22	20
Gender:	Male	40.9%	45%
	Female	59.1%	55%
Age:	14-19 years	4.5%	26.3%
	20-34 years	4.5%	5.3%
	35-49 years	27.3%	26.3%
	50-65 years	40.9%	26.3%
	Over 65	22.7%	15.8%

<u>Category</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Episcopal</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>
Length of church membership	1 year or less	0%	30%
	2-5 years	0%	5%
	6-10 years	25%	35%
	11-20 years	35%	0%
	Over 20 years	40%	30%
Bible study per week	None	4.5%	5%
	1 hour	27.3%	40%
	1-2 hours	50%	45%
	Over 2 hours	18.2%	10%

Results

Data obtained from the statistical analysis of the second phase of the study using "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight" were used to test the validity of the hypothesis that the presentation of Scripture through the utilization of literal dramatization of the Scripture will increase the participant's comprehension, recall, and application of the Scripture in comparison with a formal reading of the Scripture.

Results indicate a statistically significant difference between the treatment and control groups with the treatment group increase being significantly greater. The mean scores of both the control group (the Episcopal church) and the treatment group (the Lutheran church) increased. However, the increase for the control group was 2.09 (from an average of 10.86 questions correct to an average of 12.95 questions correct), while the increase for the treatment group was 5.25 (from an average of 7.7 questions correct to an average of 12.95 questions correct). The increase, then for the treatment group was more than two-and-one-half times greater than for the control group. The difference is statistically significant ($P = .014$). Table 2 shows these differences.

Table 2

<u>Church</u>	<u>Prescore</u>	<u>Postscore</u>	<u>Increase</u>
Lutheran	7.70	12.95	5.25
Episcopal	10.86	12.95	2.09

A question-by-question statistical analysis of the responses by the participants at both churches to the questionnaire for “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight” may be found in the Appendices section as Appendix J.

Three Categories of Questions

By dividing the questions into three categories: (1) background information about the story, (2) facts of the story, and (3) meaning of the story, additional insight may be garnered. Questions #1 and #2 related to the background of the story in “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight.” In both churches, this information was essentially presented in the same manner, at the Episcopal church by a deacon and at the Lutheran church by a narrator speaking from the pulpit. The average scores for those two questions in each church are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Episcopal	54.8% correct	88.1% correct	+33.3 percentage points
Lutheran	45% correct	92.5% correct	+47.5 percentage points

Questions #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #12, #13, and #14 were related to what happened in the story--the facts. The average scores for these 10 questions in both churches are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Episcopal	82.5% correct	87.2% correct	+4.7 percentage points
Lutheran	54.5% correct	92% correct	+37.5 percentage points

The meaning or message of the story was addressed by questions #10, #11, #15, and #16. The average scores for these four questions in both churches are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Episcopal	61.9% correct	63.7% correct	+1.8 percentage points
Lutheran	51.3% correct	64.3% correct	+13 percentage points

In all three categories of questions, the improvement from the pretest to the post-test was much greater for the treatment group, the Lutheran church, than for the control group, the Episcopal church. This overall difference for both churches is indicated in Table 6.

Table 6

<u>Category</u>	<u>Episcopal</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Background	+33.3%	+47.5%	+14.2 percentage points for Lutheran
Facts of story	+4.7%	+37.5%	+33.5 percentage points for Lutheran
Story's meaning	+1.8%	+13%	+11.2 percentage points for Lutheran

For both churches, scores on questions related to meaning showed some improvement from the pretest to the post-test. However, the improvement was noticeably less on these questions than on questions related to background and facts or plot of the story.

For both churches, the difference between the average score on the fact-related

questions and the meaning-related scores on the post-test is great. For the Episcopal church the difference is 23.5 percentage points and for the Lutheran church, 27.7 percentage points greater for the fact-related questions than for the meaning-related questions. Table 7 shows these differences.

Table 7

Post-Test Percentages Correct for "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight"

<u>Church</u>	<u>Fact Related</u>	<u>Meaning Related</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Episcopal	87.2% correct	63.7% correct	23.5 percentage points
Lutheran	92% correct	64.3% correct	27.7 percentage points

This effect was also observed with the results from "The Parable of the Good Samaritan" although to a much lesser degree. The average score on the 13 questions related to the facts of the story on the post-test for the Episcopal church was 99.5 percent correct, while the average score on the five questions related to the meaning of the story was 93.8 percent correct, a difference of 5.7 percentage points. The average score on the 13 questions related to the facts of the story on the post-test for the Lutheran church was 96.8 percent, while the average score on the five questions related to the meaning of the story was 92.7 percent, a difference of 4.1 percentage points. Table 8 shows these results.

Table 8

Post-Test Percentages Correct for "The Parable of the Prodigal Son"

<u>Church</u>	<u>Fact Related</u>	<u>Meaning Related</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Episcopal	99.5% correct	93.8% correct	5.7 percentage points
Lutheran	96.8% correct	92.7% correct	4.1 percentage points

It is presumed that participants in both groups had heard a greater number of sermons based on "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" than on "The Parable of the

Friend at Midnight.” Still, both groups scored lower on meaning than on factual information in both parts of the study.

These results would suggest that a congregant’s ability to accurately recite a story from the Bible does not ensure that the message of the story is fully understood. The lesson for ministers and teachers appears to be that Scripture, whether read or presented in dramatic form, should be followed by a thorough exploration of the passage’s meaning to the group.

Questions Related to Sight

Another interesting phenomenon was observed when the questions involving sight cues were isolated. Nine such questions were found in “The Parable of the Friend at Midnight”--questions #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #13, and #14. On these questions, participants from the Lutheran church, who saw the literal dramatization, scored 100 percent correct on all but one, while participants from the Episcopal church, who heard the formal reading, did not score 100 percent on any of those questions and under 90 percent on four of them.

In “The Parable of the Good Samaritan,” while the difference was not as great, results followed the same pattern. Participants from the Episcopal church, who saw the literal dramatization, scored 100 percent on 11 out of 13 questions with sight cues, while Lutheran church participants made 100 percent on only six out of the 13. The Lutherans had also scored 100 percent on one of those questions on the pretest as well.

These results are in keeping with the numerous studies that have been conducted demonstrating that showing and telling simultaneously have a positive impact on learning. This would seem to indicate that ministers and teachers would do well to use dramatization as well as other visual approaches in their sermons and

lessons for more positive results.

Ratings of Scripture According to Relevance

Question 17 gave the participant the opportunity to indicate on a scale of 1-to-10 (with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest) the degree of relevance (ability to make application of those principles to one's life) each felt the Scripture has for him or her as a person living in the 21st century. Table 9 shows the results of this question for both churches.

Table 9

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	5	9.5%	0%
	6	0%	5%
	8	9.5%	5%
	9	4.8%	15%
	10	76.2%	75%
Lutheran (dramatized)	3	5.3%	11.1%
	4	0%	5.6%
	5	21.1%	5.6%
	7	15.8%	5.6%
	8	10.5%	11.1%
	9	10.5%	5.6%
	10	36.8%	55.6%

A comparison of these responses shows that 36.8 percent of those at the Lutheran church answered with the highest ranking of 10, on the pretest, while that percentage climbed to 55.6 percent for that category on the post-test after seeing the literal dramatization, an increase of 18.8 percentage points. While the pretest responses at the Episcopal church were initially higher than at the Lutheran church with 76.2 percent ranking relevance at 10, the post-test showed a decrease of 1.2 percentage points, down to 75 percent, after hearing the formal Scripture reading.

Comments Regarding Relevancy of Scripture

Question 18 gave participants the opportunity to say how they felt the Scriptural passage was relevant or irrelevant to their lives today. Most comments from participants at the Episcopal church related the story in a general way to the importance of prayer and of being persistent in praying. Two related the story in a more personal way to their particular current needs. One focused on relationships with people with the comment: "It teaches us about the nature of people and our response and how we should respond to our neighbors."

Several comments from participants at the Lutheran church centered on God's desire to give people good things. One remarked: "Prayer is the way to God's giving. He always answers but not always the way we expect." One related the need of the neighbor for bread to today's scenario with, "Now we would just go to 7-11."

Post-Test Questions Comparing Two Presentation Methods

On the post-test, participants were asked to answer four additional questions expressing their preference between hearing Scripture read and seeing it dramatized in four different categories: interest, remembrance, understanding, and relevance.

Responses from both churches to question 19 related to interest are shown in Table 10.

Table 10

More Interested

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Episcopal	Read	19%
	Dramatized	81%
Lutheran	Read	12.5%
	Dramatized	87.5%

Both churches' responses to question 20 about remembrance of the details of the story are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Remember the Details of the Story Better

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Episcopal	Read	23.8%
	Dramatized	76.2%
Lutheran	Read	18.8%
	Dramatized	81.3%

Both churches' responses to question 21 about understanding the message of the story are shown in Table 12.

Table 12

Understood the Scriptural Message Better

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Episcopal	Read	23.8%
	Dramatized	76.2%
Lutheran	Read	26.7%
	Dramatized	73.3%

The responses from both churches to question 22 related to seeing the relevance of the passage to one's life are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Relevancy of the Passage of Scripture to One's Life

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Episcopal	Read	23.8%
	Dramatized	76.2%
Lutheran	Read	26.7%
	Dramatized	73.3%

Combining the results of these questions for both groups produced the following statistics.

To question #19: "I was more interested in the Scripture when it was:" 15.75 percent checked "Read only," and 84.25 percent checked "Presented in the form of a play."

To question #20: "I remember the details of the story better through having the Scripture:" 21.3 percent selected "Read only," while 78.7 percent selected "Presented in the form of a play."

To question #21: "I understood the Scriptural message better when the Scripture was:" 22.8 percent chose "Read only," and 77.2 percent chose "Presented in the form of a play."

To question #22: "I saw the relevance of the passage to my life more clearly through having the Scripture:" 25.3 percent responded "Read only," and 74.7 percent responded "Presented in the form of a play."

By averaging the scores for the four questions, the percentages are: 21.25% preference for having the Scripture read and 78.75% preference for having the Scripture acted out for all participants in the study.

Looking at the responses individually for each church, those in the treatment group, the Lutheran congregation, showed a slightly greater preference for drama over

the Episcopal church in the first two of these questions. However, the control group, the Lutheran church, expressed a slightly greater preference for drama over the Episcopal church in the third and fourth questions.

Limitations of the Study

A question might be raised about questions 19 through 22 in comparing the responses from the two churches regarding the two methods of presentation. Would the fact that the Lutheran church participants saw a play the day they completed the questionnaire while the Episcopal church participants did not, have any impact on their choices? Three from the Episcopal church wrote of their disappointment in not seeing a play that day. One wrote that the comparison questions were difficult to answer since she had not seen a dramatization that day. Approximately four months had elapsed since the Episcopal group had seen “The Parable of the Prodigal Son” staged.

Another factor that might have had some impact on the accuracy of the responses to questions 1 through 16 at the Episcopal church is the fact that the Scriptures for the lessons for the next Sunday are placed in the church bulletin each week. Some small groups and individuals from the church read, discuss, and meditate on these passages before coming to the service. One participant from the Episcopal church, when she saw the Scripture in the questionnaire she was getting ready to complete, said, “Oh, I read that right before I came up here.” At the Lutheran church, the Scriptures are not announced in advance, so it is doubtful that any of the participants would have just read the passage.

Comments about Having Scripture Read or Dramatized

After participants had answered questions 19 through 22 on the post-test about

their preference between a formal reading or literal dramatization of Scripture, they were invited to make additional comments about the two methods of presentation. Some of the positive aspects pointed out about seeing Scripture in the literal dramatization form were: “fun,” “stirred spiritually,” “added insight into the meaning and application,” “more alive,” “makes a strong point,” “brings it home for me,” benefit to young people, and memory. Three spoke of the strong impact of the visual images. One said, “Let’s have more drama.”

Others commented on their preferences for both methods. One remarked: “I like having a quality drama occasionally. I do not like having a skit every week as is done in some churches. I am very interested when Scripture is read as well.” Another wrote: “The Scripture itself is better as in a play. But I’d rather hear a sermon based on the Scripture.” Another comment was: “It depends on the Scripture. Some can be put into play form, and others are best read.”

A few participants brought out negative aspects. These types of remarks follow. “Even though I may retain more information when in dramatic form, I still like having words in front of me. I honestly don’t know why,” and “The dramatization brought the Scripture to life, but was also a bit distracting. I started focusing on the adorable little boys.” And finally, “I don’t think it was worth the effort.”

Differences According to Sub-groups

Two other statistically significant aspects of the study were discovered when viewed by the individual demographic categories located at the first of the questionnaires. These were age, sex, length of time allotted to Bible study per week, and number of years of church membership.

Length of Church Membership

On the pretest, the length of church membership was significantly related to a study subject's score ($P = .003$). As was to be expected, those who had been in church longer scored higher on the pretest. Interestingly enough, the amount of time devoted to Bible study did not produce a statistically significant result.

Gender

On question 17 on the post-test, the gender of the participant was significantly related to a study subject's score ($P = .024$). This question asked participants to indicate the level of relevance the passage held for their lives.

On the pretest, male participants in the treatment group (the Lutheran church) averaged 7 for their response; post-test responses also produced an average of 7. On the other hand, female participants' responses registered an average of 8.6 on the pretest and rose one percent to 9.6 on the post-test.

In the control group (the Episcopal church), the average for males on the pretest was 8.9 points and increased two-tenths of a point to 9.1 points on the post-test. Females, though, scored an average of 9.6 points on the pretest and an average of 10 points, the highest possible, on the post-test, reflecting an increase of .4 of a point, the maximum it could have increased.

These results seem to indicate that males have more difficulty in relating Scripture to their lives than females and that dramatization is more helpful in that regard for women than for men. The study did not address the reason for these differences; however, the data present an interesting finding that warrants further investigation in the future.

However, it is interesting to note the way males responded to question 22, which asked whether they saw the relevance of the passage to their lives more clearly

through having the Scripture read only or presented in the form of a play. From the Lutheran church, 62.5 percent of the males preferred having the play, while 75 percent of males from the Episcopal church made that response. An average for both groups was 68.8 for all males participating in the study.

Responses to the other comparison questions (#19, #20, #21) drew these percentages in favor of drama for males.

- * An average of 75 percent for males in both groups (75 percent, Lutheran; 75 percent Episcopal) chose the dramatization response for #19 regarding interest in the Scripture.

- * An average of 68.75 percent for males in both groups (75 percent, Lutheran; 62.5 percent, Episcopal) indicated that the dramatized version helped them to remember the details of the story better in response to #20.

- * An average of 68.75 percent of males in both groups (62.5, Lutheran; 75 percent, Episcopal) indicated their preference for the play format in helping them to understand the Scriptural message better.

Age

The sample was considered too small to draw any conclusions in regard to the impact of intervention according to age. However, when looking at the responses of the few persons in each age category, age did not appear to be a factor in the intervention's effectiveness.

Statistical Analysis Results to Be Shared

Results of the statistical analyses will be given to the pastors of the two churches. They also will be made available to all who assisted with and participated in the research project as well as to other interested persons.

Shortcomings of the Project

In retrospect, the study could have been improved and would have resulted in additional beneficial results if these approaches had been used.

