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MONROE ALMON DODD AND HIS PREEACHING

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An Abstract
of a Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Theology
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas

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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Theology

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Department of Preaching

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by
Austin B. Tucker

July 1971

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

The purpose of this study of Monroe Elmon Dodd and his preaching is to bring to light his adjustment to the problem of conflict of roles as it is found in a modern pastor who is committed to the priority of preaching. Dodd's ministry spanned the first half of this century witnessing the transition from the pulpit-centered pastorate to the more complex role of today's minister. Dodd preached some eighteen thousand sermons—an average of nearly one daily for fifty years. How could one man be so involved in denominational activities, in revivals and conferences, in administering a growing congregation, in shepherding a large flock, and still be able to present well-prepared sermons? And implicit in that question is the more basic inquiry: To what extent, in fact, did he master the art of preaching to which he ideally assigned top priority?

Research began with a gleaning of data by and about Dodd in Baptist periodicals. The Baptist Chronicle and its successor the Baptist Message contained something of Dodd in virtually every issue from 1912 to 1952. Other periodicals, convention annuals, and associational minutes helped to round out the picture of his public activities before
coming to Louisiana. A valuable series of Dodd's self-revelation was a column of question-and-answer format for Church Administration magazine from April, 1928, until January, 1931.

Collections of Dodd's files and other materials were made available by family members. The 27 file boxes of Dodd's correspondence and other papers included many unpublished sermon manuscripts and a file of more than 550 sermons in pulpit note form. An unpublished collection of vignettes by Rupert Peyton, an admiring member of Dodd's Shreveport congregation, was enhanced by corrections in Dodd's hand during the last months of his life. In addition to the unpublished sermons, his 66 messages in print were analyzed. Scores of interviews and letters helped provide a background of understanding, but none of them is cited as authority in the work.

The introductory chapter establishes the fact that Dodd was committed to the priority of preaching throughout his ministry. It also points out the discernible early influences which Dodd himself acknowledged as pointing him in that direction. His ideal was to make preaching central in his ministry. Chapter two indicates that his energy was scattered among many ministerial roles. He kept busy in his church with pastoral visiting and administrative work. Beyond his church, he served his denomination as a promoter
and organizer. He also founded a junior college for girls and served as its president. He served a brief term as a missionary to Mexico and later traveled extensively in the interest of missions.

Chapter three treats his use of the mass media, suggesting that his involvement as a pioneer radio preacher and as a prolific writer was at the same time an addition to his problem and an attempt at a solution. What he sacrificed in intensity of preparation in his sermons he sought to make up in wide circulation of those which were prepared.

Chapter four examines Dodd's adjustment to the pressure on his time for sermon preparation. His most noteworthy adjustment to the problem was consistent discipline to long-range planning of sermons in series.

Chapters five and six evaluate Dodd's pulpit work by the criteria of his own stated goals. A brief treatment of his use of specific objectives in preaching is followed by an examination of his sermons according to the five general objectives which he recognized for preaching: to instruct, to inspire, to comfort, to rebuke, and to evangelize.

Doctrinal sermons magnified Baptist distinctives and fundamental Christology. Inspirational sermons successfully gave uplifting devotional experience to worshippers and sometimes moved them to adopt programs or finance projects. Supportive sermons assumed a larger place in his later
ministry—especially during war years. Dodd believed a funeral sermon should serve three purposes. It should eulogize the dead, draw lessons from his life for those living, and offer words of comfort to the mourners. His supreme goal in preaching was to evangelize. He enjoyed great success as a visiting evangelist and was called on year after year to preach the revival meetings and evangelistic campaigns in his Shreveport pastorate.

Though one of his five sermon objectives was to rebuke, Dodd presented a checkered pattern of avoiding some issues and involving himself in others. He shunned the social gospel and disdained life-situation preaching, but he did take a strong stand against the liquor industry. Similar inconsistency is noted in his treatment of politics, economics, race relations, and pacifism.

Chapter seven characterizes Dodd’s theology as fundamentalist, Baptist, and mystic. The key to his hermeneutical stance is his consistent christological principle. He believed ultimate authority to be in Christ. He considered his task as an interpreter to be to interpret Christ—not simply Documents. While holding a strict reverence for the Bible, he believed the theme of the whole of it to gather around Christ. When he interpreted Scripture, he sometimes used and sometimes abused the generally accepted principles of orthodox hermeneutics.
Chapter eight looks at the distinctive qualities of oratorical style present in Dodd's sermons. He was trained in oratory and gave great attention to oratorical devices in preaching.

Chapter nine examines one of his most appealing qualities of sermon style—his craftsmanship with sermon illustrations. He drew them from a wide range of sources and used them well to make his message clear and attractive.

The conclusion summarizes the findings and observes that Dodd never completely solved the modern pastor's problem of priorities. But three closely related techniques helped him cope with his fragmentation. The most significant aid to his pulpit work was a discipline to his planned program of preaching. He projected his sermon texts and topics for two to six months in advance and prepared publicity which also served to force him to bring to birth the promised message on schedule. A second help was his regular use of sermons in series. This made variety possible while combining labor in preparation. He frequently treated a book of the Bible in consecutive expository sermons. This was his regular technique for the revival meetings which he preached in his own pastorate. A third help was his conviction that Christ ought to be exalted supremely in preaching. His most characteristic sermon was one in a biographical series about the Christ. A fourth factor should be mentioned. Dodd spent
more than one-fourth of his Sundays away from his regular pul-
pit. This was not patently a part of his method but provided
some relief from preparing for the same congregation all the
time. While some of those were outside engagements for spe-
cial addresses requiring study and composition, most of them
were occasions for using favorite sermons already well pre-
pared. Revivals away from home averaged six Sundays annually,
and vacation time took him away two months each summer. The
problem of pastoral fragmentation finds no final solution in
Dodd. Those who are committed to the priority of preaching,
however, can ill afford to ignore the experience of such a
ministry as his.

Appendix A provides a brief chronology of Dodd's life
and preaching. Appendix B gives a representative sermon.
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To Beverly,
David, and Christie
PREFACE

Purpose

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the protestant ministry in America was largely pulpit centered. The minister was a pastor whose chief role was preaching. But in the 1920's and 30's, church organizations multiplied. The effect on the clergyman was fragmentations and dilution of his ministry. Today, a man who labors under a sense of divine call to preach especially feels the tension created by the administrative and promotional responsibilities of the pastorate.

Monroe Elson Dodd did not usher in the era, but perhaps in no man can it be more clearly seen. He was the epitome of the new breed of clergy. How could one man be so involved in denominational activities, in revival and conference speaking, in administering a large and growing congregation, in all that being a shepherd to his flock required and still have something to say week after week when he stood in the pulpit? That is the problem which motivated the study of W. B. Dodd and his preaching. The purpose of this dissertation, therefore, is to evaluate all data relevant to that question.
Limitations

A definitive analysis of Dodd's sermons might be instructive, but it is not within the scope of this dissertation. This work will be concerned with the preacher first and then with his sermons. Dodd's contribution to the shape of his denomination was also significant, but that fact has been established by Clyde Wesley Averett, "Monroe Elmon Dodd: His Life and Work among Southern Baptists" (unpublished Th.D. dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1967).

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks are given to H. C. Brown, Jr., and Jesse J. Northcutt for serving as faculty advisors. Other faculty members who graciously answered questions about form and style were Robert A. Baker and William L. Hendricks.

The labor of typing during research and composition is a monument to the amazing patience of my beloved companion for life, Beverly. The final typing is the work of Mrs. R. M. Pyle, aided by Mrs. M. E. Bridgford who read the copy and offered many helpful suggestions. None of these may be charged with any shortcoming in the final product.

Acknowledgment is given gratefully to the descendants of M. E. Dodd for their gracious assistance in making available the extensive collection of personal files of the subject for research.
An explanation of the footnote form for the Dodd files will be helpful. There are three family collections of the Dodd material. The bulk of the data is presently contained in twenty-seven file boxes in the possession of M. E. Dodd's daughter, Mrs. Clarence Webb, 3904 Creswell Road, Shreveport, Louisiana. That material will be designated herein as the Webb Collection. The boxes are variously labeled with dates, alphabetical guides, and descriptive titles. The box label will follow the title of the collection, separated by a comma. Following this and enclosed in parentheses will be the label of the specific folder in that file. When the document is not in a folder as is the case with many of Dodd's sermons and addresses, that fact will be indicated. Where the specific author and title of a document is required, it will be given before the collection title. Letters will be identified by the name of the correspondent and the date. The family has donated this valuable collection to Fleming Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, but at this writing it has not yet been moved to Fort Worth.

Joyner Collection will indicate material belonging to M. E. Dodd's granddaughter, Mrs. Hubert L. Joyner, 601 Ockley Drive, Shreveport. The collection of M. E. Dodd, Jr., 4327 Gilbert Drive in Shreveport, will be designated "M. E. Dodd, Jr., Collection." The most important single document
in this last collection is a typed manuscript by Rupert Peyton, "From Ox Cart to World Citizen: A Newspaper Man Looks at a Preacher." The value of this miscellaneous collection of stories about Dodd's ministry is enhanced by corrections in the hand of Dodd himself a few months prior to his death. An interview with Peyton on July 11, 1968, at Pineville, Louisiana, revealed the autobiographical influence of the narrative. In a series of sessions in the pastor's office sometime after Dodd's 1949 heart attack, Dodd related the incidents and provided data which Peyton then typed and returned to Dodd.


Quotations from published material are reproduced as they appear in the sources except for obvious typographical errors which are corrected silently. The reader should keep in mind that most of Dodd's sermons were prepared for oral delivery, and, in fact, most of those published were transcriptions of sermons as delivered. Incomplete sentences are common and will not be littered with *sic*s. Also, when the
sense of a paragraph is not obscured by inexact punctua-
tion—misplaced hyphens, missing commas, and the use of
semicolons for commas commonly—the quotations will be re-
produced exactly. *sic* will be used where there is likeli-
hood of doubt about the form of the original.

