

Cmml Missionary Conference 1995-10 Assorted Recommendations

by William MacDonald

William MacDonald emphasizes the importance of effective communication and writing in ministry during the CMML Missionary Conference.

Duration: 57:45

Scripture: Psalm 23, Psalm 121, Isaiah 26:3, Matthew 6:33, Luke 23:43, Hebrews 2:3

Topics: "Conference"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the importance of recognizing that everyone's life is interesting and has unique experiences. The speaker encourages the audience to reflect on their own personal encounters with God and the ways in which they have seen His hand at work in their lives. The transcript also provides tips for effective writing, emphasizing the use of colorful descriptions, dialogue, repetition, and human interest to engage readers. The speaker concludes by urging writers to not let their conclusions fall flat and to rewrite and edit their work carefully.

Transcript

Defy our pens and pencils and computers and word processors that we might use them to your glory. We think of the possibilities of the printed page and we pray that we might be our very best for you. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now the first order of business every year is to remind you about this pencil you received at the beginning. It says black ink, white paper.

And the purpose of that is for the benefit of CMML, it's very hard to receive blue air letters with blue ink. And so they say use white paper and write with black ink and it will make life much simpler for them at CMML. While we're talking about CMML, just a few pointers.

It's good, any editor of a magazine likes to receive fresh material. I know that some of you are very busy and you write maybe a monthly or bi-monthly newsletter and send it out to your constituency and send a copy to CMML and that's alright. But it would really be good if you could send some fresh material for the magazine that hasn't been distributed all over the country.

In your prayer letters, they should be brief, they should be heavy on human interest and they should have prayer requests specially identified as such. A four-page newsletter is really too much for the folks at home. Sorry to say that, but that's the way life is in this rushed United States.

What is the magazine that has the biggest circulation in the world, anybody? Notice the word digest, brief. They take things and condense them, that's what people want today. They don't want a lot of wordy material and they don't want a lot of peripheral matters.

Your prayer letters should really, what people really want to know is what's going on for God. I mean, if your baby has the sniffles or something, it's really not news because babies back here have sniffles too. Or you go down to the market and you see all the fruits and vegetables there in the market.

Well, it's nice and it's interesting, but really it would be more important to tell of souls getting saved, of people being baptized and added to the assembly. And as I said, go heavy on human interest. I got a letter recently from New Tribes Mission.

I thought it was kind of cute. It told about some nationals in Columbia that were brought out to Bogota to talk with the government. All the anthropologists were trying to get the missionaries out.

They were destroying the culture of the people. You've heard all of this before. This newsletter starts off with telling the reactions of some of those nationals when they came out to civilization.

Maronin, Wendat, and Tiger were not the first among the Maku to see the big city of Bogota. Vatchinid was the first, but she was a woman. That was back in 1989.

She returned back to the tribe with her broken leg and a cast. They had heard her story. And this is her story.

This is her impressions coming from the jungle and seeing the big city. There are men with guns at the airport to guard the airplanes. And there are lots of airplanes.

Some are big father ones, too. The one that comes here is a baby airplane. We got into the stomach of a car and sitting down we went fast.

We crossed over a river on a road up high in the air. A road up high in the air. There are cars everywhere going all the time, even during the night.

The houses are stacked on top of each other. And side by side. Everywhere.

No jungle. Well, I think it's a clever introduction for a newsletter. It's not all that.

It goes on to talk about the men that are being held hostage. Dave, Mark, Rick, Tim, Steve and Ray who need deliverance from captivity to gorillas. Everybody is interesting.

I think this is one of the hardest things to get across to a group like this. Everyone's life is interesting. Your life is interesting.

If I could sit down and talk with you for half an hour, we could pull out some things from your life. For instance, let me just make you think. What's the most dramatic answer to prayer you've ever had? What is the most dramatic way in which you've seen the marvelous converging of circumstances in your life? In

which you've been conscious of God working as the sovereign God and moving the checkers on the checkerboard.

Some of you are thinking right away, and I know you're thinking of interesting things. But you just take it for granted, forgetting that that would be very interesting if it were written up and people had a chance to read it. It would be very, very interesting.

I'd just like to say to some of those who are going out for the first time, first of all, it would be a very good thing if you could keep a diary. You say, well, I'll never forget. You will forget.

You forget. But if you can keep a diary, keep a file of the prayer letters that you send out. And over the years, that file could really contain some interesting things that would bring back the memories to you.

I would strongly recommend that. Some years ago, I went around the world ministering the Word of God, and I tried to reconstruct it recently. The dates were gone.