1. The selection of less familiar parables to dramatize than “The Prodigal Son” and “The Good Samaritan” would have been preferable. Since the results of the first part of the study using “The Prodigal Son” were not statistically significant, it was impossible to compare the results from the first part of the study with those from the second part of the study in each of the two churches. This comparison would have resulted in more information than it was possible to obtain since results from only the second half of the study, which was changed to “The Parable of the Midnight Visitor,” could be used with validity.

2. A larger sample of participants could have been divided more effectively into specific age groups. There were too few participants in the various age groups to draw any reliable conclusions. This information could have been valuable to church leaders in planning various activities for different age groups, such as lessons and retreats.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis was to determine if dramatized Scripture is a more effective approach than reading Scripture in a church service in helping people to learn the stories and the meaning of Scripture and to be able to apply the principles to their lives. A secondary purpose was to develop a model for dramatizing a Biblical passage that could be used as a guide by someone with little formal training in drama in any church, regardless of size, setting, or resources.

Approaches Utilized

In carrying out this project, the following approaches were utilized.

- * The researcher examined the dramatic events of the Bible and dramatic approaches used in historical worship. Because drama involves sight as well as sound, various studies that have been conducted on the impact of audiovisual approaches on learning were studied as well as the relatively small amount of research that has been done on drama.

- * The insights and opinions of various church drama specialists and ministers as to the impact and benefits of using drama in the church were cited. Drama was also explored as a viable method of meeting the needs of and being received by people in the Postmodern Era and as a method of interpreting Scripture.

- * The researcher's experience in using drama in the church was discussed, and results of surveys related to drama that she conducted with members of her

congregation; participants in The King's Company Drama Ministry; and participants in Bibliodrama, a drama immersion approach developed by her and Dr. Richard Fine, were highlighted.

Hypothesis of the Study

This hypothesis was tested as part of the study. The presentation of Scripture through the utilization of literal dramatization of the Scripture will increase the participant's comprehension, recall, and application of the Scripture in comparison with only hearing a formal reading of the Scripture.

Description of the Study

The study involved two liturgical churches: The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Dallas, Texas, and Our Savior Lutheran Church in Mesquite, Texas, a Dallas suburb, using the same Scriptural passage containing one of Jesus' parables, "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight." It was presented as a formal reading, as it traditionally is, at the Episcopal church and given as a literal dramatization at the Lutheran church. Participants in both churches completed a pretest and a post-test questionnaire with questions designed to evaluate their knowledge of the facts and the meaning of the story. A more subjective question gave opportunity for them to express on a range of 1-to-10 how relevant they felt the passage was to their lives and to state how it was relevant.

Participants from both churches had previously participated in the first part of the study, which utilized another of Jesus' parables, "The Parable of the Prodigal Son." At that time, the Scripture was given as a literal dramatization at the Episcopal church and presented as a formal reading as it traditionally is in a liturgical church at the

Lutheran church. Results of that part of the study showed no statistically significant difference between the two groups. After consulting with research professional Dr. Mark DeHaven, the researcher theorized that the participants may have already been so familiar with the story that there would not have been enough room for improvement to result in a statistically valid difference. The decision was then made to utilize “The Parable of the Midnight Visitor,” a parable believed to be less familiar, in the second half of the study instead of “The Good Samaritan” as had been planned.

The second half of the study did produce a statistically valid difference between the two treatment methods ($P = .014$). Since .05 or less is generally considered statistically significant, the resulting differences between the two methods is considered highly significant.

The mean scores of both the control group (the Episcopal church) and the treatment group (the Lutheran church) increased. However, the increase for the control group was 2.09 (from 10.86 to 12.95), while the increase for the treatment group was 5.25 (from 7.70 to 12.95), more than two-and-one-half times greater than for the control group.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis that literal dramatization is effective in presenting Scripture in a church service with a positive impact on a person’s ability to recall the story, understand its meaning, and relate the message to his or her life was strongly supported. This was true overall as well as when the questions were divided into the three areas they addressed: the background of the story, the facts of the story, and the meaning of the story. While results improved in all three areas, those involving the facts of the story showed much greater improvement than those involving understanding the meaning or message of the passage and the background

information.

The results showed that men had more difficulty relating Scripture to their lives than women. Responses indicated that, while drama was effective in this regard for both men and women, it was somewhat more effective for women. Data revealed no reason for this phenomenon.

By isolating the questions involving sight, it was found that the treatment group made even greater gains over the control group on those type of questions than on the questionnaire as a whole. These results are in keeping with numerous studies showing the positive impact of audiovisual approaches on learning.

Preference Between Two Methods of Presentation

On the post-test, participants were given the opportunity to compare their reaction to the two methods of presentation, hearing a formal reading of the Scripture and seeing it presented as a literal dramatization, in four different areas: interest, memory of the details, understanding of the message, and relevancy to life. Average responses favoring drama on the four questions ranged from 74.7 percent to 84.15 percent. Averaging the results of all four questions for both groups showed that 78.75 percent preferred having the Scripture acted out. Many positive statements were also written about the use of drama, while few negative comments were made.

Play Productions

The two productions were very simple with the scripts using the exact words as found in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. This was necessary in order to compare the formal reading of the Scripture with the literal dramatization. Words that were written in dialogue form in the Bible were spoken by an actor; otherwise, they were read by a narrator with actors pantomiming the descriptive narration. Simple

costumes were worn by the actors, and appropriate props were used.

Staging space was limited in both churches. Since the sanctuary of the Episcopal church was burned by arsonists in January 2001, services have been held in a room with dimensions of 32 by 80 feet. There is no raised platform and little room in front of the chairs where the congregation sits. Most of the play, therefore, was staged in the widened center aisle. At the Lutheran church, the usual items found on a liturgical church's platform, such as the altar, pulpit, cross, candles, chairs, altar rails, and kneelers, limited the playing space available.

While the productions were not elaborate, evaluations completed by participants in the study and the reactions of the congregation, declared them effective. A successful model that can be used as a pattern by a church with little space and limited human and material resources was developed.

Questionnaires for Clergy, Actors

After the dramatizations were given, actors in both of the plays in the project completed a questionnaire about their experience. The three clergymen from the two churches that participated were also asked to complete a questionnaire. These were not a part of the formal study; however, it was felt that these responses would prove helpful to churches considering the use of drama in their services. The results of these questionnaires form a part of the Appendices of the thesis.

Conclusions Drawn from the Results of the Study

Based on the results of this study, the following theses or conclusions have been drawn.

1. Drama is an effective tool for helping congregations to know and understand Scripture and to relate it to their lives. (p. 119)

2. Drama provides variety and adds interest to a church service. (pp. 125 - 27)

3. Ministers and teachers cannot assume that hearing a passage from Scripture read or seeing it acted out necessarily means that people understand its meaning. A careful exploration of the meaning of the passage following the presentation is important. (pp. 120 -23)

4. Drama can be integrated effectively into a liturgical church service.

5. Drama is an effective approach for use with both sexes; however, it appears to be somewhat more effective with women than with men. (pp. 130 - 31)

6. Outcomes in learning are increased by the combination of seeing and hearing in drama over just hearing something read. (pp. 123 - 24)

7. Since an average of 78.75 percent of participants found Scripture more interesting, more memorable, easier to understand, and more relevant when presented in dramatized form rather than as a formal reading, it may be assumed that church members and visitors would be more likely to come to a service featuring a play. (125 -28)

8. Because of drama's wide appeal (as evidenced by an average of 78.75% showing a preference for dramatization over reading on the four questions expressing preference), perhaps drama may be used as a catalyst to introduce other non-traditional approaches of value into the worship service. (p. 127)

Implications for Theological Education and the Church

The synthesis of this study points to several efforts that leaders in churches and seminaries should seriously consider.

1. Drama should be used increasingly within church services to help congregations know and understand Scripture and to relate it to their lives.

2. Institutions of learning at all levels should explore the use of drama as an

effective method of teaching.

3. The positive results of this study should be made available to ministers and teachers through various approaches, such as a book, articles, workshops, and seminars.

4. Theological schools should consider offering courses in drama as a part of their curriculum. Such courses might be a part of the Department of Pastoral Studies.

5. Faculty should be recruited to teach drama courses in seminaries.

Additional Research Needed

Surprisingly very little research has been conducted on the impact of using drama in the church or in educational settings. Additional research would be beneficial in determining the effectiveness and potential for using drama in church services and educational venues.

These are some areas for research that would appear to be of value.

- * A study of the effectiveness of using contemporary dramatization in relating Scriptural truth to people.

- * A study of the impact on self-concept and spiritual development of those who participate in drama ministry.

- * A study of the effectiveness of involving participants of different ages in acting out Biblical stories as a part of Sunday school activities.

- * A study of the outcomes in learning of using drama as a teaching approach in the classroom.

- * A study showing the differences between men and women in the preferences and impact of different learning approaches and activities used in the church

- * A study similar to this one but conducted in non-liturgical churches. The results might be compared with the results of this study.

The study conducted for this thesis corroborates the researcher's observation and belief, based on many years of experience, that drama is, indeed, a potent and viable approach for use in the church with outstanding potential for increasing the learning of, the interest in, and the impact of Scripture and Scriptural principles.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Wanda Vassallo is working toward a Doctor of Ministry degree at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario. As a part of her field study requirement, she must administer a questionnaire to the congregation of The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection relating to The King's Company Drama Ministry which she directs. This is separate from the questionnaire compiled by the Profile Committee. Wanda would appreciate it very much if each member of your household who is 10 or over would respond frankly to the following questions and return the questionnaires to her in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Questionnaire Related to The King's Company Drama Ministry

1. Of the 12 plays the King's Company Drama Ministry has presented since its organization in March of 1998, I have seen about _____ of them.

2. Please check the three dramatizations you have gotten the most from.
 - _____ I Saw Him (Easter 1998)
 - _____ The Challenge of the Cross (May 1998)
 - _____ The Good Samaritan Revisited (July 1998)
 - _____ A Slight Problem (Rally Day 1998)
 - _____ Facades (November 1998)
 - _____ Special Report: Bethlehem (Christmas 1998)
 - _____ The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead (April 1999)
 - _____ A Mother's Quest (Easter 1999)
 - _____ The Passion (choral reading, April 1999)
 - _____ Pentecost (May 1999)
 - _____ The Parable of the Sower and the Seed (July 1999)
 - _____ Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet (September 1999)

3. I would rate the overall quality of the material chosen for presentation as:
 - _____ Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor

4. I would rate the overall quality of the staging of the productions as:
 - _____ Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor

5. I would rate the overall quality of the acting in the productions as:
 - _____ Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor

6. I would rate the overall quality of the costumes and props as:
 - _____ Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor

7. I would rate the overall quality of technical aspects of the productions (sound effects, lighting, sets, etc.) as:
 _____ Excellent _____ Very good _____ Good _____ Fair _____ Poor
8. I think the frequency of the productions has been:
 _____ Too often _____ About right _____ Not often enough
9. I found the effectiveness level of the productions that dramatized Scripture from the Lectionary Reading in making the passage memorable and understandable to be:
 _____ Very effective _____ Effective _____ Somewhat effective
 _____ Not effective _____ Did not see
10. Please check the statement or statements that express your reaction to the use of drama in a church service.
 _____ Provides variety
 _____ Distracts from worship
 _____ Makes the message memorable
 _____ Is interesting and exciting
 _____ Is inappropriate for use in a church setting
 _____ Gets across a concept in a dynamic manner
 _____ Is boring
 _____ Provides positive spiritual impact
 _____ Has negative spiritual impact
11. Please state any reactions you might have about the productions or comments you might wish to make about future productions.

You do not need to put your name on this questionnaire, but please check the appropriate answer in the following categories.

I am _____ male _____ female. I am _____ married _____ single.

I am _____ 10 - 13 _____ 14 - 20 _____ 21 - 35 _____ 36 - 50 _____ 51 - 65
 _____ over 65.

I have been a Christian _____ 1 - 2 years _____ 3 - 5 years _____ 6 - 10 years
 _____ 11 years or more.

I _____ have _____ have not participated in any of the productions.

RESULTS OF RESPONSES TO "QUESTIONNAIRE RELATED TO THE KING'S COMPANY DRAMA MINISTRY"

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

DALLAS, TEXAS

In October 1999 343 copies of the attached "Questionnaire Related to The King's Company Drama Ministry" were mailed to every member (aged 10 or above) of The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection with a self-addressed, stamped envelope enclosed for return. In addition, extra copies of the questionnaire were made available for visitors and non-members on the information table in the Parish Hall with notices of their availability placed in *The Good News*, the church newsletter.

A total of 146 were returned with nearly all of them sent back through the mail.

While a number of blanks were left on the demographic material, the following information was obtained.

Total returned: 146

Sex: Male - 50; Female - 90

Age: 10 -13 - 2
14 -20 - 3
21 -35 - 9
36 -50 - 34
51 -65 - 63
Over 65 - 32

Marital status: Single - 35
Married - 93

Length of time as Christian: 3 -5 years - 1
6 -10 years - 5
11 years or more - 122

Participants in drama productions: yes - 17
no - 129

Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number in the comparisons, resulting in some totals of 99% and 101% rather than 100%.

RESPONSES OF WHOLE GROUP

1. Of those who responded to the number of plays they had seen, an average of 8 out of the 12 productions that had been given was noted.

2. Few respondents followed directions to check the three dramatizations they had gotten the most from. Therefore, tabulations reflect the number of times each play was checked. These were the responses in order of those receiving the most checks.

- 89 - "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet"
- 70 - "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed"
- 56 - "A Mother's Quest"
- 48 - "The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead"
- 47 - "The Good Samaritan Revisited"
- 44 - "I Saw Him"
- 40 - "The Challenge of the Cross"
- 39 - "Pentecost"
- 38 - "Facades"
- 32 - "Special Report: Bethlehem"
- 29 - "A Slight Problem"
- 26 - "The Passion"

Predictably the two plays receiving the most checks were those most recently done (September 1999 and July 1999). However, two of the plays ("I Saw Him" and "The Good Samaritan Revisited") ranking in the top 50 percent were among those first done by the group.

3. To the question: "I would rate the overall quality of the material chosen for presentation as:" 86% responded "excellent" (40%) or "very good" (46%), while 12% checked "good." One percent responded "fair" and 1% "poor."

4. To the question: "I would rate the overall quality of the staging of the productions as:" 76% responded "excellent" (30%) or "very good" (47%), while 21% checked "good." Three percent checked "fair," and none responded "poor."

5. To the question: "I would rate the overall quality of the acting in the productions as:" 67% responded "excellent" (25%) or "very good" (42%), while 24 percent responded "good." Nine percent said "fair" and none said "poor."

6. To the question: "I would rate the overall quality of the costumes and props as:" 70% said "excellent" (29%) or "very good" (41 percent), while 26% indicated they thought they were "good." Four percent responded "fair," and none said "poor."

7. To the question: "I would rate the overall quality of technical aspects of the productions (sound effects, lighting, sets, etc.) as:" 59% responded "excellent" (18%) or "very good" (41%), while 29 % said "good." There was 10% who checked "fair," while 1% checked "poor."