In some places, a *sic* would cause more problems
than it would solve. For example, some who might know that
the Egyptian "Mamulukes" were really Mamelukes and that
"Mr. Farrady" was actually chemist Michael Faraday might
not know that the oil fields in "Rodesa" were actually in
Rodeasa, Louisiana. In such cases, it seemed better to in-
sert the correction in brackets after the error.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a ministry spanning the first half of this century, Monroe Simon Dodd preached the phenomenal sum of 13,000 sermons.¹ That is an average of 360 sermons for every year between his first one in 1900 and his retirement in 1950—almost one sermon daily. And, unlike Whitefield and Wesley who traveled continually, most of Dodd’s ministry was to one congregation; he had to prepare fresh messages continually. He served the First Baptist Church of Shreveport, Louisiana, from 1912 until 1927 when he moved to Los Angeles. But the Shreveport congregation, before the year was out, called him to return. He did so and remained there to round out forty years, retiring from the active pastorate in 1950 and remaining pastor emeritus until his death in 1952.²

The Primacy of Preaching

Dodd’s desire was to make preaching central in his

²See Appendix A.
ministry. In an article summarizing and interpreting The National Preaching Mission of the Federal Council of Churches, Dodd said: "The primacy of preaching is prominent throughout the New Testament." Then, after giving a summary of the Mission which covered twenty-seven cities beginning with Albany, New York, on September 13, 1936, and ending with New York City on December 10, he outlined its purpose and gave his own evaluation of its effectiveness. He closed, saying: "O, that preaching missions—just preaching, preaching, preaching, might be carried on, local, city-wide, county-wide, nation-wide, world-wide, until every nation, tribe, family, and individual should hear of Christ our Lord and should be brought to face and answer the question, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called the Christ?'

Dodd stressed the primacy of preaching in an address at Seminary Hill in Fort Worth, Texas, on the occasion of L. R. Scarborough's election to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention.

For Baptists, preaching the Word has ever been the highest and holiest privilege and duty. Music, writing, organization, orders of service, ordinances, there may be, but preaching there must be.

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2M. E. Dodd, "Leadership in Preaching the Word," p. 2, a manuscript carbon in Webb Collection, 1938 (Southwestern Seminary, June 1, 1938).
Once he was asked if he would judge it to be wise to eliminate one preaching service on Sundays in order to have two and a half hours for the church's general education program. His answer was emphatic: "No! No sort of service can ever take the place of the preaching of the Gospel by men definitely called of the Holy Spirit for this task."¹

The early history of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, which was Dodd's creation, is another testimony to his emphasis on preaching as primary. Dodd exercised direct control of the conference for the first fifteen years after he established it in 1935. He set the theme and selected the speakers. In those years, he repeatedly declined to grant time to those wanting to promote some matter of importance to the Southern Baptist Convention which met immediately after the Pastors' Conference. Preaching was the first and only order of business for the conference. And preaching was often the theme for the sermons. For example, in writing Duke McCall to speak on the program of

¹Lest anyone should mistake Dodd's emphasis, in the same article he later said: "I want to repeat that no sort of service can ever take the place of a definite service of gospel preaching by one definitely called by the spirit of God to this ministry." M. E. Dodd, "Ask Me Again," Church Administration, 0,3, III (December, 1929), 18. Hereafter the first reference to each issue of Dodd's column will be given in full. A later reference to the same issue will shorten facts of publication to date of issue and page number.
the tenth annual pastors' conference, Dodd outlined the plan to climax the conference with three twenty-minute messages on "this big business of preaching."\(^1\)

In his president's address to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1934, Dodd stated: "The preaching of the gospel has always been thought of as our primary, fundamental and imperative task."\(^2\)

When Gordon Palmer, president of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia invited Dodd to deliver the dedication address for new buildings there, Dodd gave his topic as "A Seminary's Supremo Service." His letter to Palmer a few weeks before the occasion stated that he had been "thinking about this quite often and praying over it." He said he had decided "to give emphasis to Gospel preaching and soul winning as the supreme task of the minister."\(^3\)

One more appeal to the Dodd correspondence should serve to emphasize his desire to make preaching supreme in

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1. Letter to Duke McColl, March 28, 1944, Webb Collection, 1944 N-Z (Pastors' Conference, Dodd). The printed program for that session shows the conference ending with three messages around the theme "Preaching for Today's World." E. D. Head was assigned "Its Spiritual Basis," McColl was to speak on "Its Practical Application," and Ellis A. Fuller was to deal with "Its Doctrinal Content."


his own ministry. A college student wrote Dodd complimenting his preaching. His reply thanked her for her "gracious words" and said: "I enjoy my ministry and wish many times that I did not have anything else to do but preach and write and visit among my friends." ¹

**Early Influences**

Four formative factors in Dodd’s background pointed him toward a pulpit ministry. These influences Dodd himself acknowledged as having important bearing on the shape of his ministry.

**Time in the Army**

On April 6, 1898, Dodd left the plow on the farm near Brazil, Tennessee, and responded to what he called a "strong urge" to volunteer for the army. He spent the rest of the year in Company K, Second Tennessee Volunteers. The Spanish-American War lasted only ten weeks, so Dodd never saw action. But it was there in the army camp that he first "turned seriously to the study of the Bible and eventually to the ministry." ²

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¹ Letter to Adelaida Dickson, September 27, 1939, Webb Collection, 1939 (Pastoral).

² Rupert Peyton, "From Oxcart to World Citizen: A Newspaper Man Looks at a Preacher," pp. 1-3 [91-93], typed manuscript in E. D. Dodd, Jr., Collection (hereafter cited as "Looks at a Preacher"). A xerox copy is deposited in Fleming Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Peyton’s pagination is inconsistent: after p. 13, there
Call to Preach

After his discharge, Dodd returned to finish high school in Trenton, Tennessee, nurturing an ambition for a career as a lawyer but fighting what he knew was God's will for him. His younger brother, Allen Dodd III, was planning to be a preacher but became seriously ill. A short while before he died, he said to Elmon, "Brother, you know God has been calling you to preach. I am going to die. I want to ask you to preach a little for me." Dodd answered that call.¹ On April 6, 1900, he preached his first sermon. A small group of friends and relatives heard him expound a text which was to become the keynote for all his preaching ministry: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2).²

Dodd considered a divine call to be essential for a preacher. In an address on "The Call of the Christian Minister," he said: "There has been continuous testimony from Old Testament patriarchs and prophets through the New Testament apostles and the post-New Testament fathers to the present time that ministers are not to choose this high

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¹Ibid., p. 2 [100].

²Shreveport Times, August 8, 1952, p. 4.
calling on their own volition as they would do in the choice of their vocation, but they are to yield themselves the willing servants to the divine will and to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.¹ Speaking to seminary students and faculty on another occasion, Dodd said: "The power, usefulness and influence of the minister depends upon his divine call."²

Dodd believed that the divine call to the ministry placed upon the called a unique responsibility and a unique authority. Once he received a letter asking him to settle a "heated discussion in Sunday school" about whether each individual Christian was "just as responsible, in the same degree as preachers are." He answered: "A minister of the Gospel divinely called to his sacred task undoubtedly has a different responsibility and should speak with a different authority from all other Christian workers."³

Formal Education

Dodd's decision to be a minister was made shortly before he started to college. But his literary and


oratorical aptitude appeared earlier. At the age of fourteen, he represented his school in a speaking competition. He won a silver medal.\textsuperscript{1} Then, at Union University, Jackson, Tennessee, "he won practically every medal and prize offered for debate, declamation and literary contests." He graduated from the university in 1904 with the degrees Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Oratory.\textsuperscript{2}

Dodd did not attend seminary, but by the time he arrived in Louisiana, he had gathered a depth of biblical scholarship that would have been a credit to the theological schools of his time. His lectures in 1912 before the Louisiana Sunday School Convention were a popular, yet quite scholarly, study of Christ. He utilized the insights of modern biblical theology by studying each Gospel in the context of its own purpose. Furthermore, his bibliography listed eighteen sources, many of them still standard works on the Gospels. He had utilized Alfred Edersheim's \textit{The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah}, A. T. Robertson's \textit{Epochs in the Life of Christ}, and other classics.\textsuperscript{3}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{\textit{"Monroe Elmon Dodd" [1920]}, p. 2. This is an eleven-page printed booklet without a designated author or other facts of publication. It is written as a brief biographical sketch in the third person, but it may be autobiographical. Webb Collection, 1931 (Dr. Dodd, Personal). Other copies in Webb Collection, 1942 (Personal).}
\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 2-3.}
\footnote{Alfred Edersheim, \textit{The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah} (2 vols.; New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904;}
\end{footnotes}
His Models

In addition to his disciplined private study, Dodd was a regular on the Chatauqua and Bible Conference circuit, first as a listener and later as a speaker. It is not difficult to trace the strong influence of these conferences on his theology as well as on his sermon style. In a letter to a leader of the Winona Lake Christian Assembly, Dodd volunteered this testimony: "Winona has meant more to me than I can ever say. My first inspiration for expository preaching came at Winona in 1906, my first time there."¹

Dodd considered G. Campbell Morgan "the greatest living Bible expositor."² References to his influence abound in the Dodd material. One of Dodd's first sermons, "How Shall We Escape," was based on Heb. 2:3. Ten years after he began preaching it in various pulpits around Tennessee and Kentucky, he heard Campbell Morgan at Winona and changed his view of its meaning. Using the text seventeen years later, he still pointed back to Morgan's impact. Before he heard


¹Letter to J. Palmer Munts, December 5, 1941, Webb Collection, 1942 (Boston Engagement, August 11-13, 1942).