Even the order of some of the countries that we visited was gone from my memory. But then, in the goodness of God, I found a file with letters, copies of letters that I had sent home at that time, and the whole thing came right back into focus. So I would really, for those going out, I would, well, for anybody for that matter, especially if you have a computer, keep a record of those things, and it will make interesting reading in days to come.

I'm really encouraged. Every year I come here and encourage people, encourage the missionaries to tell. Some of them are unreconstructed rebels like Charlie Shorten.

Charlie Shorten has more interesting things than you could shake a fist at, honestly. I haven't got him converted yet. But we will.

We keep working on it, Charlie. It's interesting how many people are taking heed and writing interesting things. God's Miracles to Marion.

You got this. Marion Carter was given to you. I'm encouraged.

I'm encouraged when this is happening. Lighting the Mosquito Coast. I don't know how many of you have read that.

Good. Interesting, you know. Really interesting reading published by CMML.

Send Me to a Hard Place, Agnes McDonnell. Let me just mention that. That's a good title.

Titles are important, aren't they? And I think that's a good title. It grabbed me right away. Wow.

A woman wanting to go to a hard place. And it's good reading, too. Pardon? I withhold comment.

This wasn't on the table here, but I read this book, A Kernel of Wheat by Chester Donaldson. Chester Donaldson served the Lord up in Northern Ontario. It's kind of reminiscences of that period of his service for the Lord there.

And you think, well, what did he get out of it? Well, I was really interested. It told when he was getting out of the armed forces. He was in the service during the Second World War up there in Canada.

And when he was getting out of the armed forces, one of his Christian pals said to him, what are you going to do when you get out of the service? Well, he said, I'm going back to the farm. And the fellow said to him, look, there are a lot of people who can farm. Why don't you go out and take the gospel to the people? And you know, that little statement changed the whole direction of his life.

It did. And as far as I'm concerned, the book was worth reading just for that. I can use that as an illustration sometime.

It makes you think of the Lord's words. Let the dead bury the dead, but go down, preach the kingdom of God. Elsa Hart wrote this book, *A Rose from My Garden*.

It tells about her daughter, Camille, and her bouts with cancer extending over years. This is very professionally done, very beautifully done. The grammar is good, and vocabulary is excellent.

It's filled with human interest, which we keep emphasizing as being very, very important. And it's already been a blessing in the lives of people. There's a lot of comfort in a book like that.

I'm doing all of this to whet your appetite to get going in a writing ministry. So those are some of the things that are coming off the press now, and they have a message, and it's true they won't be widely circulated in the bookstores. The bookstores really want rather a thick book with a square spine like these.

This one would be more what the bookstores would like. They generally don't want to handle books that have just staples that are put together with staples. Again, I want to emphasize every one of you.

I don't see even how old you are. You might be quite young, but every one of you, your life is interesting. I remember when Will Elliott and his wife were up in the home, quite aged in the home there in Hayward, California, and I used to bring the interns out there.

And I'd introduce the interns to them, and Will would take over, and he'd start talking to them, talk about his nephew, Jim Elliott. And the day he arrived at Wheaton campus with a huge Bible under his arm, and Will said, I wondered, I wonder how long he'll keep carrying that Bible on the sophisticated Wheaton campus, you know. But he did, and went on faithfully for the Lord through it all.

And the fellows were absolutely thrilled, and then Will would put his hand on their shoulder before he left and say, go on for the Lord, young man, you know, things like that. They were really red-letter experiences in the lives of some of our interns. And I could say that of all of the people out there.

Somebody just had a time to sit down and talk with them, to tell them some marvelous, marvelous, marvelous stories. And I feel that it's great to put it into writing. You extend your ministry when you put it into writing.

You can jump denominational barriers, and you give yourself some productive work to do while your body's lying in the grave if the Lord hasn't come. Somebody said every person owes it to himself to provide himself with some productive work while his body's lying in the grave. And you can do this through the ministry of writing.

You can multiply your own ministry. Any questions so far? Well, there's a section in your notebook on Christian writing, and naturally we're not going to go over it in detail. We don't have the time to do it here.

But you might just look at it. Was that tan is the color? Tan? It's called Christian writing. We'll just skim through the first part and then spend more time on the last part.

First of all, there's a section there on possibilities of Christian writing, telling even of tracts that were thrown away and then picked up, you know, the sovereignty of God, picked up by somebody, and that person coming to Christ, and then that person writing something. Great Christian literature has resulted from that sort of thing. And then the limitations of literature.

It's not the answer to everything. Literature, there are limitations to it. What makes good literature? And if you've taken a course on writing in college, you know that any good piece of writing has unity, coherence, and emphasis.

It has one theme that's followed through. Throughout, it has coherence. The parts of your writing are held together so that the reader is carried along smoothly without his mind jerking.