8. To the question: "I think the frequency of the productions has been:" 9% responded "too often;" 84% said "about right," and 7% indicated "not often enough."

9. To the question: "I found the effectiveness level of the productions that dramatized Scripture from the Lectionary Reading in making the passage memorable and understandable to be:" 44% checked "very effective;" 43%, "effective," 10%, "somewhat effective," and 2%, "not effective."

10. This question gave respondents nine possible choices to the statement: "Please check the statement or statements that express your reaction to the use of drama in a church service." Respondents checked the following answers listed in order of frequency of response.

- 106 Makes message memorable
- 102 Provides variety
- 97 Provides positive spiritual impact

- 91 Gets across a concept in a dynamic manner
- 64 Is interesting and exciting
- 13 Distracts from worship
- 6 Is inappropriate for use in church setting
- 1 Is boring
- 1 Has negative spiritual impact

A total of 460 responses were given to what could be considered "positive statements." A total of 21 responses were given to what could be considered "negative" statements. Of interest is the fact that of the 13 who checked what might be considered "negative responses" to this question, eight of those also checked what might be considered "positive" responses. One of the five who checked only "negative responses" wrote: "My son enjoys the plays very much."

Three of those checking "negative" responses wrote that they did not think the dramas should take the place of the sermon, while three others indicated that they should be presented some other time than during the worship service.

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO SEX

In comparing the responses according to sex, the 90 females reflected an overall more positive reaction to the plays than the 50 males did. Men reported that they had seen an average of 7 of the 12 plays, while women said they had seen an average of 8.

Both men and women checked "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet" the most number of times. Second and third choices, respectively, for the men were "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed" and "The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead." Women chose "A Mother's Quest" for second place and "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed" for third.

Eighty-eight percent of women ranked the overall quality of material chosen as "excellent" or "very good" while only 80% of men ranked it that high.

Women also gave the quality of staging higher marks with 82% responding "excellent" or "very good" compared with 65% of men.

Seventy-five percent of women thought the quality of acting was "excellent" or "very good," while only 55% of men gave marks that high. Sixteen percent of men and 6% of women said it was only "fair."

Seventy-nine percent of women rated the overall quality of the costumes and props as "excellent" or "good," compared with 54% of men.

Women also ranked the technical quality of the productions higher with 71% giving an "excellent" or "very good" compared with 39% of men. Sixteen percent of men responded "fair" and 4% "poor," while 7% of women said "fair" and none "poor."

On the question of frequency of productions 85% of females and 80% of males responded "about right." Fourteen percent of men and 7% of women checked "too often," and 6% of men and 8% of women said "not often enough."

Fifty-two percent of women and 31% of men thought the dramatization of Scripture from the Lectionary

Reading was "very effective," while 38% of women and 51% of men checked "effective." Seven percent of women and 16% of men indicated that they thought it was "somewhat effective," and 3% of women and 2% of men did not think it was effective at all.

Eight percent of men and 2% of women checked that drama is "inappropriate in a church setting." Twelve percent of men and 6% of women responded that drama distracts from worship. However, 62% to 72% of women and 52% to 70% of men checked the five positive responses.

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS

Overall opinions expressed about drama by 35 singles were more positive than those of the 93 married persons in all categories. Singles reported that they had seen an average of nine plays, while those who are married said they had seen an average of seven plays.

"Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet" received the most tallies of marrieds with "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed" and "A Mother's Quest" taking second and third places, respectively. Singles also placed "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet" in top position, and, after that, favored "A Mother's Quest" and "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed" equally.

Ninety percent of singles ranked the overall quality of the material chosen as "excellent" or "very good," while 85% of marrieds gave rankings that high.

There were 86% of singles who said the quality of staging was either "excellent" or "very good." Only 73% of marrieds rated it as "excellent" or "very good."

Eighty-six percent of singles rated the quality of acting as "excellent" or "very good," but only 65% of marrieds gave ratings that high. Eight percent of singles and 9% of marrieds said that acting was only "fair."

A total of 80% of singles rated the quality of the costumes and props as "excellent" or "very good," while 65% of marrieds said "excellent" or "very good."

Eighty-three percent of singles said the technical aspects of the productions were either "excellent" or "very good," while only 51% of marrieds gave rankings that high.

Regarding the frequency of productions, 79% of singles said it was "about right," while 87% of marrieds agreed with that assessment. However, 15% of singles thought production frequency was "not often enough," while only 2% of marrieds agreed. Six percent of singles and 11% of marrieds felt the frequency was "too often."

In regard to the effectiveness of the dramatizations of Scripture, 51% of singles said it was "very effective," while only 43% of marrieds agreed with that assessment. Thirty-seven percent of singles and 44% of marrieds thought it was "effective," while 6% of singles and 11% of marrieds said it was "somewhat effective." Six percent of singles and 2% of marrieds said it was "not effective."

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO AGE

There was greater variance by age as far as positive responses to the use of drama in the church to different questions than by other categories from the 143 who indicated their age. The most positive response was from the 10 to 13 year-old; however, since only two from that age group responded, it is difficult to assess the value of this response. The number responding according to age groups and the number of plays seen is as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number of Responders</u>	<u>Average Number of Plays Seen</u>
10 - 13	2	6
14 - 20	3	9
21 - 35	9	7
36 - 50	34	7
51 - 65	63	8
Over 65	32	8

The plays most frequently checked in question #2 by age groups were as follows.

10 - 13 age group:	"Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," first, followed by "The Challenge of the Cross," "The Good Samaritan Revisited," "Special Report: Bethlehem," "A Mother's Quest," and "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," each with one mark.
14 - 20 age group:	"Pentecost," first, followed by "The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead," "The Passion," "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," and "Jonah," each with one mark.
21 - 35 age group:	"The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," first; "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," second; and "A Slight Problem," third.
36 - 50 age group:	"Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," first; "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," second; and "A Mother's Quest," third.
51 - 65 age group:	"Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," first; "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," second; and "A Mother's Quest," third.
Over 65 age group:	"Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," first; "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed" and "The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead," tied for second.

Combining the responses of "excellent" and "very good" for questions 3 - 7, the most positive responses (after the 10 - 13 age group) were as follows:

<u>Question</u>	<u>Most Positive Age Group Response</u>
#3	Over 65
#4	14 - 20
#5	36 - 50
#6	36 - 50
#7	21 - 35

The following charts indicate the percentage of responses to questions 3 - 9 by age categories.

#3 - Quality of Material

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
10 - 13	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
14 - 20	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%
21 - 35	33%	44%	11%	11%	0%
36 - 50	41%	53%	6%	0%	0%
51 - 65	35%	48%	13%	2%	2%
Over 65	47%	38%	16%	0%	0%

#4 - Quality of Staging

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
10 - 13	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
14 - 20	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
21 - 35	33%	44%	11%	11%	0%
36 - 50	18%	68%	15%	0%	0%
51 - 65	33%	38%	25%	5%	0%
Over 65	31%	41%	25%	3%	0%

#5 - Quality of Acting

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
10 - 13	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
14 - 20	33%	33%	33%	0%	0%
21 - 35	11%	67%	0%	22%	0%
36 - 50	15%	64%	21%	0%	0%
51 - 65	23%	32%	31%	15%	0%
Over 65	34%	38%	22%	6%	0%

#6 - Quality of Costumes and Props

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
10 - 13	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
14 - 20	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%
21 - 35	56%	22%	22%	0%	0%
36 - 50	21%	59%	20%	0%	0%
51 - 65	26%	37%	29%	8%	0%
Over 65	28%	41%	31%	0%	0%

#7 - Quality of Technical Aspects

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
10 -- 13	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%
14 - 20	0%	67%	0%	33%	0%
21 - 35	22%	56%	22%	0%	0%
36 - 50	9%	50%	35%	6%	0%
51 - 65	18%	34%	34%	11%	3%
Over 65	22%	44%	19%	16%	0%

#8 - Frequency of Productions

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Too Often</u>	<u>About Right</u>	<u>Not Often Enough</u>
10 - 13	0%	50%	50%
14 - 20	0%	67%	33%
21 - 35	0%	100%	0%
36 - 50	3%	94%	3%
51 - 65	13%	83%	5%
Over 65	13%	81%	6%

There were no responses of "too often" regarding the frequency of productions in age groups 10 -13, 14 - 20, and 21 - 35. Three percent of those 36 - 50 years old felt they were "too often," while 13% in each of the 51 -65 and over 65 age categories indicated the frequency as "too often."

#9 - Effectiveness of Dramatized Scripture

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Very Effective</u>	<u>Effective</u>	<u>Somewhat Effective</u>	<u>Not Effective</u>
10 - 13	100%	0%	0%	0%
14 - 20	33%	33%	33%	0%
21 - 35	22%	67%	11%	0%
36 - 50	44%	47%	9%	0%
51 - 65	42%	42%	10%	6%
Over 65	55%	35%	10%	0%

Combining the responses of "very effective" and "effective" to question 9, the age group giving the most positive responses (after the 10 - 13 year olds) were from those 36 - 50 years old.

To question #9 regarding the effectiveness of dramatizing Scripture, respondents in only one age category (51 - 65) said it was "not effective" with 6% responding in that manner.

Overall, the least positive responses were from those in the 51 - 65 age group. Also, the "negative" statements checked in question 10 were made by eight persons in this age group, five in the over 65 age group, and one in the 14 - 20 age group. In addition, the handwritten critical comments came almost exclusively from those in the two oldest age categories.

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO LENGTH OF TIME AS A CHRISTIAN

Only six of those responding to this question indicated that they had been a Christian fewer than 11 years. One checked "3 - 5 years," and five checked "6 - 10 years." One hundred twenty-two said they had been a Christian "11 years or more," the highest category on the questionnaire.

Those who have been Christians 11 or more years had seen an average of eight of the plays and ranked "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," first; "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," second; and "A Mother's Quest," third. The five who have been Christians 6 to 10 years had seen an average of five of the plays. Their rating for first place was a tie among "The Raising of Lazarus from the Dead," "A Slight Problem," and "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed." Second place was also a tie among "I Saw Him," "Special Report: Bethlehem," "A Mother's Quest," and "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet." The one who has been a Christian 3 to 5 years checked four plays as being especially meaningful: "The Challenge of the Cross," "The Good Samaritan Revisited," "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," and "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet."

The 3 - 5 year Christian gave 100% rankings of "excellent" on questions 3 - 7; however, with only one response, it would not seem appropriate to assume that all in that category would respond in a like manner. Comparing the other two categories, the responses of those who have been Christians 11 years or more were more positive than those in the 6 - 10 year group.

Eighty-seven percent of "11 years or more" said the quality of the material chosen was "excellent" or "very good," while only 80% of "6 - 10 years" gave that high a rating. However 1% of the former category checked "fair" and 1% checked "poor" for this question, while "6 - 10 years" gave no rating below "good."

Seventy-nine percent of "11 years or more" responded "excellent" or "very good" to quality of staging, while only 40% of "6 - 10 years" gave marks that high.

Sixty-five percent of "11 years or more" rated the quality of acting as either "excellent" or "very good." Only 40% of "6 - 10 years" thought it was that good.

Seventy-one percent of "11 years or more" gave "excellent" or "very good" marks for quality of costumes and props, while only 40% of "6 - 10 years" checked those blanks.

Sixty-one percent of "11 years or more" said the quality of technical aspects of productions was "excellent" or "very good." None of the "6 - 10 years" responded "excellent," but 40% indicated "very good."

On the frequency of productions "3 - 5 years" said "not often enough," while all of "6 - 10 years" responding to this question checked "about right." Of the "11 years or more," 10% said "too often;" 85%, "about right;" and 5%, "not often enough."

In response to the question rating the effectiveness of dramatizing Scripture, "3 - 5 years" responded "very effective." Sixty percent of those in "6 - 10 years" checked "very effective," while 40% indicated "effective." Those in the "11 years or more" category responded: "very effective," 43%; "effective," 43%; "somewhat effective," 10%; and "not effective," 3%.

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN DRAMA GROUP

There were 17 who checked that they had participated in drama, while 129 indicated that they had not. This was the only category in the demographic information completed by each respondent.

Participants had seen an average of nine of the productions. They ranked "A Mother's Quest" first and "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet" second. Next were "Facades" and "Special Report: Bethlehem," which were checked an equal number of times.

Non-participants indicated that they had seen an average of eight plays. They ranked "Jonah--The Reluctant Prophet," number 1; "The Parable of the Sower and the Seed," number 2; and "A Mother's Quest," number 3.

As expected, overall responses from participants were somewhat more positive than those from non-participants. The following chart compares the responses.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
#3 - Material					
Participants	53%	24%	24%	0%	0%
Non-participants	38%	49%	10%	2%	1%
#4 - Staging					
Participants	47%	24%	24%	6%	0%
Non-participants	27%	49%	20%	3%	0%
#5 - Acting					
Participants	31%	38%	25%	6%	0%
Non-participants	25%	42%	23%	10%	0%
#6 - Costumes, props					
Participants	35%	41%	18%	6%	0%
Non-participants	27%	43%	27%	3%	0%
#7 - Technical aspects					
Participants	29%	24%	18%	24%	6%
Non-participants	17%	44%	30%	9%	1%

In each of questions #3 through #7, participants checked more "excellents" than did the non-participants. However, when the responses of "excellent" and "very good" are combined, non-participants responded more positively on questions 3, 4, and 7.

One hundred percent of participants said the frequency of productions was "about right." Eighty-three percent of non-participants responded "about right," while 10% checked "too often" and 7% indicated "not often enough."

Participants felt that the effectiveness of dramatized Scripture was 63% "very effective" 25% "effective," and 13% "somewhat effective." Non-participants responded that the effectiveness of dramatized Scripture was 43% "very effective," 45% "effective," 9% "somewhat effective," and 3% "not effective."

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Many respondents wrote comments and suggestions in the space provided for this purpose. These have been divided into three main categories: positive comments, negative comments, and suggestions.

Positive Comments

Ten said they look forward to seeing the plays and enjoy them very much.

Six commented on the value of combining sight and sound in the presentation of the Scriptures, while five said they bring Scripture to life. Another said that the plays are a good way to convey a message.

Five commented on the plays' value in helping to understand Scripture, and five mentioned the special positive impact for children in this regard.

Four mentioned positive spiritual impact with comments such as:

- o Each production has found a way to touch my heart and soul.
- o They convicted me of changes I need to make in my life.
- o They are thought-provoking.
- o They have made a real impact on people's lives.

Two were pleased that everyone, regardless of experience, is encouraged and given opportunity to participate.

Other positive comments included:

- o Keep up the good work (from 11 respondents).
- o Blessed to have such talent in our church (from eight respondents).
- o I like the use of humor.
- o Two said the scripts and productions are unique and imaginative and are of professional quality.
- o I can't think of any way to improve.
- o The productions are getting better and better.

Negative Comments

Three said a play should not take the place of the sermon.

Three commented that they do not care for a play in a regular church service, and another responded that he enjoys the more traditional form of worship.

Other negative comments were:

- o Sometimes I find the drama distracts more than it helps.
- o Although making a point, it seems to be a bit much for a mature group of Christians.
- o The material seems simplistic and fundamentalistic. Some of it made me feel battered.