²Baptist Messenger, December 1, 1921, p. 3.
Morgan's exposition, Dodd used the text for a message at the close of revival meetings, preaching to the non-Christian; afterwards, he used it at the beginning of the meeting in a message to Christians.¹

A comparison of Dodd's theology with the more prominent expositor will reveal close affinity. Dodd was conscious of the influence. He often mentioned Morgan in his bibliographies, recommended his books, and once featured him at the annual Bible conference at First Baptist Church in Shreveport.²

In Dodd's first published book, *Jesus Is Coming to Earth Again*, he listed more than a hundred of the leading Bible students, teachers, preachers, evangelists, and commentators who held a premillennial view of eschatology. About half of them were living at the time. The list included, in addition to Morgan, such notables as A. C. Dixon, A. C. Gabellein, James M. Gray, and Bob Jones. That Dodd's views were in harmony with these men is obvious.³

Dodd himself, conducted an annual "Bible Institute" while he was pastor in Paducah, Kentucky. He was there

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¹M. E. Dodd, "How Shall We Escape?" Webb Collection, Pulpit Notes File (Hebrews).

²*Baptist Message*, December 1, 1921, p. 3.

from January, 1908, to March, 1911. When he moved to Shreveport, one of the first things he did was to establish the mid-winter Bible Conference. He sought to bring to his church and to the pastors of the area the same men who had so impressed him in the fundamentalist conferences. The idea of a "Southwestern Conference" came to Dodd in the summer of 1912 while he was attending the Northwestern Bible Conference at Indianapolis under the direction of W. B. Riley. Dodd was in his first year as pastor of the Shreveport congregation. So in 1913, the new January Bible Conference made what Dodd called a "modest beginning." From then until World War I, the conference was an annual event in Shreveport. It gathered ever-increasing numbers to hear the great fundamentalist leaders of England and America as well as the outstanding conservative voices of the Southern Baptist Convention such as B. C. Dargan, L. R. Scarboroug h, and other seminary professors. 

These influences, like the prevailing source of light on a young plant, tended to draw him toward a pulpit-centered ministry. But there were other bends to the twig too. For example, Dodd developed an early interest in fund raising. When he was sixteen years old, the old Poplar Grove church

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1 Letters from Dodd to Baptist Chronicle, published January 22, 1913, p. 1; February 6, 1913, p. 2; and December 11, 1913, p. 16. Baptist Chronicle was the official paper for the Louisiana Baptist Convention until it was succeeded by Baptist Message on July 24, 1919.
house needed repairs and painting. Times were hard and money was scarce among the rural membership. The church conference met one Saturday afternoon to discuss the matter. Young Elmon asked that he be permitted to raise the necessary money. The deacons and elders agreed. The following Monday he mounted his little Texas pony and hurried along the countryside stopping at every farm house to make an earnest plea for the church. He collected dimes and quarters and an occasional dollar, and by Saturday he had a collection that he was proud to lay before his elders. With a few contributions from them, there was enough to repair and paint the church.\(^1\) During his ministry Dodd personally raised over ten million dollars for churches, missions, Christian education, and benevolence. He led the First Baptist Church of Shreveport to give over five million dollars.\(^2\)

Another incident in Dodd's early life had memorable significance for him. There was some opposition to his ordination. Some of the council did not think he would ever know enough to be a preacher, but one of them expressed confidence in the young man. Judge Howard said: "Never mind; all Gibson County will be proud of Elmon Dodd someday." He did not say it in Dodd's hearing, but the word came to him.

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\(^{1}\) Peyton, "Looks at a Preacher," pp. 30-31 [43-44].

\(^{2}\) Ibid., p. 37 [50].
Half a century later, Dodd said: "It was like fire in my soul. It kindled a flame that never died out, of ambition to live up to that expectation." Having recently returned from his home town where he was feted as "Gibson County's Foremost Citizen," he acknowledged: "For fifty years I have gone on the encouragement of that word."  

\[1\] M. E. Dodd, "Last Sermon at First Baptist Church, Shreveport, Louisiana, April 20, 1952," p. 8, a typed manuscript in Joyner Collection.
CHAPTER II

A FRAGMENTED MINISTRY

"The life and work of the minister is vastly different from what it was even a few years ago," wrote Dodd in 1934. As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he was sending a mimeographed letter to all ministerial students in convention schools. He spoke of the increased complexity of society and the additional demands fallen upon the minister. He advised them that the minister "needs to be on constant guard against dissipating his time, talents, and energies over too wide a field." He told the young ministers that it would take a deep, conscientious understanding of their duty and a strong will as well as the help of the Holy Spirit to keep them "concentrated on primary and fundamental things."

A few years later he expressed his frustration with a fragmented ministry in more personal terms to a group which likely included some of the same ministerial students. It was 1938, and he was delivering the Holland Foundation Lectures at Southwestern Seminary. He confessed: "I get

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so intellectually hungry and have scant time to satisfy that hunger . . . because of being driven with so many activities.¹

Even though he wanted his ministry to be pulpit-centered, he felt acutely the demands of his many other roles. These duties did not mean that he would preach less. Indeed, as his prominence grew, he was called on for more and more preaching. But by consuming time, the extra duties posed a threat to his general study and to his sermon preparation.

One of the dramatic changes in the ministry during the early twentieth century was the drift away from the primacy of preaching. As a method of instruction, teaching began to rival preaching. As a structure of organization, the class began to rival the congregation. And the function of pastoral ministry which had largely centered in preaching began to find the many other roles of the clergyman encumbering the highest calling. It is not surprising, then, that in spite of his sure commitment to a ministry of preaching, Dodd found himself entangled with many other ministry tasks.

Pastoral Visiting

As shepherd of a large and growing flock, Dodd felt

¹M. B. Dodd, "Thy Kingdom Come," Holland Foundation Lectures at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, November, 1938, Lecture 5, p. 2 (typed manuscript, bound, in Fleming Library, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary).
the pressure of his responsibility in pastoral care. When he began the ministry in Shreveport, he set an aggressive pace of pastoral calls. In his first year he walked over one thousand miles and rode streetcars many more, recording fifteen hundred calls. His annual report so impressed his congregation that they bought him an automobile. As the first Shreveport pastor to use an automobile in his work, the next year he reported twice as many calls.\(^1\)

Later Dodd decided that general visiting on the part of the pastor was neither desired by the people nor the best and most profitable use of the pastor's time. He assumed that it would be necessary to continue pastoral visiting of the sick, new members, the unsaved, the shut-in, and the poor and needy, but, wrote Dodd:

The old time pastor who went from house to house visiting his people and the old time doctor who used to call upon the sick, feel their pulse, look at their tongue and hold their hand, seem to be rapidly depart-
ing institutions of a passing generation.

\[\ldots\]

So the pastor of today finds out that if he starts on general pastoral calling he is generally wasting his time because he finds so few of the people at home;\(^2\) and those that are there are not prepared for the call.

Dodd further defended the new approach to pastoral ministry on the basis of the pressing duties of a growing congregation.

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\(^1\) Payton, "Looks at a Preacher," p. 9 [21].

And he suggested that the people could come to see the pastor if they wanted to and should not expect him to come calling regularly.  

Though his flock may have learned not to expect periodic visits from the pastor, they did not shun to send for him when they were sick. A note in Dodd's diary for January 25, 1929, records: "Called out of bed three times to sick beds. Some were real and important needs, some only hysterical."  

Dodd recommended that the "average pastor" designate one-tenth of his sixty-hour work week for visitation. When he retired, he claimed an average over "many years" of fifteen hundred visits annually. He said, "Every pastor who has the good of his people at heart and who has the salvation of souls at heart will go day and night in private visiting to see them, to bring them to Christ."  

**Administrative Work**

Dodd had no illusions about the time-consuming task of church administration. He expected it to take fully one-half of the average pastor's sixty-hour week. In this

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1Dodd, "Ask Me Again," December, 1929, pp. 16, 23.
2Diary of M. E. Dodd, January 25, 1929, Joyner Collection.
3"Dr. Dodd's Final Message as Pastor," Baptist Message, August 31, 1950, p. 4.
4Dodd, "Ask Me Again," December, 1929, pp. 16, 23. He
category he included the conducting of public services, attending committee meetings, council meetings, staff meetings, and meetings of other church groups such as the Woman's Missionary Union and the young people's organizations.

When he began as pastor in Shreveport, First Baptist Church had six hundred members. It passed the two thousand mark by 1920 and continued to climb, surpassing twenty-five hundred by the pastor's tenth anniversary. All church activities multiplied in proportion. During his first year, he supervised a reorganization and grading of the Sunday school.

A business woman's tea room was established to provide meals for the girls and women who were increasingly taking employment in the city. The church reached what some might consider the ultimate standard of attainment: the church was "open seven days each week from 8:00 A.M. until 10:00 P.M." and, as the denominational press reported divided the sixty hours into "four-tenths for study, one-tenth for visitation and five-tenths for administrative work."