And then emphasis, it builds up to a climax. Usually the emphasis is in the first paragraph or the last. In order to be a good writer, you should be a good reader.

The importance of reading, page 9. It's so important to read. While you're reading, almost subconsciously be evaluating what you are reading. Why is this a great piece of literature that I'm reading? You know, this sort of thing.

And how can I imitate it? Imitation is the sincerest form of flattering. It's a nice paragraph down at the bottom. Spurgeon said, We preachers know and our people suspect that nothing we say is really original.

All we do is package it in a new way. Even the great Spurgeon confessed, Thoughts belong to everybody, brethren. I must not wonder if other people steal my thoughts since I've stolen so many of other people's.

For my part, I beg, borrow, and steal from every conceivable quarter. But when I steal a man's coat, I tear it all to pieces and make a waistcoat out of it. Excuse me.

In other words, he milked other people's cows but made his own butter. Inspiration. There is such a thing as inspiration.

The Lord lays something on your heart to write. There is such an experience of getting definite help from the Lord when you are writing. Page 10.

Notice the last paragraph. Once when Sir Arthur Sullivan was attending a performance of his own opera, HMS Pinafore, he turned to a friend and asked, Did I really write that? And this is a common experience. You look back on it and you realize that the Lord was helping you and you don't take any credit for it at all.

It's hard work. You have to discipline yourself to this. People say to me, When do you write? I say, In my spare time.

And that's true. I write when I have spare time. I always have some projects to be working on.

Some very good quotes here. Second paragraph in the end. T.H. White who wrote the Once and Future Kings said of an earlier book, I shall probably be glad to have written this book but I hate writing it.

Part of that is because you write and then you rewrite and you edit and you rewrite. Thank you. Notice the various types of writing that you engage in on page 12.

Tracts. It's hard getting tracts published. It's hard getting anything published.

It's hard getting tracts published. You have to kind of study the kind of tracts that a particular publishing house wants. American Tract Society like to publish articles by athletes.

By fairly famous people in that. The human element is strong in their writing. Good News publishes other types altogether.

Magazine articles. I know Uplook Magazine would really appreciate articles, contemporary articles rather than just republishing things from the past. Jabe Nicholson would really hug you if you would send in some good articles at the present time.

News stories. It's surprising that sometimes you can get things in local newspapers especially not in the big cities. Letters.

Well, you know about letters. If you're going to be on the mission field you're going to be writing letters. Acknowledging gifts.

Editorials for church bulletins, magazines, devotional articles, expository writing. There's an example here of a tract. Probably the worst example I could find anywhere.

If you read it you'll cringe. It's so bad. I wouldn't even want to have to rewrite it.

I have a nervous breakdown in the process. Page 14. I use a letter I received some time ago.

A long time ago now from the Gibsons in Marseilles. It tells their impressions when they first arrived in France. It's very well done.

A very good letter. Very readable. Page 16.

Editorials, devotional articles, expository writing. I give a good example of expository writing there based on 2 Timothy 2, 3 and 5. How it should be done. We don't want to go over it now, but you'll have time to read it.

How do you do it? First of all you choose the subject. I keep a little file. It's just called something, some dumb thing like miscellaneous projects or something.

And if I get an idea I just scratch it on a paper and throw it into the file. And then you wait to see if it incubates. If the Lord is in it then you'll get other ideas along that same line.

You throw them into the file. And after a while maybe you have quite a few articles. Well, an outline begins to emerge.

I have things in the file that never saw the light of day. The ideas never came. But you choose a subject and then you start collecting ideas and then you work on the outline.

And a lot of this would have to do with you brothers who preach to a good outline that's tremendous. Psalm 23, the secret of a happy life, the secret of a happy death, the secret of a happy eternity. Who

couldn't preach a message on that? Just a matter of putting the flesh on the bones, isn't it? I've used that so many times for a funeral message.

Secret of a happy life. Not original with me. The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.

Secret of a happy death. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Secret of a happy eternity.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Or Hebrews 2.3. Salvation so great.

Neglect so easy. Escape so impossible. Wouldn't it be easy for you to write a gospel tract for that outline? It would for me.

Here's another good outline. Luke 23.43. What certainty verily I say unto thee. What speed today.

What glory in paradise. What company with me. Tremendous.

God, you don't have this, do you? These notes. You have none? I like Isaiah 26.3. You, a precious God. Perfect peace.

A priceless possession. Whose mind is stayed on you. A present focus.

Because he trusts in you. A powerful faith. Man, if you can make an outline like that.

It's not difficult, really. Giving a message on that. Or writing an article.