Suggestions

Two wanted to know more in advance about productions so that they could invite friends.

These suggestions were made for alternate times for productions:

- o Consider times other than worship services.
- o Would prefer a few church year seasonal dramas.
- o How about a Friday or Saturday night production?

These suggestions were made for improvement of acting:

- o Would like to see more facial expressions.
- o Timing is slow. More time needs to be spent in coaching individuals.

Respondents suggested in regard to types of productions:

- o Recastings in typical modern setting tends to work more effectively for me.
- o Maybe consider a musical opera, such as "Amahl and the Night Visitors."
- o Would like more variety in approaches used.
- o Use more youth and smaller as well as larger cast productions.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

All in all, the response to the use of drama at Resurrection was overwhelmingly positive.

Overall respondents gave "excellent" or "very good" evaluations ranging from 59% to 86% to questions 3 - 7. Only 1% checked "poor" on two of those questions, while rankings of "fair" were given by only 1% to 10% on those five questions. Only 9% thought the frequency of the presentations was "too often," while 7% indicated "not often enough." Eighty-seven percent thought the dramatization of Scripture was either "very effective" or "effective," while 10% responded "somewhat effective" and only 2% "not effective"

Responses from females were more positive than those from males as were opinions of singles over opinions of those who are married. Responses from those who have been Christians for 11 or more years were more positive than from those who have been Christians a shorter length of time; however, since only five percent fell into the latter category, it is difficult to know how much weight should be placed on this figure. Responses from those who have participated in the productions were more positive than from those who have not participated.

Responses by age were not as clear cut as in the other categories. Overall, those 50 and under were somewhat more positive in their assessments than in the two older age groups. The age group with the least positive views were those 51 to 65.

Written comments were, for the most part, very encouraging and appreciative. It is thought that probably the six who expressed negative reactions to the use of drama in a regular service or substituting a play for the sermon attend the early service, which is shorter and more "cut and dried" than the 10:30 service. Unfortunately information as to which service the respondent attends was not asked for.

Suggestions are believed to be thoughtfully and constructively offered and should be given consideration in future planning of the drama ministry.

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KING'S COMPANY DRAMA MINISTRY PARTICIPANTS

Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire, a part of the field study for my doctoral studies. You do not need to sign your name. Please place it in the drama box on the information table in the Parish Hall or mail it to me. Thanks a lot. Wanda Vassallo, 8940 Shorelark Drive, Dallas, TX 75217, (214) 398-5162.

1. The impact of drama participation on my spiritual growth has been:
☐ slight ☐ fair ☐ good ☐ very good ☐ excellent
2. The impact on my self-concept and self-confidence has been:
☐ slight ☐ fair ☐ good ☐ very good ☐ excellent
3. The drama productions have helped me develop my talents and abilities:
☐ not at all ☐ very little ☐ somewhat ☐ a good deal ☐ a lot
4. I feel that participating in the productions has given me the opportunity to minister to others:
☐ not at all ☐ very little ☐ somewhat ☐ a good deal ☐ a lot
5. The thing(s) I like most about participating in the productions is (are):
6. The thing(s) I like least about participating in the productions is (are):
7. These are my suggestions for improving the drama ministry:

My age is ☐ 20 or under ☐ 21 - 35 ☐ 36 - 50 ☐ 51 or over.

I have participated in productions.

I had previous experience in drama. ☐ yes ☐ no.

I would like to participate in drama workshops. ☐ yes ☐ no.

If yes, please indicate a preference of day and time: weekday evening
 Saturday Sunday afternoon Sunday evening

If you have had a special spiritual experience as a result of participation in The King's Company Drama Ministry, please share it on the back of this questionnaire.

RESULTS OF RESPONSES TO "QUESTIONNAIRE FOR KING'S COMPANY DRAMA MINISTRY PARTICIPANTS

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

DALLAS, TEXAS

In April 2000, 51 of the attached "Questionnaire Related to The King's Company Drama Ministry" were given or mailed to every person who has participated in the ministry with the exception of three whose addresses are unknown.

A total of 31 or 61 percent was returned. Some were handed to the director; others were placed in a box designated "Drama Ministry" on the information table in the Parish Hall at Resurrection with a few being returned through the mail.

The following demographic information was obtained.

Total returned:

Age: 20 or under	- 6
21 - 35	- 4
36 - 50	- 6
51 or over	- 15

Number of dramas participated in:

1	- 15
2 - 4	- 6
5 or more	- 10

Previous experience in drama:

yes	- 17
no	- 13

Would like to participate in drama workshops:

yes	- 17
no	- 13

Percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number, resulting in some totals not equaling 100 percent.

RESPONSES OF WHOLE GROUP

Four questions asked respondents to select the responses that matched their feelings

and impressions. These were the results for all of those who returned questionnaires.

1. Responses to the question "The impact of drama participation on my spiritual growth has been:" were: 3% slight, 13% fair, 23% good, 39% very good, and 23% excellent.
2. Responses to the question "The impact on my self-concept and self-confidence has been:" were: 6% slight, 0% fair, 29% good, 29% very good, and 35% excellent.
3. Responses to the question "The drama productions have helped me develop my talents and abilities:" were: 0% not at all, 6% very little, 39% somewhat, 29% a good deal, 26% a lot.
4. Responses to the question "I feel that participating in the productions has given me the opportunity to minister to others:" were: 3% not at all, 0% very little, 19% somewhat, 35% a good deal, and 42% a lot.

RESPONSES BY AGE GROUPS

Of the 25 respondents, six were under 20; four were 21 - 35; six were 36 - 50; and 15 were 51 or over. Combining the two top highest possible responses to the first four questions, the most positive percentage results for question one was from the 21 - 35 age category. For question two, the highest returns were from those under 20, while those 51 or over gave the most positive responses to questions three and four.

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO PARTICIPATION IN NUMBER OF PRODUCTIONS

Predictably the most positive responses to the first four questions were given by those who had participated in more productions. The following charts indicate the percentage of responses to questions 1 - 4 by number of production participation in these three categories: one play, one to four plays, five plays or more. Of those responding, 15 had appeared in one production, six in two to four plays, and 10 in five or more.

Question # 1 - Impact on Spiritual Growth

<u>Number of Plays</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
1	6%	20%	33%	27%	13%
2 - 4	0%	17%	33%	50%	0%
5 or more	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%

Question #2 - Impact on Self-Concept and Self-Confidence

<u>Number of Plays</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
1	7%	0%	33%	40%	20%
2 - 4	20%	0%	60%	20%	0%
5 or more	0%	0%	10%	20%	70%

Question #3 - Development of Talents and Abilities

<u>Number of Plays</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
1	0%	6%	53%	20%	20%
2 - 4	0%	17%	67%	17%	0%
5 or more	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%

Question #4 - Opportunity to Minister to Others

<u>Number of Plays</u>	<u>Slight</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
1	7%	0%	20%	40%	33%
2 - 4	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%
5 or more	0%	0%	0%	20%	80%

RESPONSES ACCORDING TO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN DRAMA.

Of the 31 respondents, 13 had had no previous experience in drama, 17 had had at least some experience, and one left this response blank. Those with no previous experience drama reported a greater impact on their spiritual growth with 69 percent selecting "very good" or "excellent" compared with 59 percent in those two categories for those with experience.

However, the reverse was true in evaluating the impact on self-concept and self-confidence. Seventy-six percent of those with previous experience selected the two highest categories of response, whereas only 50 percent of the inexperienced responded in that manner.

A total of 61 percent of those without previous drama experience felt that drama had helped a great deal or a lot in the development of their talents and abilities, while 51 percent of those with experience checked those categories.

Results on the question regarding the opportunity to minister to others were nearly equal. Seventy-seven percent of the inexperienced and 76 percent of the experienced responded “a good deal” or “a lot” to that question.

DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE IN DRAMA WORKSHOPS

Seventeen of the 31 respondents, or 55 percent, indicated an interest in participating in drama workshops. Ten of those had had previous experience in drama, while the other seven had never been in a play.

By ages, 66 percent of those under 20 checked “yes,” 75 percent of those 21 to 35 years of age, 66 percent of those 36 - 50, and 43 percent of those 51 or over. Seven of those who were interested had been in one production, three in two to four plays, and eight in five or more dramatizations.

The majority preferred a Sunday afternoon workshop with one of the seven indicating that Saturday morning would also be all right. Five liked a weekday evening with two suggesting Sunday evening. One of those who checked Sunday evening also checked Saturday as did three other participants in the questionnaire.

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Those who completed the questionnaire were asked to cite what they liked best about participating in the productions. These were their responses.

Twelve responses related to the opportunity for ministry and presentation of the Word of God to others.

Ten wrote positively of their experiences in working with a group and developing close friendships and relationships.

Two mentioned the positive impact on them from a spiritual standpoint.

Four responses related to having the opportunity to act and be on stage.

Two noted being able to communicate God’s message in a fresh, unusual manner.

Four responses related to the fun and friendly atmosphere in the process of preparing and presenting the productions. They wrote:

- o “. . . seeing people smile
- o “They were enjoyable. Fun to work with you. It was a great experience.”

- o "These are great productions. It's all fun with you. All the shows are really fun."
- o "Wanda fosters a nurturing, friendly environment."

Other comments were:

- o "Bringing Scripture 'alive'"
- o "Stretched my talents."
- o "Getting to volunteer my time"
- o "Helping me be more self-confident."
- o "Prayer"
- o "Seeing others come to enjoy dramatic performance"

Respondents were also given the opportunity to say what they liked least about participating in the productions. These were their responses.

Eleven left this blank, while one wrote "none;" another, "There really isn't anything I didn't like;" and one, "I enjoy it all as organized."

Two commented on the rehearsals being hampered by absences.

Three wrote "Memorizing lines," while one of those added "Forgetting lines."

One wrote: "Always feeling that we could use twice as much practice time to achieve the level of 'performance' we could otherwise."

A teenager who has been in one production wrote: "How do I say this, ummm, since I've been in drama stuff 4-ever, I'm not learning anything new. I'm like an 8th grader in a 3rd grade class."

Another teenager who has participated in one production replied: "Teens ideas are not listened to or even considered so more teen participation."

Other things liked least were:

- o "We could not do more performances."
- o "Not having the time or opportunity to participate more."
- o "Lots of times it's hard to work with the items given to me."
- o "Sitting and waiting."
- o "The amount of time it takes to develop a 'good production.'"
- o "Practice"
- o "The travel time"
- o "Is having to get to and perform in the 7:30 service."

Those who participated were also asked to write suggestions for improving the drama ministry. Fifteen left this space blank, while one wrote, "It is wonderful just the way it is," and another, "doing a good job already."

One proposed a dinner theater to perform, raise money, and raise awareness about the ministry. Another mentioned a coffee house format outside of services.

Another commented: "Rehearsal schedule should be planned to reduce 'waiting' time for participants that was due to late arrivers and confusion."

One recommended: "Establish a set of criteria that must be achieved in order to participate as a member of the core group. There could be other levels but only those who met the higher criteria would get the more challenging roles."

Two of the teenagers suggested having a mime and puppet team.

Other suggestions from teenagers included: "Maybe have the kids make suggestion to change things," "getting ideas and using them for plays," and "screenplay writing assistants and advisors."

Other recommendations were: more advance notice, inclusion of more sound effects and music, workshops, more people, more choral reading, variety in styles, and more humor.

Others wrote:

- o "Have someone call each participant the day before rehearsal."
- o "Add the opportunity to develop and produce video drama."
- o "Develop a drama which invites youth from our church and the church next door to put on several shows in the apartments nearby during the summer."

One who participated wrote on the back of his questionnaire:

I have been blessed to see Wanda take willing and not so willing people and people with talent and those with lesser talent, and make a cohesive capable drama team. She has a knack for bringing out good skills and encouraging all to work for one another. She has made a way for my son, Austin, for which I am very grateful and others are blessed in unique ways we will never know.

Another offered: "I was blessed to see God's hand in the creative process used to spread the gospel in a unique and exciting way! Thanks!"

One respondent commented on the use of drama as ministry:

Participating in this ministry has really broadened my interpretation of a "good performance." In the secular world, I always based my opinions of my own performance in terms of technique, interpretation. Theater as a ministry has opened my eyes to see that the Lord uses every performance--mistakes and all--to communicate to his people. I have stopped being so critical of myself in performance and trust that God is using me as a vessel.

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

Overall the response by those who had participated in The King's Company Drama Ministry could be considered very positive.

The respondents who had participated in the highest number of plays category were the most positive.

Previous experience in drama did not seem to have a consistent effect since those with experience ranked higher on one questions, while those without experience ranked higher on two questions, and results were nearly equal for the other question. Those with previous experience responded more positively on the question relating to a positive impact on self-concept and self-confidence. This confirms the director's observation that self-confidence grows progressively with successful experience.

Those without previous experience gave higher rankings on the questions regarding spiritual growth and development of their talents and abilities. The latter result may be due to the fact that several of the inexperienced did not realize they even had a talent for drama. Results on the fourth question related to opportunity to minister to others were only one percent different.

Of interest was the fact that those 20 or under ranked impact on spiritual growth the lowest of any age group, while 87 percent of those 51 or over checked the top two categories under opportunities for ministry to others. Of course, a factor to take into consideration is that all of those 20 or under had participated in only one production.

Written comments were, for the most part, very encouraging and appreciative. None of the responses under what respondents liked least came as a surprise.

Suggestions are believed to be thoughtfully and constructively offered and should be given careful consideration in future planning of the drama ministry.

APPENDIX C

Format for Using Psychodramatic Approaches with Stories from Scripture

1. Director explains the purpose of the session:

- o To explore the characters in a particular Biblical story
- o To vicariously experience the challenges they faced
- o To discover things about ourselves and our situations from our own and others' portrayals of the characters
- o To maintain the integrity of the meaning and message of the Scriptural passage even though, in its development, the spontaneity of the moment may cause a divergence from some details of the story.

2. Director hands out a written synopsis of the Biblical story to be enacted. The synopsis lists the characters and the action of each scene to be dramatized. Participants take turns reading aloud the synopsis. During the reading, they consider which part they feel drawn to and wish to enact.

3. The director asks for volunteers to improvise the story in the various parts. If no one volunteers for a particular part, the director asks someone if he or she will agree to play the part. Sex, age, and appearance are not considered in assigning roles.

4. The director warms up each person to his or her role by describing the setting, what the character is doing, and by asking the actor to move and think aloud in that part.

5. The spontaneous action of the story begins. As the dramatization develops, it is all right if the plot strays somewhat from the Biblical account as long as the message and principles of the passage remain true. Focus is on characterization and spontaneity rather than on Biblical scholarship about the story.

6. During the dramatization, the director may call on an actor for a soliloquy, may ask characters to switch roles, use one or more doubles, or other psychodramatic techniques. An effective technique is to use two doubles, one on either side of the main character, presenting positive and negative urgings about what the character is contemplating doing. If only one double is available, that person may present positive comments from one side of the character and then negative comments from the other side.

7. After the dramatization is over, each participant is asked to express what it was like to play a particular part. Others may also enter in and express something they especially noted about the person's portrayal or the character's story. Participants are given the opportunity to express ways their own portrayal of a character or other aspects of the play relate to their own lives and/or current circumstances. The director may capitalize on the moment by asking individuals and/or the group specific questions and ways in which the Holy Spirit may have spoken to them through the dramatization.