2Dodd's report to the church, published in Baptist Message, April 10, 1913, p. 2. The pastor himself taught the Baraca Class with attendance running more than 125.
it, there was "something doing all the time."\(^1\)

Activity generated activity; the increase of organizations required new construction to house them. In April, 1922, Dodd's church drew quite a bit of attention in the dedication of its new half-million-dollar structure. The main building of four stories was accented by a ten-story tower. The auditorium could seat three thousand and the Sunday school provided quarters for another three thousand.\(^2\)

F. R. Weber, an authority on church architecture as well as the history of preaching, observed with reference to an earlier era of construction that "men who spend much of their time at their drawings, or else on the high scaffolding surrounding a new abbey church, are hardly likely to give adequate time to preparation of sermons." The same historian identified the years 1905 to 1930 as a period of "labor to heap up stones."\(^3\)

Dodd had far more than average energy and seemed to thrive on activity. Yet his conscience was not always clear about spending so much time in the administrative tasks of

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\(^1\) *Baptist Message*, March 3, 1921, p. 1.


the ministry. He recorded in his diary for January 3, 1928, a "strenuous day." It included a college chapel address in the morning, an executive board meeting, seeing "mail of three days accumulation," writing material for the church paper, conferences, telephone calls, and other unknown activities specified only by "etc. etc." The list was recorded as context for his wish: "Oh, that more business men would take more interest and assume more responsibility for the causes of Christ and give the preacher more time for his real work at the Word and prayer." ¹

In 1943 at a joint meeting of the Deacons and Directors at First Baptist, "the pastor . . . spoke of . . . his desire and purpose to be released from administrative responsibilities in order to give more time to Bible teaching, radio broadcasting and writing, in addition to regular preaching responsibilities." In the same meeting, the pastor outlined an elaborate program of revised church administration. The first proposal was the appointment of an executive committee with a "President of the Corporation" to handle administrative details of the church.² He repeatedly tried to adjust his schedule to allow more time for pulpit work, but he apparently carried the main load of church

¹ Diary of M. E. Dodd, January 3, 1928, Joyner Collection.
² Minutes of Joint Meeting, Deacons and Directors, First Baptist Church, July 12, 1943, pp. 241, 243.
administration until his retirement.

Denominational Service

Nothing consumed more of the preacher's time and energy than his lifelong involvement in denominational activities. He was a leader in local and convention-wide service even before moving to Louisiana. In 1909 and 1910, he was moderator of the West Union Baptist Association in Kentucky and chairman of the executive board of that association.1 He also represented Kentucky Baptists on the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1909 through 1911 and represented Louisiana from 1912 until 1917 when he went to France.2 In 1911, he delivered a speech on "Mission Schools in the Mountain Areas" at the meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Jacksonville, Florida. Whatever the result of that speech for the work of the Home Mission Board, it proved to be a fateful event for Dodd's future ministry; it drew the attention of two members of the First Baptist Church of Shreveport. Charles G. McClaud, a physician, knowing that his pastor was in poor health and that the church would soon be seeking another leader, leaned over and said to Z. R. Long,

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1Minutes of the West Union Baptist Association, 1910, p. 1.

2Southern Baptist Convention Annual, 1909, p. iii; 1910, p. iii; 1911, p. iii; 1912, p. iii; 1913, p. 5; 1914, p. 5; 1915, p. 5; 1916, p. 5; 1917, p. 5. At that time the board organization provided for a vice president from each state convention.
"Zeck, there's our next pastor."

Dodd presided over nearly every Baptist body he ever served. Besides serving in Kentucky as moderator of the association and as chairman of his associational executive board, he immediately exercised extensive influence at all levels of denominational structure when he moved to Louisiana. He was a popular platform personality when he came to the state and an immediate power in convention affairs. In 1912 there was a debt of $13,000 on the state mission board. Dodd, a newcomer to the state, and pastor of the church which was host to the convention, invited representatives of all the departments of state work and a number of pastors and laymen to meet with him before the hour of the Friday afternoon session. They met and considered a plan for an immediate, state-wide campaign to liquidate the debt against the state mission board. The minutes of the convention report that it was an enthusiastic and impressive hour. The assembly unanimously and wholeheartedly voted in favor of the movement and asked Dodd to present the matter to the convention. The convention adopted it unanimously. Immediately after the convention, Dodd wrote an editorial

1 Judy Holley, "Dr. M. B. Dodd to Retire from Pastorate Today," Shreveport Times, August 15, 1950, p. 12, and Southern Baptist Convention Annual, 1911, p. 41. Dodd's brief report was marked by picturesque and pungent language.

sounding a rally cry for Louisiana Baptists to liquidate the indebtedness.  

Dodd’s fellow Baptists immediately acknowledged his dynamic leadership by electing him president of the state Executive Board. He repeatedly served in that capacity. In addition, he represented Louisiana on the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, and the Sunday School Board in Nashville. He was also a trustee for Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Louisiana College.  

Dodd was accorded the high honor of preaching the convention sermon for his state convention in 1914 and again in 1922. He was serving as president of the Louisiana Convention in 1927 when he left the state to become pastor of Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles, California. When he returned later the same year to the Shreveport pastorate, he was reelected to that presidency in what the Baptist Message called "perhaps the most enthusiastic unanimous vote ever cast for a presiding officer for this  

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1Baptist Chronicle (Louisiana), November 21, 1912, p. 8.

2"Monroe Elmon Dodd," p. 11. Louisiana College, Pineville, Louisiana, is owned and operated by the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Nor was his growing influence limited to the state convention. When the Southern Baptist Convention met in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1919, Dodd was the preacher. In 1933, he was first vice president. In that capacity, he suggested in Baptist periodicals that the scheduled meeting be called off. The country was in the depth of depression, and the government was discouraging unnecessary travel. Dodd felt also that it would relieve the Baptists of Washington, D. C., where the convention was to be held. Nevertheless, the announcement was made in April that the meeting would convene as scheduled in May. Then suddenly Fred Brown, the elected president, was disabled by an illness. He sent word to Dodd that the duty of presiding would fall on his shoulders. At that meeting Dodd was elevated to the presidency. He was reelected in Fort Worth the next year. At the 1935 meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, he refused to be considered for another term.

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1 *Baptist Message*, January 8, 1931, p. 8. The *Baptist Message* may have been guilty occasionally of flattering important personalities, but there is no good reason for impugning the sincerity of the editor on this occasion. He also reported that Dodd's return to spend the rest of his life in Louisiana was "regaled with genuine joy."

2 "Historical Table," *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, II, 1258-59.


Dodd served at the head of every level of Baptist organization with the Baptist World Alliance as the only exception. Some observers expected Dodd to be elected to that honor at the Fifth World Congress in Berlin. It was 1934, and Dodd was serving as president of the Southern Baptist Convention. He delivered one of the major addresses at the meeting of the Alliance, but the honor went to E. Y. Mullins. Dodd was, however, a member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance from that time until his retirement in 1950. As a member of the Executive Committee, Dodd represented the Alliance in fraternal visits to many lands around the world.\(^1\)

Dodd's denominational service was far more than to preside over various bodies though. He served with distinction on a number of working committees and commissions. And he labored in organizing and promoting a number of programs which have done much to shape the Southern Baptist Convention to the present day.\(^2\)

Roland G. Leavell acknowledged Dodd’s key place of

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2. See Appendix A.
leadership, with other Baptist leaders, in founding Baptist Bible Institute, which later was renamed New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. At the Southern Baptist Convention in 1915 Dodd met with seven other Baptist leaders in a hotel room to lay the groundwork for establishing the school. The group requested Dodd to present their plan to the Southern Baptist Convention at the next session to meet in Asheville, North Carolina. He was named chairman of the Committee on Plans and conducted a vast correspondence preparing the plea to the convention. In July, 1917, representatives from mission boards in Louisiana and Mississippi met in New Orleans with representatives of the Home Mission Board and the Sunday School Board. In the fall, when the Southern Baptist Convention met in New Orleans, it was Dodd who presented the report and made the speech appealing for the establishment of the school for missionary training. His report was adopted. At the next convention, which met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1918, the Baptists were concerned with the matter of financing the new seminary. The war was on. While the messengers deliberated, a telegram arrived from Dodd announcing a pledge of $25,000 from the First Baptist Church of Shreveport to the school. B. H. DeMent, who was elected president of the institution at the 1917 organizational meeting, said this pledge inspired the Convention to vote
the money needed to establish the school.\textsuperscript{1}

Besides this influence in bringing the seminary in New Orleans to birth, Dodd was instrumental in raising funds for the purchase of a Southern Baptist hospital in that city. There was extensive debate on that proposal also at the meeting of the Convention in Jacksonville, Florida. Dodd led the crusade which ultimately prevailed. Likewise, he led in raising funds for the purchase of a hospital for Louisiana Baptists in Alexandria.\textsuperscript{2}

One of Dodd's most distinctive contributions to the life of his denomination was leading the convention to adopt the Cooperative Program for financing its work. The convention entered into a five-year program running from 1919–1924 to raise seventy-five million dollars. It started off big the first year, but a financial slump curtailed contributions when they should have gathered momentum. In the end, a total of fifty-eight million dollars was raised.\textsuperscript{3} After the campaign, Dodd was named chairman of a "Conservation Commission." This was later named the Committee on Future Programs for Southern Baptists. Dodd was elected permanent

\textsuperscript{1}Baptist Message, November 1, 1962, p. 5, and Peyton, "Looks at a Preacher," p. 5 [112].

\textsuperscript{2}The Louisiana hospital was released from convention control in 1969 (Louisiana Baptist Convention Annual, 1969, p. 110).

\textsuperscript{3}Frank S. Burkhailer, "Seventy-five Million Campaign," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, I, 1196-98.
chairman and charged with the responsibility of coming up with recommendations for correlating the work of the denomination. He canvassed many leaders in the denomination for their ideas on a new program and studied their suggestions. He made a composite of the best of them based on "The Budget Plan" of cooperation which had enjoyed a measure of success already in his own state convention. He brought the report to the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925 recommending the institution of the Cooperative Program.\(^1\)

To Dodd also belongs the credit for launching the Southwide Simultaneous Revival Crusade of 1923\(^2\) and the Centennial Evangelistic Crusade of 1945.\(^3\) Some of these promotional and organizational tasks came to Dodd because he was an eloquent speaker, and some of them he advanced by means of his pulpit power. All such involvement in denominational structures exacted its inevitable toll on his available time and energy. Time spent promoting programs was time he could not spend on his more basic ministry of the


\(^{2}\) Baptist Message, June 22, 1922, p. 5.