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APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT PARTICIPATION IN BIBLIODRAMA

On the next four questions, please check the answer that most closely reflects your reaction.

1. The impact of participating in the impromptu bibliodramas on my spiritual growth has been:
☐ slight ☐ fair ☐ good ☐ very good ☐ excellent
2. The impact on my self-confidence , self-concept and self-understanding has been:
☐ slight ☐ fair ☐ good ☐ very good ☐ excellent
3. My understanding of the stories I've participated in and their message has grown:
☐ not at all ☐ very little ☐ somewhat ☐ a good deal ☐ a lot
4. My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the stories have increased:
☐ not at all ☐ very little ☐ somewhat ☐ a good deal ☐ a lot
5. The thing(s) I like most about participating in the bibliodramas is (are):
6. The thing(s) I like least about participating in the bibliodramas is (are):
7. These are my suggestions for improving the bibliodrama sessions:
8. I think this approach would be effective for use with the following groups and/or ages:
9. From your participation in bibliodrama, describe how this method has impacted both your spiritual and personal development. Please give examples. (Use other side if more space is needed.)

My age is ☐ 21 - 35 ☐ 36 - 50 ☐ 51 - 65 ☐ 65 or over

I have participated in ☐ sessions.

I would like to participate in future bibliodrama sessions if the opportunity presents itself.
☐ yes ☐ no **(You do not need to sign your name.)**

RESULTS OF QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN BIBLIODRAMA

Participants in the Bibliodrama sessions conducted as a part of the course in Psychodrama were asked to complete a questionnaire in relationship to their experience.

Of the eight respondents (all those who had participated in one or more of the group's nine sessions), one was 36 to 50 years old, four were 51 to 65 years old, and three were over 65. Three had participated in all nine session; two in seven, one in four, one in two, and one in one.

These are the results from the eight respondents.

1. To the question "The impact of participating in the impromptu bibliodramas on my spiritual growth has been:" three responded "excellent," while five replied "very good."
2. To the question "The impact on my self-confidence, self-concept and self-understanding has been:" four checked "excellent," three said "very good," and one responded "good."
3. To the question "My understanding of the stories I've participated in and their message has grown:" three responded "a lot," and five said "a good deal."
4. To the question "My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the stories have increased:" five replied "a good deal," and three said "a lot."
5. These were the things the participants indicated they liked most about being a part of the sessions.
 - o Experiencing a variety of perspectives and personal relevancy of Scripture.
 - o "Realizing how much I love God, how sinful I am in areas of my life."
 - o Two commented on having the opportunity to "walk into" the characters of the Bible.
 - o "Insights regarding spiritual teachings and my life."
 - o "It is fun and insightful."
 - o "Helps me see the Biblical characters as real people, feel "identified" with them and empathize with their struggles and situations.
 - o "Noticing my reactions to participating with people in the drama."
 - o "Making me think."
 - o "Scripture comes to 'life.'"
6. The things participants said they liked least about being a part of the sessions were:
 - o "Time always seems too short."
 - o "Is playing a part I wanted to, but I did not count the cost of what all the part entailed."
 - o Five did not point out anything they disliked.
 - o "I am not good at drama, so I was very uncomfortable and self-conscious."
7. Suggestions for improving the bibliodrama sessions were:
 - o Develop workshop format to unfold various Scriptures and explore larger themes.
 - o Continue to explore, expand and evaluate format for using psychodrama approaches

with Scripture.

- o Develop a core group of about eight or more men and women who meet on a regular basis.

- o Four gave no suggestions for improvement with two responding that they liked it just the way it was done.

8. To the statement "I think this approach would be effective for use with the following groups and/or ages," four indicated all ages. Two said adults and/or youth. Still another wrote six and older, teens, couples, families. Two mentioned that this technique would be good for use in a Sunday school class, and one thought an Extended Family would make a good setting. Another mentioned its potential for use in the healing ministry.

9. The final question asked how participation in bibliodrama has impacted their spiritual and personal development. These were the replies.

- o "I have experienced the vulnerability of God in terms of struggle, pain, joy, and patience and mostly unconditional love. God's vulnerability has allowed me to have a deep feeling of partnership with me."

- o "Deep insights - helped in prayer life.

- o "I can understand the Bible characters more and why they acted and did what they did. Also, I can personally identify with them."

- o "The most personally impactful interchange for me was the response of another character to my character in the Bibliodrama. I almost wept at the time. I could truly feel the anointing of the Holy Spirit ministering the truth--the encouragement to me."

- o "I believe it has given me greater insight into the depth and extent of God's love and emotion and the anguish he experiences as a result of our disobedience and waywardness."

- o The woman who played Eve said: "When it came time to deliberately disobey God by picking and eating the apple, I became ill inside--I could not--I would not disobey God. Most difficult for me to do. I thought if only I could get out of this part. The serpent did not influence me at all, but I knew for the sake of the play, I had to pick and eat that apple. Then when Adam ate the apple and God screamed out with such pain, I could hardly stand it. I could feel His pain."

- o Interaction of the group

- o "Personal development--gave an opportunity to come out of drama shell. Saw my insecurity once again in a new light."

- o "Really neat to see my black and white thinking and how to move out of that."

- o "I especially liked the work we did with Richard."

All of the participants indicated they would like to be a part of any future sessions which might be held.

APPENDIX E

SCRIPT OF THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

(Based on Luke 15:1 -3; 11 - 32, NRSV)

By Wanda Vassallo

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Narrator	
Father	- A loving, generous man
Older Son	- A dutiful, proud, and rather arrogant young man
Prodigal Son	- A restless rather irresponsible younger brother
Girl	- A gold digger who dresses to attract attention
Farmer	- An older man
Three Pigs	- Played by boisterous young people
Slave	- A typical, obedient servant type
Three Guests	- May be played by same actors as pigs

Scenery:

No scenery is necessary.

Costumes:

Typical of Biblical days

Pigs may wear black pants and knit shirts and then add a robe over them when they become guests.

Props:

A small lectern may be used by the Narrator.

Play money

Lavish robe

Two money pouches

At Rise:

Narrator enters Right Front and goes to lectern which is at Left.

NARRATOR: **Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them." So he told them this parable: There was a man . . .**

(FATHER enters Right Front and stands Center Stage)

. . . who had two sons.

(OLDER SON enters Right Front. He walks proudly toward Center Stage with his hands folded and a pious expression on his face. FATHER turns toward him with outstretched arms and a loving expression on his face. OLDER SON bows perfunctorily to FATHER, then walks three paces Right. PRODIGAL enters Right Back, looking restless and discontent, and comes up center aisle. OLDER SON sees him, looks disgusted, and turns his back toward PRODIGAL with deliberation. PRODIGAL walks toward FATHER. FATHER turns toward him with outstretched arms and a loving expression on his face. PRODIGAL bows to FATHER and paces left of FATHER. OLDER SON shakes his head in disgust.

PRODIGAL: (paces, then stops as if he has made a decision and walks aggressively toward FATHER.) **Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.**

(FATHER looks surprised, but reluctantly beckons OLDER SON to him. OLDER SON walks toward FATHER and stands on his right hand. FATHER pulls out a wad of play money.)

NARRATOR: **So he divided his property between them.**

(FATHER gives prodigal a bill, then the OLDER SON, alternating until he has given them all the money. PRODIGAL takes the money with increasing glee. FATHER and OLDER SON look somber and exit Right Front. PRODIGAL spreads money in fan shape, holds it up in triumph and does a little dance.

NARRATOR: **A few days later the younger son gathered all he had . .**

(PRODIGAL stuffs money in his pouch.)

. . . and traveled to a distant country . . .

(PRODIGAL walks down center aisle to widened area, stops and starts walking fast in place with an expression of glee on his face. "The Entertainer" by Scott Joplin is played on keyboard as background music.)

. . . and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

(PRODIGAL throws money over his shoulder. GIRL enters Right Front, sees money, picks it up excitedly and stuffs it down her front. She goes up to PRODIGAL in a flirty way. They dance up and down the aisle, throw money around and pantomime drinking. They dance some more. He pantomimes putting a large necklace around her neck. She points to her finger. He pantomimes putting a ring on her finger. Then she points to her ears. He looks in his pouch and finds no money. When she sees that he has no money left, she gives him the brush-off and exits Right Back. PRODIGAL takes a couple of steps toward her with a sad expression on his face, then realizes that she has taken advantage of him and stops, looking very hurt. Background music changes to minor key and is played slower and slower.)

When he had spent everything . . .

(PRODIGAL looks in empty pouch again and looks dejected.)

. . . a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need.

(PRODIGAL walks slowly as if on treadmill, holds stomach as if hungry. He looks up as if at sun, mops brow, holds throat--all the while his steps are getting slower and slower. Finally, he can barely walk. On dissonant bang on keyboard, he falls down.)

(FARMER enters Right Front and goes down aisle to third row of chairs.)

So he went . . .

(PRODIGAL gets up.)

. . . and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country . . .

(Music stops. PRODIGAL goes to FARMER, shows him his empty pockets, rubs his stomach, gets down on his knees as if begging. FARMER thinks with hand on chin. Finally he nods O.K. PRODIGAL gets up. FARMER pantomimes talking and points down aisle.)

. . . who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs.

(PIGS enter Right Rear on hands and knees and start up aisle.)

PIGS: **Oink, oink, oink, oink, oink, oink, oink, oink, oink.**

(PRODIGAL shakes his head in disbelief, looks at FARMER who nods "yes" to him.)

(PIGS continue to "oink" and stop at wide aisle.)

(PRODIGAL pantomimes starting to pick up bucket; holds his nose as if it smells terrible and then, with distasteful look, picks it up, carries it to the PIGS and pours it out as if in a trough. PIGS oink and jostle each other to get food. He watches PIGS intently, holding his stomach, looking around.)

(FARMER exits Right Front.)

NARRATOR: **He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating . . .**

(PRODIGAL looks hesitant but then gets down on all fours among PIGS who try to nudge him out of the way.)

. . . and no one gave him anything.

(PRODIGAL starts to put imaginary husks in his mouth.)

But when he came to himself . . .

(PRODIGAL stands bolt upright with an expression as if a light just came on in his head)

. . . he said:

PRODIGAL: (walking a few paces down the aisle) **How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me like one of your hired hands."**

(PIGS exit Right Front.)

NARRATOR: **So he set off . . .**

(Another section of "The Entertainer" is played on the keyboard as background.)

PRODIGAL: (walks in aisle toward front. In widened space, he starts walking as if on a treadmill. As he walks, he rehearses his speech for FATHER.) **Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you . . .** (He tries it again, trying to sound more contrite.) **Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;** (He shakes his head affirmatively) **I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me like one of your hired hands.** (He tries it again, this time getting down on his knees.) **Treat me like one of your hired hands."** (gets up.)

(As PRODIGAL walks on treadmill, FATHER enters stage Right Front and paces back and forth as though worried. Periodically he pauses, walks a couple of steps Stage Right, puts his hand above his eyes and squints as though trying to see if he can see PRODIGAL coming. Music stops.)

NARRATOR: **He went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion.**

(FATHER excitedly runs toward him, hugs him and kisses him on the cheek.)

He ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

PRODIGAL: (getting down on knees and speaking with a very humble attitude) **Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.**

NARRATOR: **But before the prodigal son could finish his planned speech, the father summoned one of his slaves.**

(FATHER snaps fingers on right hand toward Stage Right, extends left hand and helps PRODIGAL up. SLAVE enters Right Front.)

FATHER: (to SLAVE) **Quickly, bring out a robe--the best one--and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again He was lost and is found!**

(FATHER embraces PRODIGAL again as SLAVE returns with robe. SLAVE helps PRODIGAL put on robe.)

NARRATOR: **And they began to celebrate.**

(GUESTS enter Stage Right Front in a jovial mood. They welcome PRODIGAL, congratulate FATHER, who pantomimes inviting them into his "house" at Stage Center. They begin to dance and rejoice. SLAVE stands to one side, pantomimes offering GUESTS platter of food. Music plays again.)

Now his elder son was in the field . . .

(OLDER SON enters Right Back walks up the aisle.)

. . . and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing.

(OLDER SON stops midway up the aisle and looks puzzled. He summons SLAVE by snapping fingers. SLAVE comes to him.)

OLDER SON: **What is going on here?**

SLAVE: **Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.**

(OLDER SON strides angrily a few paces down aisle. SLAVE tries to get him to come in. OLDER SON motions for him to go away. SLAVE goes back in "house." FATHER sees OLDER SON and starts down aisle toward him.)

NARRATOR: **And he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.**

(FATHER pantomimes talking with him. GUESTS freeze. PRODIGAL stands STAGE CENTER, looking toward FATHER and OLDER SON.)

OLDER SON: (shaking his head and turning his back on FATHER. He then turns on FATHER with great anger and bitterness.) **Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command. Yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. (walks away from him, then turns back, pointing his finger at him) But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!**

FATHER: (shaking his head sadly and speaking in a kind, gentle way)
Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. (pauses. Then with joy and excitement) **But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life. He was lost and has been found.**

(OLDER SON freezes with back to FATHER and disdainful expression on his face. FATHER freezes reaching toward OLDER SON. All hold their positions for a slow count of six. They then go down the Center aisle of the church as they sing "He Who Hath Ears to Hear Let Him Hear" and exit Right Rear. OLDER SON, who still looks disgruntled, leads way, followed by FATHER, PRODIGAL, GUESTS, FARMER, GIRL FRIEND, and NARRATOR.)

Song: **He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
And not only hear but understand . . .
That what the prophets said is true,
And that God's Word is real.
He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.**

CURTAIN

APPENDIX F**SCRIPT OF THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT**

(based on Luke 11:1-13)

By Wanda Vassallo

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

Narrator

Jesus

Disciples

Neighbor - A persistent, pushy man

Friend - A normally good natured person, who is very irritable
because of the circumstances

Two children

SCENERY:

No scenery is necessary.

COSTUMES:

Typical of Biblical days

PROPS:

Pulpit is used by the Narrator.

Three loaves of bread

Sheets and pillows

Rubber snake

Rubber scorpion

AT RISE:

Stage is empty.

(FRIEND and CHILDREN enter from front pew DC, lie down on "bed" UC and pretend to be asleep.)

NARRATOR: (enters DR and goes to pulpit UR) **Today's reading from the New Testament is found in the Book of Luke, chapter 11, verses 1 through 13.**

(JESUS enters DL followed by DISCIPLE DL. JESUS is obviously praying to himself as he walks UL on second level, while the DISCIPLE stops DL watching him.)

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him:

1ST DISCIPLE: **Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.**

NARRATOR: **He said to them:**

JESUS: (takes two steps downstage toward DISCIPLE) **When you pray, say:
Father, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Give us each day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
And do not bring us to the time of trial.**

NARRATOR: **And he said to them:**

JESUS: **Suppose one of you has a friend . . .**

(NEIGHBOR enters DR and walks DR to imaginary door.)

. . . and you go to him at midnight . . .

(FRIEND snores loudly.)