\(^{3}\) Baptist Message, August 17, 1944, p. 7. The Centennial year saw a significant increase in baptisms, but the goal of one million was not reached. See also Roland Q. Leavell, "Evangelism," Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, I, 407-19.
In answer to a question about "how much detail work" the pastor should do, Dodd spoke of the pastor's need to avoid being diverted from his supreme tasks to secondary and insignificant things." What did he consider to be supreme? And what was secondary and insignificant? His answer on that occasion remained in generalities. He spoke of the pastor spending his time in "something big and constructive and worthwhile." ¹

Did he mean preaching? If he had in mind his own ministry when he wrote that, as is likely, he was not thinking of preaching. In 1929 his thoughts were occupied with Dodd College. For nearly two decades at the apex of his ministry, Dodd was distracted from his pulpit ministry by the junior college for girls that he founded and served as president.

Dodd was a champion of the cause of Christian education even before he came to Louisiana. It will be recalled that it was a speech on mission schools that first caught the ear of the laymen from Shreveport at the 1912 Southern Baptist Convention. And his debut into state denominational activity was presenting the report on education at the

¹M. S. Dodd, "Ask Me Again," Church Administration, 0.3. III (July, 1929), 18.
convention in Ruston, Louisiana, that year.¹

How early he began to visualize a girls' school for Louisiana is not apparent, but in the year it finally opened he mentioned in the Baptist Message: "For some years I have been gathering books about woman and her life ... in anticipation of and in preparation for the girls' college."² The first mention of such an enterprise in the state convention records was in 1920 when the convention appointed a special committee on "a female college" with C. O. Ware, another Louisiana Baptist pioneer, as chairman. Pressing obligations of programs already started delayed further convention progress on the enterprise for several years.³

The first report from the Committee on the Female College, at the 1921 convention, recommended that the convention take steps to establish such an institution and that it "appoint a committee with instructions to solicit bids from the various towns and cities of the state to ascertain what inducements said towns and cities may propose to offer to the location of such a college to be owned and controlled by the Baptists of the state."⁴ Dodd took his cue from that

¹Shreveport Times, August 15, 1950, p. 12, and Baptist Chronicles, November 21, 1912, p. 3.

²Baptist Message, December 15, 1927, p. 4.

³Ibid.; also see Baptist Message, November 8, 1962, p. 22.

⁴Baptist Message, January 8, 1931, p. 8.
and the next month called together a few prominent members of his church. Before the meeting adjourned those nine persons constituted themselves a foundation to establish a college for girls. It was named the M. E. Dodd Foundation.\(^1\) In 1925, the report of the committee on the girls' college advocated that the convention launch the project at Shreveport "taking advantage of certain flattering propositions made by the M. E. Dodd Foundation and the Shreveport Chamber of Commerce." This was a three-way agreement. The Dodd Foundation would give a thirty-acre site "easily worth $200,000." The Shreveport citizens would be asked by the Chamber of Commerce to raise another $200,000 for an administration building. The convention's part was to allocate a sum in the budget for a general campaign to raise another $200,000 in 1927 for dormitories.

Before the vote was taken on the proposition, Dodd delivered what the Baptist Message called a "convincing and thrilling address" on the needs of such a school. The paper further reported that it was "one of the greatest addresses of his life" and that "it made a profound impression on the convention and that the body voted unanimously to accept the offer of the M. E. Dodd Foundation and to launch a campaign in 1927 to build a dormitory."\(^2\)

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\(^1\)Baptist Message, October 13, 1927, p. 1.

\(^2\)Baptist Message, November 26, 1925, pp. 1, 4.
In 1927 Dodd moved to Los Angeles as pastor of the Temple Baptist Church there. The E. E. Dodd Foundation, which named the school Dodd College after his leaving, was unable to decide on a president. Nor was the church able to agree on a successor. Within seven months Dodd accepted the call to return to a dual role as pastor of the same church he left and as president of the new college in its opening session.

For the next fourteen years, Dodd divided himself between the college and its problems and his other ministry. The college's main problems were two—financing and convention control. The depression made the convention's contract to raise $200,000 an increasingly illusive dream. By early 1931 the Dodd Foundation was attempting to sever ties with the convention. Apparently they hoped to cool a simmering opposition from within Baptist ranks and at the same time to warm possible sources of revenue outside of the circle of Baptists.¹

As for his other ministry, Dodd was never more occupied than in these years. He was writing, traveling, and working in every level of denominational life as well as preaching at the Shreveport pastorate. And in it all, he was feeling the frustration of fragmentation. When he was president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1935, he

¹*Baptist Message*, January 2, 1931, p. 8.
released a message to the pastors of the South urging them in keeping with Acts 6:1-6 to "let others serve other things" and to "let the pastors be given to prayer and ministry of the word."\(^1\)

As the nation and the convention began to recover from the depression, Dodd began to agitate for convention control and support of the school again. But a growing opposition crystallized against Dodd College and in favor of Louisiana College, the better-established Baptist school of the state. By 1940 there was a well-heated debate. In 1941, the Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention dealt the telling blow. Just before the meeting of the convention, the Executive Board's Committee on Education published the voluminous report of its year-long study. The report recommended greater support of Louisiana College and no support to Dodd College. All efforts to fend off the blow were useless. The Dodd Foundation gave the school, property, and all assets to the convention. It was closed at the end of the school year.

Would Dodd have given more time to preaching if it had not been for the college? Probably yes. But without a doubt the role of college president added more to his status than to his stature as a preacher. He was devoted to the

project. At the time of the closing of the college, Dodd expressed his real grief to a friend in a personal letter. He said, "I have given twenty years of toil and tears, prayers and service and $25,000 in personal gifts to this cause."  

**Missionary**

Before moving to Fulton, Kentucky, his first full-time pastorate, Dodd received what he considered "a divine impression to become a missionary." He and his new bride offered themselves to the Foreign Mission Board for service in Persia. The board decided not to open a mission in Persia and appointed the Dodds to Mexico. In February, 1905, they entered Mexico. It was not a happy experience. They survived "three railroad wrecks and many other incidents" on the way to the mission post. For four months everything seemed to go wrong. They decided that "God's will had not been fully wrought in their going to Mexico." The Fulton congregation urged him to return, and he did so.  

That brief experience was the limit of Dodd's official appointment, but it was not all of his missionary experience. Fired as he was with a wanderlust and thirst for adventure as well as missionary zeal, it is not surprising that Dodd volunteered to be a chaplain in 1918.

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1 Letter to R. T. Mahon, April 4, 1942, Webb Collection, 1942 (General Correspondence).

Perhaps because he was going on forty years of age, however, and not a seminary graduate, he did not get a commission in the army. He settled for an assignment under direction of the YMCA as religious work director to the soldiers at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana. His church granted him a six-month leave of absence, continued his salary, and provided his pulpit supply. Dodd and his family lived in a dormitory at Louisiana College not far from the army camp. In October, when that tour of duty was complete, the church agreed to extend it another six months. He sailed overseas attached to the Second Army with the official title "Religious Secretary and Speaker." Dodd counted more than five thousand men who confessed faith in Christ and recorded the names of five hundred who volunteered for Christian service.¹

In his later ministry Dodd made three extensive tours of foreign mission fields. The first world tour was in 1934 while he was president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Soon after being reelected at the meeting in Fort Worth, he sailed for Berlin and the congress of the Baptist World Alliance. He preached "The Gospel for Today" there as one of the principal addresses of the meeting. Then he continued on an around-the-world preaching mission. The story of that mission is recorded in his book Girdling the

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¹Quarterly Review, October-December, 1942, p. 356; Watchman-examiner, February 17, 1944, p. 157; see also Peyton, "Looks at a Preacher," p. 4 (94); and a certificate in Joyner Collection.
Globe for God, published in 1935.¹

In 1938 Dodd made his second missionary tour. It was a journey of 18,000 miles by air around Central and South America. On this tour of the mission fields, he delivered 173 public addresses and recorded more than 1,000 decisions for Christ.²

The third and final tour was a journey westward in 1946 by way of Honolulu to New Zealand and Australia. Dodd's congregation encouraged these travels as part of his ministry. When the deacons had discussed this third tour they voted to "recommend to the church the granting of a leave of absence not to exceed six months with continuation of full salary." They also appointed a committee to work out the details of any additional financial arrangements which "might be made in the interest of the missionary journey."³

Broadening his ministry thusly, Dodd widened his influence and in that sense increased his effectiveness. But spreading himself around inevitably mitigated against his attaining his full depth of potential as a consistent pulpiteer.

¹M. E. Dodd, Girdling the Globe for God: A Travelsogue (Shreveport, Louisiana: John S. Raymond, Publisher, 1935) (hereafter cited as Girdling the Globe).

²"Missionary Tours of Dr. and Mrs. M. E. Dodd," a printed leaflet, 1946, Joyner Collection; also Baptist Message, May 5, 1938, p. 1.

³Minutes of the deacon's meeting, First Baptist Church, May 14, 1946.
CHAPTER III
EXTENDING HIS PULPIT

"I firmly believe," said M. R. Dodd, "that our
heavenly Father put it into the mind of man to produce some
of our modern inventions for the purpose of propagating the
gospel of his grace in Christ Jesus our Lord."1 Dodd was
committed to claiming the mass media for the message of
Christ.

In the same address, he spoke of the trans-Atlantic
cable sending portions of Scripture revision, of the tele-
phone transmitter in the pulpit sending the sermon to sick
and shut-ins, and of the airplane transporting the preacher
between assignments. "But of all the modern inventions
which have great possibilities for the preaching of the
Gospel to all peoples," Dodd continued, "the radio stands
supreme."2

Radio Ministry

Of all the things that Dodd contributed to the

1M. R. Dodd, "The Radio and Religion," a typed
manuscript in Webb Collection, 1934 (not in a folder), p. 1.

2Ibid., p. 2.

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ministry of the Word, probably none stands higher than his contribution to the pioneering of the use of the radio for preaching. Broadcasting was an infant industry when Dodd saw its possibilities for multiplying his message.

**Pioneer Broadcaster**

In 1922 the First Baptist Church, Shreveport, claimed distinction as the first church in the world to build, own, and operate its own station. The church was reported to be attracting nationwide attention as it began installation of the broadcasting equipment. It was to have a normal radius of 1,500 miles, but expected "under favorable weather conditions" to be picked up from coast to coast and by ships hundreds of miles at sea. The antenna was suspended 100 feet above the streets between the ten-story tower of the church and a steel tower on an office building nearby. It was made of copper wires 125 feet long.\(^1\)

In overflowing zeal, the article further reported that several hundred churches in the area were planning to install receiving sets to take advantage of the religious services broadcast from the church in Shreveport. Those churches without pastors or with services only once or twice a month could now have a pastor visit them twice on Sunday.

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\(^1\)"Shreveport First Church Attracts Nationwide Attention," *Baptist Message*, July 13, 1922, p. 13. See also Peyton, "Looks at a Preacher," p. 11 [23]. The station, KDBX, was a 100-watt station.
and often through the week. A rural pastor must have felt his heart skip a beat as he read:

Instead of listening to the preacher in their own pulpit, they will hear the minister in the city church many miles away. When revival services are held here, churches throughout the southwest will take part.¹

The world was not ready for all of Dodd's zeal: he spoke of marriage by radio as the coming thing. He said it would be just as legal as any other ceremony and just as solemn as if the pastor were present. Tongue in cheek perhaps, Dodd suggested that his plan would permit a couple to have their wedding solemnized by the pastor of their choice who may be hundreds of miles away. The tendency of the groom to arrive late was the only obstacle Dodd could foresee, and he believed that he could provide for that.²

Nationwide Voice

In 1929 Dodd began his most extensive radio ministry. He began broadcasting over KWH with its clear channel and nationwide power. He had two hours every Sunday night from eight until ten o'clock. The first hour was the broadcast of the regular church service. During the second hour he conducted a question-and-answer program. He answered biblical questions propounded by listeners. Between

²Ibid.
questions, church musicians provided sacred music.¹

How many people listened to Dodd on the radio? In his address, "The Radio and Religion," Dodd indicated a knowledge of audience rating sophisticated for that time. Six factors measured the audience: the power of the station, the fact that it was a clear channel, the number of receiving sets known to be in service, multiplied by the average number of hearers per set, adjusted according to the popularity of the station, and checked by the number of reports received. In addition, Dodd frequently conducted his own straw poll by asking audiences throughout the country how many had heard the services. Combining all factors, Dodd estimated the audience would "range anywhere from two million to four million."² A more objective measure is given in an article about the station manager and owner, W. E. Henderson, who was well known for his "verbal pyrotechnics" before the federal government introduced strictures on language. The article reported that the station received 1,000 to 2,500 letters daily, 100 to 200 telegrams nightly, and an average of 50 long-distance calls on each program.³

¹Letter from KWKH to Jacobs and Co., a research firm, in Webb Collection, 1934, A-R (J General).


³"KWKH Has Real Personality," an otherwise unidentified article torn from a tabloid magazine in Webb Collection,
Dodd's correspondence files give ample testimony to the extent of his unseen congregation. When he was president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1934, Shreveport's First Baptist Church maintained a broadcast of the regular Sunday evening services followed by a thirty-minute program "in the interest of the great Southern Baptist denominational work." Hundreds of cards and letters came that year from all over the nation. One person reported hearing the program in New Brunswick, Canada, eighteen hundred miles away.¹

In December of 1934, station KWH lost its clear-channel rating to WWL of New Orleans. Though still a 50,000-watt station, it was reduced to regional status with a directional antenna. After W. K. Henderson sold the station to the Shreveport Times, he wrote Dodd a letter. A postscript about Dodd's influence in the earlier days said: "When you spoke over radio station KWH on 850 kilocycles, it could be said, and truthfully, that you were being heard all over the United States and in foreign countries, and that you were the most listened to man who ever

¹Webb Collection, 1934 (Radio).
spoke over the station.\textsuperscript{1}

Dodd continued the regular broadcasting on KWKH, with its curtailed audience, for another decade. At the end of 1943 the program director wrote advising him that C.B.S. would be providing a commercial program which would conflict with the broadcast from First Baptist Church. When the broadcasts were discontinued January 30, 1944, Dodd ended more than twenty years of continuous radio preaching.\textsuperscript{2}

As with any pioneering ministry, Dodd's radio program was not without its critics. In reply to a censorious letter from a Shreveport attorney and member of First Baptist Church, Dodd gave this evaluation of the effectiveness of his radio ministry:

As to the radio program, you will agree with me that the church is in business for the preaching of the gospel to the largest possible number of people and for the doing of the most good. . . . Our South Louisiana French missionaries themselves say that I preach to more South Louisiana French Catholics over the radio than all the forty missionaries employed by the state mission board put together. We have reports from every state in the union, from every section of Canada, from Mexico, Central and South America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the British West Indies. Many conversions and rejections are reported, and vast good done, that we will never know about until we get to heaven.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1}Letter from W. K. Henderson, December 27, 1934, Webb Collection, 1935, "H."

\textsuperscript{2}A letter from program director of KWKH, December 29, 1943, Webb Collection (Bible Conference, 1944).

\textsuperscript{3}Letter to E. B. Herndon, October 28, 1929, Webb Collection (H General).
There was a fear among many clergymen that radio would hurt church attendance. Why should people go to church to hear a dull sermon when they could stay at home and hear a dynamic one? In January, 1931, a representative of the ministerial association in Mobile, Alabama, asked for Dodd's suggestions on the subject: "The Radio and the Preaching of the Gospel and Its Possible Effect on the Church." Dodd replied that he believed that the broadcasting increased church attendance in his own church and abroad. He referred to "reports from all over the country" to that effect. He further maintained that the radio services reached great numbers of non-Christians and non-evangelicals otherwise unreachèd. He wrote: "We have had a number of conversions reported of people who never have attended evangelical services before." He concluded by stating his belief that radio was the greatest agency for broadcasting the gospel ever invented.¹

"The Baptist Hour"

M. S. Dodd also had the distinction of being the first preacher for "The Baptist Hour" and of pioneering in the radio committee for the Southern Baptist Convention. He was a member of the subcommittee which met September 5,

¹Letter from C. G. Sanders, January 8, 1931, and Dodd's reply, January 16, 1931, Webb Collection, 1931 (S General).
1940, in Atlanta, Georgia. It was at that meeting that the
discussion led to the launching of a program which was called
"The Baptist Hour." At that meeting Dodd was chosen to be
the first speaker on the program.¹

Thus, on January 5, 1941, "The Baptist Hour" was
born in Shreveport, Louisiana. Early that Sunday morning
Dodd stood in the pulpit of First Baptist Church, with his
choir, to conduct a worship service for the unseen congre-
gation. His sermon entitled "Christ and Human Crises" was
taken by telephone lines into Radio Station KWKH. From
there it was sent to sixteen other stations in an eleven-
state area.²

Later, in the fall of that same year, S. F. Lowe,
the director of that new denominational ministry, reluc-
tantly accepted Dodd's resignation from the Radio Commit-
tee. Lowe spoke of one source of satisfaction in losing
Dodd from the committee; he said, "Our committee will feel
much freer to invite you to speak on our program." He con-
tinued candidly by saying that he considered Dodd to be
"one of the best radio speakers in the Southern Baptist
Convention."³

¹Webb Collection, 1940 (Radio Committee—SBC).
²"Born in Louisiana," Baptist Message, November 8,
³Letter from S. F. Lowe, September 22, 1941, Webb
Collection (SBC Radio Committee).
Many other outstanding leaders in the convention shared that sentiment. During the same year the Radio Committee planned a series of thirteen messages on an extensive radio hookup. Leaders around the convention were asked to nominate speakers. Dodd was nominated as often as anyone on the list with the exception of George W. Truett who was listed number one on more than half of the nominations.¹

Dodd’s radio ministry continued to the last decade of his life. Some of the more significant occasions came after he reached three-score years. On October 20, 1940, with the storm clouds of World War II ready to spill over, he preached the “C.B.S. Church of the Air” sermon. His message “Faith for Fateful Days” was a classic exposition of I Pet. 1:7 “Though for a passing moment you suffer various trials, this is only to prove that your faith is sterling.”² The next August, as a member of the Executive Committee of the Baptist World Alliance, Dodd was invited to address Baptists of the world over a short-wave radio hookup. Again taking his cue from world crisis, he discussed

¹ Copy of tabulated nominations in Webb Collection, 1940 (Radio Committee, SBC).

what Baptists could do for a world bled white by war. The
message championed religious liberty and said: "Until the
business of the world, local and international, comes under
the mastery of Christ, even as art and music and the best
literature have done, the world will never be well of its
wounds."1

On April 2, 1944, immediately following the close
of "The Baptist Hour" program, KKGK began the broadcast of
the "Southern Baptist Evangelistic Hour." Dodd had tran-
scribed the programs two months earlier in Atlanta, Georgia,
under the sponsorship of the convention's Radio Committee.2
Dodd was again "The Baptist Hour" preacher for three Sundays
in May, 1945.3 His last volume of sermons was the result of
a series of radio sermons delivered as part of the prepara-
tion for the Simultaneous Evangelistic Crusade of eight
thousand Baptist churches west of the Mississippi River in
the spring of 1950.4

Besides his preaching ministry, Dodd annually re-
ported the convention meeting over nationwide radio. As

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1 Baptist Message, October 22, 1942, p. 8.