. . . and say to him:

(FRIEND snores even more loudly and snorts.)

NEIGHBOR: (pantomimes knocking on door impatiently.)

SOUND CUE: (Knocking in sync with NEIGHBOR'S pantomime)

(FRIEND rouses a little, leans up on his elbow, but then lies back down.)

NEIGHBOR: (Calls out loudly) **Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.**

JESUS: **And he answered from within:**

FRIEND: (During VISITOR'S speech, he sits up looks around in disgust, climbs over the children, strides DC, turns toward imaginary door.) **Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.** (He turns, goes back to the bed UC and lies down. Children sit up sleepily and then lie back down.)

(NEIGHBOR looks frustrated. He paces far DR away from "door," considering what to do, then turns back and walks to "door." Just about the time FRIEND gets settled, he knocks again.)

SOUND CUE: (Knocking in sync with NEIGHBOR'S pantomime)

(FRIEND sits bolt upright, looks very angry and then throws himself back down on his pillow and tries to get comfortable.)

(NEIGHBOR holds his ear close to the door, trying to discern any movement. When he hears nothing, he ponders for a moment and then, with a determined look on his face, knocks longer and more persistently than ever.)

SOUND CUE: (Knocking in sync with NEIGHBOR'S pantomime)

(FRIEND is really mad now. He sits up, fuming. Finally, he shrugs his shoulders, gets up and gets a loaf of bread UC, stomps DR, pantomimes opening the door and shoves the bread at NEIGHBOR.)

(NEIGHBOR smiles broadly and takes the bread, but then holds up two more fingers and points at the bread.)

(FRIEND doubles up his fist as if to hit him, but then throws up his hands in surrender, goes UC and gets two more loaves, stomps DR and heaves them at NEIGHBOR. He then slams the door and goes UC and sits on side of bed.)

(NEIGHBOR exits DR, whistling triumphantly and doing a little dance. FRIEND sits on side of "bed" looking disgruntled. Children sit up on side of bed by him.)

JESUS: I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs. So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.

(FRIEND and 1ST CHILD stand up in front of bed DC. 2ND CHILD sits on side of bed. 1ST CHILD pantomimes asking FRIEND for a fish during the next speech.)

Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish?

(FRIEND gives 1ST CHILD a rubber snake. CHILD jumps back and throws snake down. 2ND CHILD stands up DC and pantomimes asking FRIEND for an egg during the next speech.)

JESUS: Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion?

(FRIEND gives 2ND CHILD a scorpion. CHILD takes scorpion, cries and throws scorpion down.)

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

(All freeze for a count of 10. They then exit down center aisle to back of sanctuary singing "Ye Who Hath Ears to Hear, Let Him Hear" in the following order: FRIEND, CHILDREN, JESUS, DISCIPLE, NEIGHBOR, NARRATOR)

SOUND CUE: (Introduction and song, "He Who Hath Ears to Hear, Let Him Hear," is played.)

ALL: (sing) He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.
And not only hear but understand . . .
That what the prophets said is true,
And that God's Word is real.
He who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

(Curtain)

APPENDIX G

Questionnaire to Pre-Test and Post-Test Participants' Knowledge of The Prodigal Son Scripture

Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Please indicate the following information by placing a check mark on the correct line:

Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> male	Age: <input type="checkbox"/> 14 - 19
<input type="checkbox"/> female	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 - 29
Church membership	<input type="checkbox"/> 30 - 39
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year or less	<input type="checkbox"/> 40 - 49
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 - 65
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> over 65
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 20 years	
<input type="checkbox"/> more than 20 years	

On a weekly basis, I average spending the following amount of time on individual and/or group Bible study or reading:

☐ none
☐ less than one hour
☐ one to two hours
☐ more than two hours

Occupation _____

Please put a check mark in the blank opposite a, b or c to indicate which you consider to be the correct answer for each of the following questions.

1. The Parable of the Prodigal Son was told by:

- ☐ a. John the Baptist.
☐ b. The Apostle Paul.
☐ c. Jesus.

2. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is found in the Bible in the book of:

- ☐ a. Mark
- ☐ b. Luke
- ☐ c. Acts

3. The story is about a father and his:

- ☐ a. Four sons.
- ☐ b. Two sons.
- ☐ c. Three sons.

4. In the story, the prodigal son asked for:

- ☐ a. His share of the inheritance early.
- ☐ b. The deed to his father's farm.
- ☐ c. A coat of many colors.

5. The son took what his father had given him and:

- ☐ a. Wasted his resources in wild living.
- ☐ b. Invested in property.
- ☐ c. Bought a home for himself and his new wife.

6. When a famine came, the prodigal son:

- ☐ a. Borrowed money to live on.
- ☐ b. Fed the pigs for a farmer in order to have something to eat.
- ☐ c. Went to live with his father-in-law.

7. The prodigal son decided to go home because:

- ☐ a. He got homesick.
- ☐ b. He decided he should be at home helping his father.
- ☐ c. He realized that his father's servants had a better life than he did.

8. When he arrived home, he planned to:

- ☐ a. Ask to be one of his father's servants.
- ☐ b. Demand his share of the profits while he had been gone.
- ☐ c. Apologize for not keeping in touch with his father.

9. When he returned, his father:

- ☐ a. Sent a servant to meet him with a cup of water.
- ☐ b. Ran to meet him and kissed him.
- ☐ c. Saw him coming and greeted him when he came to his house.

10. The prodigal son's attitude on seeing his father was one of:

- ☐ a. Pride.
- ☐ b. Arrogance.
- ☐ c. Repentance.

11. The father responded by:

- ☐ a. Planning a party in his honor.
- ☐ b. Demanding that he leave.
- ☐ c. Scolding and reprimanding him.

12. While the prodigal son was gone, an older brother had:

- ☐ a. Also left home.
- ☐ b. Stayed home but refused to work since his younger brother was not there to help.
- ☐ c. Faithfully helped his father.

13. When the older brother learned that the prodigal had returned, he:

- ☐ a. Refused to speak to his father.
- ☐ b. Lashed out at his father with angry words.
- ☐ c. Rushed to his brother with open arms.

14. In response to his first-born's reaction, the father:

- ☐ a. Agreed with what he had said.
- ☐ b. Commended him for his logic.
- ☐ c. Encouraged him to rejoice because his brother had returned.

15. The father said of the prodigal that he:

- ☐ a. Was dead and is alive again.
- ☐ b. Had caused him great grief.
- ☐ c. Did not deserve to be forgiven.

16. The main theme of this parable is:

- ☐ a. Restoration.
- ☐ b. Restitution.
- ☐ c. The consequences of sin.

17. The parable was told to illustrate the importance of:

- ☐ a. Righteous living.
- ☐ b. Faithfulness.
- ☐ c. Forgiveness.

18. The older brother was:

- ☐ a. Generous.
- ☐ b. Self-righteous.
- ☐ c. Wasteful.

19. The father's attitude toward the prodigal demonstrated the principle of:

- ☐ a. "Your sins will find you out."
- ☐ b. Unconditional love
- ☐ c. "An eye for an eye."

20. The father's treatment of the two sons demonstrated that he:

- ☐ a. Loved the prodigal more than his brother.
- ☐ b. Was unappreciative of the older son.
- ☐ c. Loved each son in a way that was appropriate to each one.

21. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most and 1 being the least), how relevant do you feel this ancient story is to your life today as a person living in the 21st century?

22. In what way is it relevant or irrelevant? _____

APPENDIX H

PRETEST AND POST-TEST RESULTS OF THE PARABLE OF THE
PRODIGAL SON QUESTIONNAIRES

Demographic Information of Participants in the First Part of the Study

<u>Category</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Episcopal</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>
Number of participants:		29	30
Gender:	Male	58.6%	53.3%
	Female	41.4%	46.7%
Age:	14-19 years	6.9%	16.7%
	20-34 years	6.9%	13.3%
	35-49 years	27.6%	20%
	50-65 years	34.5%	33.3%
	Over 65	24.1%	16.7%
Length of church membership	1 year or less	0%	0%
	2-5 years	0%	23.3%
	6-10 years	21.4%	16.7%
	11-20 years	32.1%	30%
	Over 20 years	46.4%	30%
Bible study per week	None	6.9%	16.7%
	1 hour	27.6%	40%
	1-2 hours	37.9%	26.7%
	Over 2 hours	27.6%	16.7%

These are the question-by question responses for each of the two churches on the pretest and post-test questionnaires for The Parable of the Prodigal Son. The Episcopal church was the treatment group, while the Lutheran church was the control group. (Correct answers are shown in bold type.)

1. Jesus told the Parable of the Prodigal Son:

- ____ a. To his disciples ____ b. As a part of the Sermon on the Mount
 ____ c. **To the Pharisees and scribes.**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	75%	28.6%
	b.	10.7%	0%
	c.	14.3%	71.4%
Lutheran	a.	56.7%	10%
	b.	23.3%	0%
	c.	20%	90%

2. The Parable of the Prodigal Son is found in the Bible in the book of:

- ____ a. Mark ____ **b. Luke** ____ c. Acts

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	40.7%	6.9%
	b.	48.1%	86.2%
	c.	11.1%	6.9%
Lutheran	a.	50%	3.3%
	b.	26.7%	96.7%
	c.	23.3%	0%

3. The story is about a father and his:

_____ a. Four sons _____ **b. Two sons** _____ c. Three sons.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	7.4%	0%
	b.	85.2%	100%
	c.	7.4%	0%
Lutheran	a.	7.1%	0%
	b.	82.1%	96.7%
	c.	10.7%	3.3%

4. In the story, the prodigal son asked for:

_____ **a. His share of the inheritance early** _____ b. The deed to his father's farm _____ c. A coat of many colors.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	100%	100%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran	a.	100%	100%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	0%	0%

5. The son took what his father had given him and:

_____ **a. Wasted his resources in wild living** _____ b. Invested in property _____ c. Bought a home for himself and his new wife.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	100%	100%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran	a.	93.3%	100%
	b.	3.3%	0%
	c.	3.3%	0%

6. When a famine came, the prodigal son:

- ☐ a. Borrowed money to live on
☐ b. **Fed the pigs for a farmer in order to have something to eat**
☐ c. Went to live with his father-in-law

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	17.2%	0%
	b.	82.8%	100%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran	a.	17.2%	0%
	b.	72.4%	100%
	c.	10.3%	0%

7. The prodigal son decided to go home because:

- ☐ a. He got homesick
☐ b. He decided he should be at home helping his father
☐ c. **He realized that his father's servants had a better life than he did**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	3.6%	0%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	96.4%	100%
Lutheran	a.	0%	0%
	b.	23.3%	3.3%
	c.	76.7%	96.7%

8. When he arrived home, he planned to:

_____ a. **Ask to be one of his father's servants** _____ b. Demand his share of the profits while he had been gone _____ c. Apologize for not keeping in touch with his father

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	88.9%	100%
	b.	7.4%	0%
	c.	3.7%	0%
Lutheran	a.	73.3%	100%
	b.	16.7%	0%
	c.	10%	0%

9. When he returned, his father:

_____ a. Sent a servant to meet him with a cup of water _____ b. **Ran to meet him and kissed him** _____ c. Saw him coming and greeted him when he came to his house

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	7.4%	0%
	b.	85.2%	93.1%
	c.	7.4%	6.9%
Lutheran	a.	24.1%	3.3%
	b.	62.1%	90%
	c.	13.8%	6.7%

10. The prodigal son's attitude on seeing his father was one of:

_____ a. Pride _____ b. Arrogance _____ **c. Repentance**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	0%	0%
	b.	10.3%	0%
	c.	89.7%	100%
Lutheran	a.	6.7%	3.4%
	b.	13.3%	3.4%
	c.	80%	93.1%

11. The father responded by:

_____ **a. Planning a party in his honor** _____ b. Demanding that he
leave _____ c. Scolding and reprimanding him

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	93.1%	100%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	6.9%	0%
Lutheran	a.	86.7%	100%
	b.	6.7%	0%
	c.	6.7%	0%

12. While the prodigal son was gone, an older brother had:

- ____ a. Also left home ____ b. Stayed home but refused to work since his younger brother was not there to help ____ c. **Faithfully helped his father**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	0%	0%
	b.	10.3%	0%
	c.	89.7%	100%
Lutheran	a.	3.3%	0%
	b.	10%	3.4%
	c.	86.7%	96.6%

13. When the older brother learned that the prodigal had returned, he:

- ____ a. Refused to speak to his father ____ b. **Lashed out at his father with angry words** ____ c. Rushed to his brother with open arms

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	0%	0%
	b.	96.6%	100%
	c.	3.4%	0%
Lutheran	a.	6.7%	3.4%
	b.	80%	93.1%
	c.	13.3%	3.4%

14. In response to his first-born's reaction, the father:

- ☐ a. Agreed with what he had said ☐ b. Commended him for his logic
☐ **c. Encouraged him to rejoice because his brother had returned**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	3.6%	0%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	96.4%	100%
Lutheran	a.	3.3%	0%
	b.	3.3%	6.9%
	c.	93.3%	93.1%

15. The father said of the prodigal that he:

- ☐ **a. Was dead and is alive again** ☐ b. Had caused him great grief
☐ c. Did not deserve to be forgiven

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	93.1%	100%
	b.	6.9%	0%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran	a.	86.7%	100%
	b.	13.3%	0%
	c.	0%	0%

16. The main theme of this parable is:

_____ **a. Restoration** _____ b. Restitution _____ c. The consequences of sin

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	81.5%	86.2%
	b.	11.1%	10.3%
	c.	7.4%	3.4%
Lutheran	a.	92.9%	86.7%
	b.	3.6%	6.7%
	c.	3.6%	6.7%

17. The parable was told to illustrate the importance of:

_____ a. Righteous living _____ b. Faithfulness _____ **c. Forgiveness.**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	7.1%	3.4%
	b.	3.6%	0%
	c.	89.3%	96.6%

Lutheran	a.	0%	0%
	b.	0%	6.7%
	c.	100%	93.3%

18. The older brother was:

____ a. Generous ____ **b. Self-righteous** ____ c. Wasteful

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	7.1%	0%
	b.	92.9%	89.7%
	c.	0%	10.3%
Lutheran	a.	13.8%	0%
	b.	72.4%	86.7%
	c.	13.8%	13.3%

19. The father's attitude toward the prodigal demonstrated the principle of:

____ a. "Your sins will find you out." ____ **b. Unconditional love**
 ____ c. "An eye for an eye"

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	7.1%	3.4%
	b.	92.9%	96.6%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran	a.	0%	3.3%
	b.	100%	100%
	c.	0%	0%

20. The father's treatment of the two sons demonstrated that he:

- _____ a. Loved the prodigal more than his brother _____ b. Was unappreciative of the older son _____ c. **Loved each son in a way that was appropriate to each one**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	0%	0%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	100%	100%
Lutheran	a.	0%	0%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	100%	100%

21. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most and 1 being the least), how relevant do you feel this ancient story is to your life today as a person living in the 21st century?