3 "Come, Let Us Worship the Lord: A Souvenir of
The Baptist Hour," Webb Collection, 1945 (Miscellaneous
Manuscripts), p. 4.

4 M. B. Dodd, Salvation: Past, Present, Future
(Shreveport, Louisiana: First Baptist Church, 1950), p. 2
(hereafter cited as Salvation).
those broadcasts continued into his senior years, he gave reports of significant action on the convention floor with his own commentary and sometimes that of invited guests.\(^1\) In a letter signed by his secretary it was reported that Dodd had preached over practically every large station of the United States and many in other parts of the world, including Panama, Lima, Santiago, Buenos Aires, and other points in South and Central America. Also mentioned were stations in Calcutta, India; Rangoon, Burma; and Shanghai, China.\(^2\)

Dodd was a genuine pioneer in radio preaching. He cultivated the medium, not simply because he enjoyed it, but because he could see its potential to multiply his message.

**The Message in Print**

Not all of his writing was in sermon form, strictly speaking, but in Dodd's mind, it was essentially evangelistic proclamation. In an article about evangelism, he wrote:

> I would define Evangelism as the proclamation of the good news of God in Jesus Christ with a view to winning others to Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord. This telling of the Good News may be done personally by word of mouth, may be done publicly as [by] the called preacher of the Gospel, may be done

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\(^1\)Letter to Pat White, \textit{KZKH}, Webb Collection, 1942 (\textit{\textsuperscript{\textcopyright}}).  
\(^2\)Ibid.
by the printed page, by distributing tracts, by the radio, and by many other means. We should capture every means at our disposal and bring them into requisition to the service of Christ for the salvation of souls.¹

His literary bent appeared early; he trained in high school and college. At Union University he was editor in chief of the college magazine. During his editorship, it reportedly became "one of the leading college magazines of the south."² He named the college annual "Lest We Forget" and was elected literary editor of that publication.³

Tracts

Soon after graduation from college, and while in his first full-time pastorate, Dodd began writing gospel tracts. When he had written his first one he thought: "Here I am trying to win others to Christ and I have not even won my own father."⁴ He sent a copy of the tract, and within a week he had a letter from his father asking him to come and baptize him.

Dodd believed in using tracts. Throughout his ministry he urged other Christians to distribute gospel tracts, appealing primarily to their soul-winning effectiveness.⁵

¹Baptist Message, January 25, 1951, p. 4.
²"Monroe Elmon Dodd," p. 2. ³Ibid.
⁵Baptist Message, June 1, 1922.
Toward the close of his active ministry, when Dodd was General Director of the Centennial Evangelistic Crusade, he urged his fellow Baptists to "make tracks with tracts."

Christianity is promoted by propaganda. The printed page is a powerful propaganda agency. Pamphlets, tracts, and leaflets are used in multiplied millions by governments, political parties, political ideologies, and cult religions. Baptists should make more tracks with tracts than they do.¹

Dodd continued to be a prolific writer of tracts throughout his ministry. By 1947 it was reported that his tracts had reached a circulation of over a half-million and were printed in seven languages.²

Baptist Periodicals

Another phase of Dodd's writing ministry was in Baptist periodicals. While he was in the Fulton pastorate, Dodd founded a Baptist paper. It was called the Baptist Message and was later combined with the Baptist Builder of Martin, Tennessee. This, in turn, was absorbed by the Baptist and Reflector and continued as the official organ of Tennessee Baptists. During his one-year pastorate in Louisville, Kentucky, he reviewed a number of books for the Western Recorder and was one of their contributing

¹M. E. Dodd, "Making Tracks with Tracts," carbon copy of manuscript in Webb Collection, 1945 (Articles written for Centennial Evangelistic Crusade, M. E. Dodd, Gen. Dir.).

²"Silhouette, Dr. Dodd," p. 5.
editors. When he moved to Shreveport the next year, he immediately began to write for the Baptist Chronicle, the official organ for Louisiana Baptists at that time. He sent church news and publicity, as well as sermons. In 1919, editor E. O. Ware gave up attempts to collect unpaid subscriptions and sold the paper. It was transferred to a "holding and publishing committee" of which M. E. Dodd was a member. The name of the new paper was the Baptist Message—the same name as the paper Dodd had founded in Tennessee. The new paper's first edition reported: "with great enthusiasm, Dr. M. E. Dodd was elected editorial writer to serve until the meeting of the convention." He was identified as "the author of several books" and one "who wields a trenchant pen."  

As he began that ministry he quoted his lifelong text, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Gal. 6:14). He identified it as the text of his first sermon in Shreveport nearly eight years before and said, "It is good enough with which to start this newspaper work." Pledging to "write right" he stated: "It is my desire above all things to magnify the cross of Christ and in doing so to promote all the interests of his cross everywhere." 

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1 "Monroe Elmon Dodd," p. 5.
3 Ibid., p. 8.
From that time until his move to California in 1927, there was an article or sermon by Dodd in virtually every issue of the paper. In 1926, when the Baptist Message was at its peak circulation, Dodd was writing a weekly column of miscellaneous paragraphs under the banner "This and That." It was discontinued for a while in 1929 and reappeared again in scattered issues of 1930 and 1931.¹

During the depression the circulation of the paper declined drastically. In 1928 it was the second largest in circulation among Baptist state papers, but within a space of two years it dropped to last place, even though the subscription was reduced from $2.00 to $1.00.²

Just before the depression, Dodd accepted an assignment from P. E. Burroughs to be editor of one of the pages in the new periodical—Church Administration. His columns were to be in question-and-answer form. The articles of advice to church staff members continued under the banner "Ask Me Again" until the periodical was discontinued with the January, 1931, issue.³

Dodd frequently wrote articles for other periodicals

¹Baptist Message, 1928-1931.


³Letter from P. E. Burroughs, January 5, 1928, Webb Collection, 1929 (Church Administration).
throughout his ministry, including Southern Baptist periodicals such as Home Missions, the Quarterly Review, and others. He was a frequent contributor also to the Watchman-Examiner in New York edited by his friend, Curtis Lee Laws.

Published Addresses and Sermons

Most of the books which Dodd wrote were sermons or other addresses. The Prayer Life of Jesus reproduces addresses which he gave to various young people's assemblies, Bible conferences, and other assemblies throughout the country.\(^1\) In 1924 a member of Dodd's church gave $10,000 to Baptist Bible Institute to establish the Lane Foundation Lectures. A condition of orthodoxy was attached to the endowment. Dodd was the first speaker and his lectures, The Democracy of the Saints, were printed. Dodd's five lectures on the church surveyed in characteristically alliterative style the membership, the method, the message, the motive, and the Master of the church.\(^2\) Concerning the Collection, his next book, was not homiletical.\(^3\)


\(^2\) M. E. Dodd, The Democracy of the Saints: The Lane Lectures (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1924), p. 7.

\(^3\) Dodd sold this manuscript to Revell on the basis of a 1929 emphasis on stewardship among Southern Presbyterians, Southern Methodists, and Southern Baptists. In
Dodd's sermons were usually stenographically reported as he delivered them in his pulpit in Shreveport. In 1916 the Chronicle Publishing Company, publishers of the Baptist state paper in Alexandria, Louisiana, issued a series of his Sunday morning messages under the title Baptist Principles and Practices. In these, Dodd dealt at length with Baptist history and heritage and such distinctives as democracy in government and individualism in religion. He defended practices like close communion and doctrines like the eternal security of the believer as distinctively Baptist.¹

In 1917 a volume of six eschatological sermons was issued with the title Jesus Is Coming to Earth Again; or

writing the editor he said, "I believe that what I have tried to do in this manuscript will have a large and wide appeal, especially to the 40,000 ministers of these denominations mentioned." M. B. Dodd, Concerning the Collection (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1929), and Webb Collection, 1928 (Concerning the Collection). Letters to Revell and to Curtis Lee Laws, November 2, 1928.

One of the early study course books of the Southern Baptist Convention was Dodd's Missions Our Mission. This volume had a twofold object. It was designed to promote the denominational Cooperative Program as a unit without segmented rivalry. The second object of the book was to show that the ultimate aim of all of the denomination's work, whether orphans' home, hospitals, ministerial relief, Christian education, or other missions, had one goal. "The aim of it all is the preaching of the gospel to every creature." M. B. Dodd, Missions Our Mission (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1930), p. 5.

The Signs of the Times: The Second Coming of Christ and End of the World. In 1920 Dodd privately published a brief paperback volume of four addresses delivered at "various young people's summer assemblies." The title was Jesus, the Lily, the Lamb, the Lion, the Lord.

His next volume of sermons was published in 1930 in response to "hundreds of reports and requests for copies of the pastor's sermons" from his extensive radio audience on KWH. The volume, entitled The Christ Whom We Worship, was a collection of five sermons on fundamental Christology stenographically reported as they were broadcast in the evening services of the First Baptist Church. They were messages which Dodd said he had used during the previous several years "at various Bible Conferences, in evangelistic meetings, and in summer supplies from Boston to Los Angeles." The five sermons dealt with Christ's virgin birth, divine life, vicarious death, bodily resurrection, and personal return.

Two years later he issued another collection of fourteen sermons chosen "from those which previously had

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1 Dodd, Jesus Is Coming.

2 M. E. Dodd, Jesus, the Lily, the Lamb, the Lion, the Lord (Shreveport, Louisiana: n.p., 1920) (hereafter cited as Jesus, the Lily).

been preached in the regular pulpit ministry" during his twenty years in Shreveport (and in special services throughout the country)." These, also given over radio station KWKH, were a series of radio revival services, January 24 to February 6, 1932.¹

In 1934 the Sunday School Board published another volume of Dodd's messages. *Christ's Memorial* is a collection of brief communion meditations which Dodd delivered at the monthly service of the Lord's Supper.² He published in 1936 a volume of sermons all based on texts found in the third chapter and the sixteenth verse of various New Testament books. The volume was appropriately entitled *Three: Sixteens.*³

Dodd was too busy for the next dozen years with the burden of Dodd College to put out any more books. But in 1950 he issued one more volume of radio sermons. It was


²M. E. Dodd, *Christ's Memorial* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1934). This helpful collection, first published while Dodd was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, was reprinted in 1953 after Dodd's death.

While Dodd was president of the Southern Baptist Convention, he made a missionary tour around the world, taking in the Baptist World Alliance meeting in 1934. The result of that trip was a volume telling the story of his trip: *Circling the Globe.*

a volume of eleven messages on the general theme of salvation issued in connection with the Simultaneous Evangelistic Crusade of eight thousand Baptist churches west of the Mississippi River in the spring of that year.  

There is some correspondence in 1943 about a volume which apparently was never published. Burney Zondervan inquired in January about a proposed series of evangelistic sermons and expressed eagerness to have the manuscript. There is no evidence of follow-through on this with Zondervan, but later in the same year there is some correspondence and other notes indicating the intention of publishing a book of sermons. But again they did not appear. The likely cause in that case was unsatisfactory arrangements with a vanity publisher; the proposed volume was to be issued under the name Emedee Press, probably a phonetic acrostic of Dodd's initials.  

Direct Mail  

Besides writing for print, Dodd also carried on an extensive correspondence. He wrote many personal letters meeting particular needs of individuals, but he made more extensive use of form letters. He devised form letters for his secretary to personalize and type for different occasions

1 Dodd, Salvation.  
2 Webb Collection, 1943 (Dr. Dodd's books).
in the lives of his members.\(^1\)

For example, when a new baby arrived, Dodd sent a flowery letter of congratulations to the family. In June of 1938, after returning from his 18,000-mile mission tour, he sent letters addressed "to the loved ones" of church members who died while he was away. The letter said: "Our church observance of the Lord's Supper and the Memorial Service next Sunday, June 5, will provide me the first proper opportunity I have had since returning from the long journey to make grateful and loving recognition of your dear one who went away during my absence." The letter continued in a direct attempt at a comforting ministry. Other uniform letters, some typed and some mimeographed on stationery, went out to mailing lists of various groups such as incoming students at Centenary College in Shreveport or to new members announcing the baptismal service planned for them.\(^2\)

It is evident that not all of his writing was preaching. But especially in printed sermons and tracts, Dodd sought to apply the Word to the hearts of men. His writing was at the same time an extension of his pulpit ministry and a distraction from it. His discipline in writing certainly helped his style. In his early ministry, before moving to Shreveport in 1912, he wrote more sermon manuscripts fully.

\(^{1}\)Webb Collection, 1938 (Form Letters).

\(^{2}\)Ibid.
Later, as his ministry multiplied, he wrote manuscripts for articles but not sermons. His sermons were prepared in pulpit note form. Opening paragraphs were usually thoughtfully structured. Often, additional paragraphs were written out for a climax of scaring rhetoric in the middle of the sermon. The rest would be very sketchy note form. The sermons that he published were taken stenographically as he preached them and usually were printed with scant revision.¹

¹Webb Collection, Pulpit Notes File. See also Dodd, The Christ, p. 8, and Dodd, Three Sixteens, p. 6.
CHAPTER IV

SERMON PREPARATION

Time for Preparation

Samuel Blizzard's research into conflict of roles in the rural parish ministry is now well known. His findings are generally accepted as demonstrating that the minister's own ideal self-image places the role of preacher at top priority. Yet, judging by the amount of time spent in each of his basic ministry tasks, the minister typically functions as an administrator, pastor, priest, and organizer more than he does as a preacher.¹ M. E. Dodd was the epitome of the twentieth century's new breed of preacher; how did he function so actively in all of his roles and still come to the pulpit week after week with something to say? This chapter sets forth Dodd's adjustment to this unsolved problem of the parish preacher.

Long-Range Planning

Dodd's most effective assault on the problem of sermon preparation was his self-discipline of announcing in

advance his program of preaching. He wrote:

The selection of the subject is almost half the victory in sermon preparation. Many times I have found myself giving as much time and thought to, and being anxious about, WHAT I should preach as was required in the preparation after the subject had been determined upon.

For this reason I find it exceedingly helpful to preach in series. . . . It is good self-discipline also to have them printed. Then I am committed before the public for those subjects and cannot go back on them. Dodd thought of a sermon series as being one of four different forms: scripture exposition, doctrinal studies, biographical studies, and practical themes.²

He often had two or more series going simultaneously, varying the four types. He might have a course of expositions through one of the gospels on consecutive Sunday mornings, a series of doctrinal sermons on Sunday evenings, and a biographical series running for chapel services at the girls' school. His program for the first ten weeks in 1928 included a course of expository messages from the Acts of the Apostles for Sunday mornings and a series on the Ten Commandments for the evening services. His Wednesday evening prayer meetings for those weeks were structured around Pilgrim's Progress.³ A four-month program for the last

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² Ibid.
³ At least once Dodd projected the text for his prayer meeting meditations for a whole year in advance. He announced that the scripture lesson for the Wednesday night meeting would be "the same as those designated for
quarter of 1943 focused on "The New Testament Church" in the mornings and in the evenings on practical topics dealing with "The Christian Home."  

His greatest delight was to build a series of biographical messages on the person of Christ. He never seemed to exhaust all of the variations on that theme. He could combine the biographical motif with a consecutive exposition or with a doctrinal framework. An example of the former is his program for February and March of 1929. He preached through John's Gospel in twenty-six sermons. For six consecutive Sunday mornings and evenings he dealt with successive passages. The first sermon was based on the first eleven verses and was entitled "The Pre-existent Christ." The evening of the same day he dealt with the next three verses in a message on "The Incarnate Christ." The pattern continued six more Sundays, dealing with extended passages from every chapter in the Gospel. Starting on the seventh Sunday was a week of special services continuing the series in morning and evening sermons. The climax came on Easter

the Wednesdays in his book of daily devotions." The book indicated was a mimeographed compilation of selections available to the church members. Webb Collection, 1943 (typed unclassified manuscript).

1 "Dr. Dodd's Sermon Subjects," September-December, 1943, in Webb Collection in a miscellaneous group of publicity pieces not filed. There are 26 sermons by the pastor in this planned program. In addition, 10 studies for new members were outlined for Sunday morning classes taught by the pastor and his associate. Dodd shared Wednesday evening responsibilities with other leaders in the church during this quarter.
Sunday with a morning message from chapter twenty entitled "The Risen Christ" and an evening message from the final chapter on the ever-living Christ.\textsuperscript{1} Another Easter-week series was based on characters surrounding the passion narrative: Judas, Peter, Pilate, Herod, and others.\textsuperscript{2}

Budget of Time

Dodd recommended that a minister budget his time and stay on schedule as much as possible. He believed that most preachers could accomplish much more than they do by "taking up all the slack in their time."\textsuperscript{3}

Dodd's typical week scheduled no significant block of time for Bible study and sermon construction. Monday morning started with a church staff meeting at nine o'clock and pastors' conference at ten. At noon he had luncheon

\textsuperscript{1}Webb Collection, 1928–1929 (Printed Matter). Dodd made extensive use of his planned program in advertising. The sermon texts and titles were often reported in the newspaper or displayed in ads. They were distributed in printed bulletins, leaflets, and cards. Frequently, especially for revival services, the series would be printed on post cards. See Webb Collection for planned programs in 43 printed, publicity pieces in the unfiled miscellaneous group.

\textsuperscript{2}Webb Collection, 1941 (Printed Matter).

\textsuperscript{3}Letter to Slater A. Murphy, December 3, 1942, Webb Collection, 1942 (Pastoral). The letter was a hastily dictated reply to a request for help with a speech on "The Preacher's Personal Program." Dodd apologized for being brief and pleaded the pressure of other responsibilities. Yet this is one of the few times that Dodd granted such requests. Other letters asking for advice and information and several questionnaires from students doing research lie unanswered in his files.
committee meetings scheduled. At three o'clock he met with the Woman's Missionary Society.\(^1\)

On Tuesday he went to the church office to read and answer mail. Then he did writing for newspaper and magazine articles and for The Chimes, a weekly mailout of First Baptist Church. Apparently Dodd never elected to delegate that public relations task to any of his staff. The hand-written notes and typed copy throughout the Dodd files show that he personally took that responsibility.\(^2\)

On Wednesday he scheduled twelve hours from ten o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night at the church. That day included personal conferences, Sunday school officers and teachers meeting, and the regular Wednesday night church program of prayer meeting, group activities, and committee meetings.\(^3\)

He set aside each Thursday as "Visitation Day," and Friday was his "Rest Day."\(^4\) He listed hobbies as golf and fishing. These, he said, "make me forget my troubles, help me enjoy my friends, recreate physical fiber, mental poise and spiritual vitality."\(^5\) On Saturday mornings Dodd planned

\[^{1}\text{M. E. Dodd, "Ask Me Again," Church Administration, C.S. II (July, 1923), 23.}\]
\[^{2}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{3}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{4}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{5}\text{M. E. Dodd, "My Hobbies," a typed manuscript for June, 1931, BYU Magazine, in Webb Collection, 1932 (an unlabeled folder).}\]