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	6	7.4%	0%
	7	3.7%	6.9%
	8	18.5%	10.3%
	9	3.7%	3.4%
	10	66.7%	79.3%
Lutheran	2	3.3%	0%
	3	0%	3.4%
	5	3.3%	3.4%
	6	3.3%	3.4%
	7	6.6%	3.4%
	8	20%	13.8%
	9	10%	3.4%
	10	53.3%	69%

22. In what way is it relevant or irrelevant? _____

These are some of the comments made by Our Savior Lutheran participants to question 22:

- o His teaching about forgiveness and love should be applied to all aspects of our life.
- o I love everyone in my life, but I love them in different ways and for different reasons. I love them all unconditionally and would forgive them for any wrongs they may have done.
- o Unconditional love is something hard to find these days. This story shows us how easy it is to find ourselves in a situation where unconditional love is necessary.
- o It is relevant because it show how we can be like God and be forgiving and love unconditionally.
- o Unconditional love and unconditional forgiveness is what God gives us and asks us to give others.
- o To some degree we are all guilty of self-righteousness. God is not and forgives all who come to him. We should try and apply this to our own lives.
- o We have daily forgiveness opportunities in small and large ways throughout our lives.
- o It shows us not only how to accept or respond to our family members but our fellowman as well.
- o My sins are forgiven if I love the heavenly father and truly repent.
- o We are constantly going astray yet are welcomed back by grace.

These are some of the responses from Resurrection participants:

- o It helps me in my job especially being a teacher. To see each child as the Lord sees them. To love them regardless of actions.
- o Even though people make poor choices, if they repent they should be forgiven.

- o The concept of forgiveness is always relevant, especially in today's rudderless culture! In the prodigal, forgiveness coupled with forgiveness is penitence. It is hard to forgive someone who is arrogant or unrepentant, but you still have to.
- o To keep my eyes on my walk with God and not others.
- o I come from a large family where I was the next to oldest. I have seven children and had to learn to love and forgive each differently as different ones. Now, I'm using it on my grandchildren as they grow. It helps with understanding other people's lives when they talk about their family and grandchildren.
- o Humiliation of the father prefigures the humiliation of Jesus on the cross. Restoration is an ongoing process for relatives in the family of God.
- o We have to be careful not to look at everyday circumstances in our lives and the lives of those around us for God is always at work reconciling his people to himself in ways we don't always see. We just need to love them as best we know how.
- o We all have daily opportunities to forgive and be forgiven, to scold or to encourage, to reject or to receive. As always, Jesus shows us the way.
- o I need to realize God's unconditional love. Elder son: judgmental (ugh!) This time (after the play) I want to think about: the father and elder son: Is it o.k. that I killed a calf and have a party? What does that mean?
- o It shows that no matter how worldly and wayward our children may be, there is always hope that they will return to their father.
- o Self-righteousness, judgment, unforgiveness, loving father. I am in all three.
- o I am working on boundaries but want to integrate it with God's unconditional love, so I wonder if the Father set some boundaries or if the son went back to his old ways and personality type.

APPENDIX I

Questionnaire to Pre-Test Participants' Knowledge of "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight" Scripture

Please answer all questions. If you do not know the answer to a question, place a check mark by the answer that you think is possibly the correct one. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. Please indicate the following information by placing a check mark on the correct line:

Sex: ☐ male
☐ female

Occupation _____

Membership in a church
☐ 1 year or less
☐ 2 - 5 years
☐ 6 - 10 years
☐ 11 - 20 years
☐ more than 20 years

Age: ☐ 14 - 19
☐ 20 - 34
☐ 35 - 49
☐ 50 - 65
☐ over 65

On a weekly basis, I average spending the following amount of time on individual and/or group Bible study and/or reading.

☐ none
☐ less than one hour
☐ one to two hours
☐ more than two hours

1. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight is found in the Bible in the Book of:
 - ☐ a. Luke
 - ☐ b. Acts
 - ☐ c. Matthew
2. The prayer Jesus said before he told the parable was:
 - ☐ a. Part of his teaching in the synagogue.
 - ☐ b. Given when he heard the Pharisees and Saducees praying amiss.
 - ☐ c. In response to a request from one of his disciples.
3. In the story, the neighbor went to his friend's house at midnight because:
 - ☐ a. Thieves had broken into his house.
 - ☐ b. A guest had come to his house, and the neighbor needed to give him something to eat.

- _____ c. His wife had become seriously ill, and he did not know what to do.
4. The neighbor asked his friend to give him:
- _____ a. Money
_____ b. Medicine
_____ c. Bread
5. When the neighbor arrived, his friend was:
- _____ a. Asleep.
_____ b. Going over his accounts.
_____ c. Arguing with his wife.
6. The friend's reaction to the neighbor's arrival at midnight was to:
- _____ a. Invite him to come in.
_____ b. Offer his assistance.
_____ c. Tell his neighbor not to bother him
7. After the friend's response, the neighbor:
- _____ a. Continued to make demands.
_____ b. Got mad at his friend.
_____ c. Was delighted with his friend's response.
8. At the end of the story, the friend:
- _____ a. Chased the neighbor off of his premises.
_____ b. Gave him what he wanted.
_____ c. Lectured him about his lack of thoughtfulness.
9. In the story, the friend:
- _____ a. Put his neighbor's needs before his own comfort.
_____ b. Responded with anger.
_____ c. Attempted to get even.
10. The Parable of the Midnight Visitor was told by Jesus to illustrate the importance of:
- _____ a. Being a good neighbor.
_____ b. The value of having good friends.
_____ c. Being persistent.
11. In the story, God's response to prayer is represented by:
- _____ a. The neighbor who asks.
_____ b. The friend who is awakened at midnight.
_____ c. Both the neighbor and the friend.

12. At the end of the parable, Jesus emphasized the importance of these three approaches:
- ☐ a. Ask, search, knock.
 - ☐ b. Plant, tend, reap.
 - ☐ c. Pray, fast, worship.
13. After the story, Jesus asked his listeners if their children should ask them for a fish, would they, instead, give them:
- ☐ a. A snake.
 - ☐ b. A stone.
 - ☐ c. A rat.
14. Jesus then asked them if their children should ask for an egg, if they, instead, would give them:
- ☐ a. A dog.
 - ☐ b. A scorpion.
 - ☐ c. A loaf of bread.
15. These two examples reflect God's response to us because of:
- ☐ a. Our demanding things from him.
 - ☐ b. Our use of the right words.
 - ☐ c. God's nature as a Father his children.
16. Jesus then compared man's desire to give good gifts to their children to God's desire to give to those who ask him for the greater gift of:
- ☐ a. Prophecy.
 - ☐ b. The Holy Spirit.
 - ☐ c. Unconditional love.
17. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most and 1 being the least), how relevant do you feel this ancient story is to your life today as a person living in the 21st century?

In what ways is it relevant or irrelevant?

**Questions Added to the Pretest Questionnaire in the Post-Test
Questionnaire to Test Participants' Knowledge of "The Parable of
the Friend at Midnight" Scripture**

Please think back to the presentation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son as acted out in March and compare the method of presentation that Sunday with today's presentation of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight as read by a layreader in answering the following questions.

18. I was more interested in the Scripture when it was:

_____ a. Read only

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

19. I remember the details of the story better through having the Scripture:

_____ a. Read only.

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

20. I understood the Scriptural message better when the Scripture was:

_____ a. Read only.

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

21. I saw the relevance of the passage to my life more clearly through having the Scripture:

_____ a. Read only.

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

Please make any additional comments you might wish to add regarding the use of dramatized Scripture in comparison with having Scripture read in a church service. _____

APPENDIX J

Pretest and Post-Test Results of the Questionnaire for The Parable of the Friend at Midnight Scripture

Demographic Information

<u>Category</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Episcopal</u>	<u>Lutheran</u>
Total participants:		22	20
Gender:	Male	40.9%	45%
	Female	59.1%	55%
Age:	14-19 years	4.5%	26.3%
	20-34 years	4.5%	5.3%
	35-49 years	27.3%	26.3%
	50-65 years	40.9%	26.3%
	Over 65	22.7%	15.8%
Length of church membership	1 year or less	0%	30%
	2-5 years	0%	5%
	6-10 years	25%	35%
	11-20 years	35%	0%
	Over 20 years	40%	30%
Bible study per week	None	4.5%	5%
	1 hour	27.3%	40%
	1-2 hours	50%	45%
	Over 2 hours	18.2%	10%

Responses to Questions

These are the question-by-question responses for each of the two churches on the pretest and post-test questionnaires. The Episcopal church was the control group with the Scripture read, while the Lutheran church was the treatment group with the Scripture dramatized. (Correct answers are shown in bold type.)

1. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight is found in the Bible in the Book of:

_____ a. **Luke** _____ b. Acts _____ c. Matthew

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	61.9%	90.5%
	b.	14.3%	9.5%
	c.	23.8%	0%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	45%	90%
	b.	25%	0%
	c.	30%	10%

2. The prayer Jesus said before he told the parable was:

- _____ a. Part of his teaching in the synagogue.
 _____ b. Given when he heard the Pharisees and Saducees praying amiss.
 _____ c. **In response to a request from one of his disciples.**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	9.5%	9.5%
	b.	42.9%	4.8%
	c.	47.6%	85.7%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	25%	0%
	b.	30%	5%
	c.	45%	95%

3. In the story, the neighbor went to his friend's house at midnight because:

- _____ a. Thieves had broken into his house.
 _____ b. **A guest had come to his house, and the neighbor needed to give him something to eat.**
 _____ c. His wife had become seriously ill, and he did not know what to do.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	4.5%	4.5%
	b.	86.4%	95.5%
	c.	9.1%	0

Lutheran	a.	15%	0%
(dramatized)	b.	75%	100%
	c.	10%	0%

4. The neighbor asked his friend to give him:

- ☐ a. Money
☐ b. Medicine
☐ c. **Bread**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	4.5%	4.5%
(read)	b.	0%	0%
	c.	95.5%	95.5%
Lutheran	a.	15%	0%
(dramatized)	b.	5%	0%
	c.	80%	100%

5. When the neighbor arrived, his friend was:

- ☐ a. **Asleep.**
☐ b. Going over his accounts.
☐ c. Arguing with his wife.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal	a.	90.9%	95.5%
(read)	b.	9.1%	4.5%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran	a.	70%	100%
(dramatized)	b.	20%	0%
	c.	10%	0%

6. The friend's reaction to the neighbor's arrival at midnight was to:

- ☐ a. Invite him to come in.
☐ b. Offer his assistance.
☐ c. **Tell his neighbor not to bother him**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	4.5%	4.5%
	b.	27.3%	4.5%
	c.	68.2%	90.9%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	10%	0%
	b.	40%	0%
	c.	50%	100%

7. After the friend's response, the neighbor:

- ☐ a. **Continued to make demands.**
☐ b. Got mad at his friend.
☐ c. Was delighted with his friend's response.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	63.6%	86.4%
	b.	0%	4.5%
	c.	36.4%	9.1%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	25%	100%
	b.	20%	0%
	c.	55%	0%

8. At the end of the story, the friend:

- ☐ a. Chased the neighbor off of his premises.
☐ b. **Gave him what he wanted.**
☐ c. Lectured him about his lack of thoughtfulness.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	0%	0%
	b.	95.5%	90.9%
	c.	4.5%	9.1%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	15%	0%
	b.	85%	100%
	c.	0%	0%

9. In the story, the friend:

- _____ a. Put his neighbor's needs before his own comfort.
 _____ **b. Responded with anger.**
 _____ c. Attempted to get even.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	72.7%	59.1%
	b.	27.3%	40.9%
	c.	0%	0
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	75%	75%
	b.	20%	25%
	c.	5%	0%

10. The Parable of the Midnight Visitor was told by Jesus to illustrate the importance of: -

- _____ a. Being a good neighbor.
 _____ b. The value of having good friends.
 _____ **c. Being persistent.**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	36.4%	31.8%
	b.	4.5%	0%
	c.	59.1%	68.2
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	75%	20%
	b.	10%	0%
	c.	15%	80%

11. In the story, God's response to prayer is represented by:

- _____ a. The neighbor who asks.
 _____ **b. The friend who is awakened at midnight.**
 _____ c. Both the neighbor and the friend.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	13.6%	18.2%
	b.	45.5%	27.3%
	c.	40.9%	54.5%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	20%	30%
	b.	35%	35%
	c.	45%	35%

12. At the end of the parable, Jesus emphasized the importance of these three approaches:

- ☐ a. **Ask, search, knock.**
☐ b. Plant, tend, reap.
☐ c. Pray, fast, worship.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	86.4%	100%
	b.	0%	0%
	c.	13.6%	0%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	70%	95%
	b.	20%	5%
	c.	10%	0%

13. After the story, Jesus asked his listeners if their children should ask them for a fish, would they, instead, give them:

- ☐ a. **A snake.**
☐ c. A rat.
☐ b. A stone.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	57.1%	81.8%
	b.	42.9%	18.2%
	c.	0%	0%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	25%	100%
	b.	70%	0%
	c.	5%	0%

14. Jesus then asked them if their children should ask for an egg, if they, instead, would give them:

_____ a. A dog.
 _____ **b. A scorpion.**
 _____ c. A loaf of bread.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	5%	0%
	b.	80%	95.5%
	c.	15%	4.5%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	10%	0%
	b.	45%	100%
	c.	45%	0%

15. These two examples reflect God's response to us because of:

_____ a. Our demanding things from him.
 _____ b. Our use of the right words.
 _____ **c. God's nature as a Father who wants to give good things to his children.**

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	4.8%	4.5%
	b.	4.8%	4.5%
	c.	90.5%	90.9%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	25%	31.6%
	b.	5%	0%
	c.	70%	68.4%

16. Jesus then compared man's desire to give good gifts to their children to God's desire to give to those who ask him for the greater gift of:

_____ a. Prophecy.
 _____ **b. The Holy Spirit.**
 _____ c. Unconditional love.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	a.	4.8%	0%
	b.	52.4%	68.2%
	c.	42.9%	31.8%
Lutheran (dramatized)	a.	0%	5.3%
	b.	15%	21.1%
	c.	85%	73.7%

17. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most and 1 being the least), how relevant do you feel this ancient story is to your life today as a person living in the 21st century? _____

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Pretest</u>	<u>Post-test</u>
Episcopal (read)	5	9.5%	0%
	6	0%	5%
	8	9.5%	5%
	9	4.8%	15%
	10	76.2%	75%
Lutheran (dramatized)	3	5.3%	11.1%
	4	0%	5.6%
	5	21.1%	5.6%
	7	15.8%	5.6%
	8	10.5%	11.1%
	9	10.5%	5.6%
	10	36.8%	55.6%

18. In what ways is it relevant or irrelevant?

These were some of the responses from participants at the Episcopal church.

- o "It teaches us about the nature of people and our response and how we should respond to our neighbors."
- o "God's desire to give to his children through our persistent prayer."
- o "Relevant. I'm learning and still learning how much he loves me and his plans are good for me."

- o "Persistence in prayer for our #1 son."
- o "We still have needs that need to be presented to the Father, and he still desires to fulfill our needs and more."
- o "Keep asking. Keep seeking. God loves us and wants to give us what we desire."
- o "Seek the Father's will through the Holy Spirit for direction for your life as this will be beneficial as well as peaceful."
- o "Understanding God, importance of the Holy Spirit, importance of prayer."
- o "We need to pray and keep on praying, being open to how the Lord will answer that prayer."
- o "I was in a real bad place this week, and I asked God to give me a word. Immediately I was impressed with 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.' God wants us to ask as he is our loving Father."

These responses were made by some of those participating at the Lutheran church.

- o "Some of us are too scared to ask for what we want, and we don't persist."
- o "Now we would just go to 7-11."
- o "Reminds me to be persistent in everything and shows God's love."
- o "It is relevant to know that God always wants to give you good things."
- o "It is relevant because if we do not give up asking and seeking in prayer, God will grant our dreams and meet our needs."
- o "Being meek or timid will not help you get what you need. You must be persistent and aggressive."
- o "God wants us to pray with fervor and constancy as well as with faith."
- o "We should be persistent in our faith, prayers, etc. Don't give up on yourself,

others, God.”

- o “Prayer is the way to God’s giving. He always answers but not always the way we expect.”

On the post-test, participants were asked to answer four additional questions expressing their preference and degree of preference in four different categories. The directions for the two churches and the results of these four questions follow.

Please think back to the presentation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son in March and compare the method of presentation that Sunday with today’s presentation of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight in answering the following questions.

19. I was more interested in the Scripture when it was:

_____ a. Read only

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Level of Interest</u>		
Episcopal	a. Read	19%	a. 0%	b. 66.6%	c. 33.3%
	b. Play	81%	a. 25%	b. 50%	c. 25%
Lutheran	a. Read	12.5%	a. 100%	b. 0%	c. 0%
	b. Play	87.5%	a. 42.9%	b. 35.7%	c. 21.4%

20. I remember the details of the story better through having the Scripture:

_____ a. Read only.

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Level of remembrance</u>		
Episcopal	a. Read	23.8%	a. 0%	b. 25%	c. 75%
	b. Play	76.2%	a. 33.3%	b. 53.3%	c. 13.3%

Lutheran	a. Read	18.8%	a. 100%	b. 0%	c. 0%
	b. Play	81.3%	a. 38.5%	b. 38.5%	c. 23%

21. I understood the Scriptural message better when the Scripture was:

_____ a. Read only.

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Level of understanding</u>		
Episcopal	a. Read	23.8%	a. 25%	b. 25%	c. 50%
	b. Play	76.2%	a. 20%	b. 40%	c. 40%
Lutheran	a. Read	26.7%	a. 100%	b. 0%	c. 0%
	b. Play	73.3%	a. 36.4%	b. 54.5%	c. 9.1%

22. I saw the relevance of the passage to my life more clearly through having the Scripture:

_____ a. Read only.

_____ b. Presented in the form of a play

to the following degree:

_____ a. A lot more _____ b. More _____ c. A little more _____ d. No significant difference.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Level of relevance</u>		
Episcopal	a. Read	23.8%	a. 25%	b. 50%	c. 25%
	b. Play	76.2%	a. 20%	b. 40%	c. 40%
Lutheran	a. Read	26.7%	a. 100%	b. 0%	c. 0%
	b. Play	73.3%	a. 54.5%	b. 18.2%	c. 27.3%

APPENDIX K

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLERGY REGARDING THE USE OF DRAMATIZED Scripture

1. I believe the level of interest, involvement, and attention of the congregation in seeing Scripture acted out in comparison with its being read was:

☐ less ☐ no difference ☐ a little greater ☐ greater ☐ much greater

2. I think the overt physical and emotional reaction of the congregation on seeing the Scripture acted out in comparison with its being read was:

☐ less ☐ no difference ☐ a little greater ☐ greater ☐ much greater

3. Please check the items you feel are true about using dramatized Scripture in a church service:

<input type="checkbox"/> Provides variety	<input type="checkbox"/> Is attention getting
<input type="checkbox"/> Is boring	<input type="checkbox"/> Keeps the interest of the congregation
<input type="checkbox"/> Helps people remember the story	<input type="checkbox"/> Is sacrilegious
<input type="checkbox"/> Is distracting	<input type="checkbox"/> Involves the congregation in the story
<input type="checkbox"/> Is inappropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Helps make the story more meaningful

4. The thing(s) I like most about using dramatized Scripture in a church service is (are):

5. The thing(s) I like least about using dramatized Scripture in a church service is (are):

6. Please describe the impact that seeing dramatized Scripture has had on you personally.

RESULTS OF RESPONSES FROM CLERGY INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

Three clergy were involved in the study conducted at The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection and Our Savior Lutheran Church. These included a priest and a deacon at the Episcopal church and the pastor at the Lutheran church.

The study was conducted in both churches on Sunday March 25, 2001, with the congregation at the Lutheran church just hearing the Scriptural passage in Luke 15:11-32, which contains the parable of the prodigal son, read as it traditionally is in a liturgical service. At the Episcopal church, the passage, using the exact same wording as the Biblical passage, was dramatized with actors portraying the various characters. Then, on July 29, 2001, the Episcopal congregation heard the Scriptural passage of Luke 11:1-13, which contains the parable of the friend at midnight, read by a layreader. Due to a difference in the lectionaries used by the Episcopal and Lutheran churches, this passage was not slated for use in the Lutheran church until August 12, 2001. On that Sunday, the passage was interpreted in dramatized form with actors portraying the various characters in the passage, but using the actual wording in the Bible at the Lutheran church.

The three clergymen at the two churches, who were present for both interpretations, completed simple questionnaires about their observations of and experience with the project.

RESPONSES OF GROUP

Two questions asked respondents to select the responses that matched their feelings and impressions. These were the results of the three participating clergymen.

1. Responses to the question: "I believe the level of interest, involvement, and attention of the congregation in seeing Scripture acted out in comparison with its being read was:" were: two-thirds, much greater; one-third, a little greater.
2. Responses to the question: "I think the overt physical and emotional reaction of the congregation on seeing the Scripture acted out in comparison with its being read was:" were: 100%, greater.

The third question asked respondents to check items they felt were true about using dramatized Scripture in a church service. These were the totals for each response.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 2 Provides variety | 1 Is attention getting |
| 0 Is boring | 2 Keeps the interest of the congregation |
| 0 Is sacrilegious | 3 Helps people remember the story |

0 Is distracting
0 Is inappropriate

3 Involves the congregation in the story
2 Helps make the story more meaningful

WHAT CLERGY LIKED MOST

The fourth question asked participants to write what they liked most about using drama within a church service. These were their responses.

"Jesus was not a book. 'The Word became flesh.' in Jesus and the dramatized Gospel is more lifelike and natural . . . closer to the way Jesus opened up the Kingdom of God."

"It appeals direct to the heart and enables to make the necessary changes and amendments."

"In the story chosen for presentation, the Prodigal Son, the change in the son from bravado to remorse was most compelling."

WHAT CLERGY LIKED LEAST

The fifth question provided an opportunity for respondents to state what they liked least about using drama in a church service.

Only one cited anything. He wrote: "The natural break in the rhythm of the service required to 'set the stage' was unfortunate, but is something that can be worked out."

PERSONAL IMPACT OF SEEING Scripture DRAMATIZED

Question 6 asked participants to describe the impact that seeing dramatized Scripture had on them personally.

One referred back to his remarks in question 4 about the prodigal son. These were the responses of the other two:

"I identify with the Gospel and internalize its message. His story more easily becomes my story."

"Makes the context and the story more natural and effective and meaningful. It impacted me to use this method while giving the sermon or teaching and keep up the interest of the audience."

APPENDIX L

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT PLAYING A ROLE IN "THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON"

On the next four questions, please check the answer that most closely reflects your reaction. You do not need to sign your name.

1. The impact on my spiritual growth of being in the play was:

_____ slight _____ fair _____ good _____ very good _____ excellent

2. The impact on my self-confidence, self-concept and self-understanding has been:

_____ slight _____ fair _____ good _____ very good _____ excellent

3. My understanding of the story and message of this parable has grown:

_____ not at all _____ very little _____ somewhat _____ a good deal _____ a lot

4. My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the parable have increased:

_____ not at all _____ very little _____ somewhat _____ a good deal _____ a lot

5. The thing(s) I liked most about being in the play was (were):

6. The thing(s) I liked least about being in the play was (were):

7. Please describe the impact being in this play has had on both your spiritual and personal development. (Use other side if more space is needed.)

My age is _____ teenager _____ 21 35 _____ 36 - 50 _____ over 50

I am a _____ male _____ female

RESULTS OF RESPONSES FROM THOSE WHO PLAYED ROLES IN "THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON"

Ten members of The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection played roles in the dramatic interpretation of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" which was presented in the 7:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. church services on Sunday, March 25, 2001. The roles were: the narrator, father, older son, prodigal son, girl friend, servant, farmer, and the three pigs who also doubled as guests at the party.

All ten--six males and four females--completed a simple questionnaire about their personal experience as a member of the cast. Two of these were teenagers; two were in the 21 to 35 year range; three were 36 to 50 years old; and three were over 50.

RESPONSES OF WHOLE GROUP

Four questions asked respondents to select the responses that matched their feelings and impressions. These were the results for all of those who returned questionnaires.

1. Responses to the question: "The impact on my spiritual growth of being in the play was:" were: 10% slight, 10% fair, 20% good, 40% very good, and 10 % excellent.
2. Responses to the question: "The impact on my self-confidence, self-concept and self-understanding has been:" were: 10% slight, 40% good, 40% very good, and 10% excellent.
3. Responses to the question: "My understanding of the story and message of this parable has grown:" were: 20% somewhat, 40% a good deal, and 40% a lot.
4. Responses to the question: "My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the parable have increased:" were: 10% very little, 30% somewhat, 20% a good deal, and 40% a lot.

RESPONSES BY AGE GROUPS

The overall most positive responses to question 1 were from those in the 21 through 35 age group, followed by those ages 36 to 50. Those 21 to 35 also responded most positively to question 2 with those 36-50 again ranking second in positive responses. For question 3, those 21 to 35 gave the highest rankings once more with teenagers giving the second highest responses. Those in the 36 to 50 age range gave the most positive rankings to question 4, followed by the teenagers.

RESPONSES BY SEX

For all four of the questions the four female participants gave slightly higher average responses than did the six male actors.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LIKED MOST

The fifth question asked participants to write what they liked most about being in the play. These were their responses.

- o People and environment
- o Working with the cast
- o Watching people and their reaction to the story
- o All plays
- o I am spreading the Word of God.
- o Getting to know other cast members better
- o Being able to use "gifts" and offer ministry through something I dearly love is a treat.
- o Doing something I enjoy with like-minded Christian brothers and sisters
- o Not having to memorize lines
- o Camaraderie
- o Spiritual insights
- o Getting to make the congregation laugh
- o Bring the Word "alive" for people to see all the emotions, the nuances that come when real people interact.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LIKED LEAST

- o Having to be the bad guy
- o It's hard work.
- o Crawling around on the floor
- o Missing the first rehearsal
- o Not being able to sit and watch the complete performance myself
- o That one of the pigs got sick

THE IMPACT BEING IN THE PLAY HAD ON ACTORS' SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- o I can't really explain it, but it is great.
- o I have a much better understanding of the difference between compliance and true obedience.
- o It helped me to better understand the message of the prodigal son.
- o The Lord used my character portrayal in this play to further confirm a prophetic work that he is doing in my life. So the timing and Scripture presented in the play were important in reassuring me of God's presence and activity in my personal walk with him.
- o The presentations bring Scripture to life. Seeing the parables brought to life adds another, more personal dimension to the Word.
- o The thing that impacted me most was a new insight on how much the father loves both sons. I've always thought about God's love for the Prodigal, but when we acted out the Scriptures, I realized how much he loved the elder brother as well. It was especially evident when he left the celebration and went out to plead with him to come in, and when he told him that everything he had was his.
- o Very good!
- o By playing a character, I got to see into and tap into all the emotions that we all feel. It allowed me to see deeper into how much God loves us and is overjoyed when we return!

APPENDIX M

QUESTIONNAIRE ABOUT PLAYING A ROLE IN "THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT"

On the next four questions, please check the answer that most closely reflects your reaction. You do not need to sign your name.

1. The impact on my spiritual growth of being in the play was:

_____ slight _____ fair _____ good _____ very good _____ excellent

2. The impact on my self-confidence, self-concept and self-understanding has been:

_____ slight _____ fair _____ good _____ very good _____ excellent

3. My understanding of the story and message of this parable has grown:

_____ not at all _____ very little _____ somewhat _____ a good deal _____ a lot

4. My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the parable have increased:

_____ not at all _____ very little _____ somewhat _____ a good deal _____ a lot

5. The thing(s) I liked most about being in the play was (were):

6. The thing(s) I liked least about being in the play was (were):

7. Please describe the impact being in this play has had on both your spiritual and personal development. (Use other side if more space is needed.)

My age is: _____ 21-35 _____ 36-50 _____ over 50

I am a _____ male _____ female

RESULTS OF RESPONSES FROM THOSE WHO PLAYED ROLES IN "THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT"

Seven members of Our Savior Lutheran Church played roles in the dramatic interpretation of "The Parable of the Friend at Midnight" which was presented in the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. church services on Sunday, August 12, 2001. The roles were: the narrator, Jesus, the disciple, the neighbor, the friend, and the two children.

The five adults--one female and four males--completed a simple questionnaire about their personal experience as a member of the cast. The two 5-year-old boys were too young to understand the meaning of the questions and, therefore, did not participate. Of the five adults, three were between 36 and 50 years old, while the other two were over fifty.

RESPONSES OF WHOLE GROUP

Four questions asked respondents to select the responses that matched their feelings and impressions. These were the results for all of those who returned questionnaires.

1. Responses to the question: "The impact on my spiritual growth of being in the play was:" were: 80%, good; 20% excellent.
2. Responses to the question: "The impact on my self-confidence, self-concept and self-understanding has been:" were: 40%, good; 60%, excellent.
3. Responses to the question: "My understanding of the story and message of this parable has grown:" were: 20%, somewhat, 60%, a good deal; 20%, a lot.
4. Responses to the question: "My understanding of and empathy with the characters in the parable have increased:" were: 100%, a good deal.

RESPONSES BY AGE GROUPS

Those in the 36 to 50 age group responded slightly more positively to questions 1 and 2. However, the reverse was true for question 3. On question 4, all participants made the same response.

RESPONSES BY SEX

The average response for the four males was slightly higher on question 1. On question 2, 75% of the males selected "very good" with 25% indicating "good," while the female said "good." For question 3, responses for the sexes averaged out the same, and, of course on question 4, they were identical.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LIKED MOST

The fifth question asked participants to write what they liked most about being in the play. These were their responses.

- o The children participating
- o It was short.
- o The chance to bring God to people
- o Doing the play with the other people, interaction
- o Confidence

WHAT PARTICIPANTS LIKED LEAST

Only one participant wrote anything for the thing he liked least. His response was: "fear of being 'up front.'"

THE IMPACT BEING IN THE PLAY HAD ON ACTORS' SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- o Should help my poor prayer life
- o Awareness of strength in praying (perseverance)
- o Caused me to reflect more on the power of prayer
- o It always fills my heart with joy to praise God and bring people to him with my actions.
- o I felt very uplifted having participated in the skit.

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