A magazine article on it. I like Haddon Robinson's outline of Psalm 121. He's the God of the towering hills.

Who gives help to his people. I lift up my eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help.

Isn't that good? He's the God of the night watch. Who neither slumbers nor sleeps. He that keepeth Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.

We're kept by the insomnia of God. He's the God who provides friendly shade. To protect from the elements that might hurt us.

Sun shall not smite thee by day nor the moon by night. The God of the house and of the road. Who looks after us in all our comings and goings.

By comings I, what is it he saw? Going out and I coming in. From this time forth and forevermore. Then you go on to the lead paragraph.

And we were talking about this earlier today with some folks. The purpose of the lead paragraph is to grab people. And in writing books today, if you'll notice in Reader's Digest, Reader's Digest practically always begins with an article of human interest.

And in a lot of books, what they'll do is take some incident from, let's say, from the life of a person that's really dramatic and really traumatic, and they'll just give you a little bit of it. Something to grab your attention. They won't tell you very much.

And then they go back and start laying the foundation and building up to that point again. But the lead paragraph, of course, is very, very important if you're doing an article or doing a book like that. Notice, it may be done by a question.

Have you heard of the poor fellow who dropped dead jogging home from a health food store? Well, I'd want to read more about that, wouldn't you? It may be done by an exclamation or a humorous or startling statement. We have a permissive father. He permitted us to work.

It may be done by a quotation. According to one lawyer, Rose Bird was undistinguished but not otherwise remarkable. Rose Bird was the chief justice of the Supreme Court in the state of California.

And she was removed from office by the voters. It may be done by the use of an incident. During a trial at which I was an attorney, an eminent psychologist was called to testify, a severe no-nonsense professional.

She sat down in the witness chair, unaware that its rear legs were set precariously on the back of the raised platform. Will you state your name? I might not get through this. It's so funny.

Anyway, read it at your leisure. It's very well written. I want to tell you, if you came to an article and it had that first paragraph, you'd want to read the article.

You wouldn't be able to lay it down. Or it could be done by colorful description. Of course, this is a famous paragraph by Macaulay, the old philosopher still among us, in a brown coat with the metal buttons, the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, carrying his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans.

Good writing. Why is it a good writing? Because it gives you an image. An image comes before your mind, a colorful image.

It may be done by dialogue. I really don't know what to do with my books, he said, looking around for sympathy. Why not read them, asked a caustic fellow.

And then, of course, you do your first rough draft. Don't worry too much about it. I would say just be content to do a first rough draft because you're going to cross out.

That's the marvelous thing about the computer, about the word processor, isn't it? All you have to do is backspace. I still have a bunion on this finger from writing with a pencil all down through the years. I guess it will be there until the end.

You don't get a bunion with a computer. You just backspace. That's probably the only reason.

Don't think you're through. Bottom of page 20, when you have finished the first rough draft, the rest is murder. Yes, murder.

You must murder your darling production. You must reread it and criticize it and so forth. I can't overemphasize page 22.

Be simple. When I read something, for instance, in a theological journal or something, I read something and it's very obscure and very difficult. I draw the conclusion to the man who wrote it.

He doesn't really understand it. He's trying to obfuscate us, drowning us with words. The great thing today is be simple.

When I first wrote what the Bible teaches, I had in mind maybe ninth grade audience. It was a big mistake. What would you say today, Charlie? What kind of an audience? Sixth grade? Yes, sixth grade.

Just one of the facts of life. I don't know if any of you hear Chuck Smith on the radio. He's a preacher out in California.

They have these Calvary chapels all over the place now. The genius of that whole movement, and those churches are springing up everywhere, is simplicity. They just go through the Bible constantly, systematically, consecutively.

They go through the Bible, and it's simple. And middle America goes out there dressed informally in jeans and all the rest, and they have three services or four services on a Sunday morning. Simplicity.

You cannot be too simple. It gives an illustration of it, two illustrations of it. Those two quotations in this page, and they're good.

It's good writing. But every word in those two illustrations are monosyllables. I'll show you what you can do with monosyllables.

For instance, the second one, the first, says, When you speak and write, no law says you have to use big words. Short words are as good as long ones, and short old words like sun and grass and home are best of all. A lot of small words, more than you might think, can meet your needs with the strength, grace, and charm that large words lack.

I'll give you an example of what you shouldn't do. On page 23, the last quotation on that page, Now I shall for these reasons review the great occasions which the Holy Ghost records for our instruction and hope to show I trust plainly to any man who is subject to the word of God that there's nothing capricious in the manner in which the Holy Ghost was given, that there's nothing to weaken the confidence of the feeblest child of God. There is everything flowing from a full or comparatively full acquaintance with the revealed will of God to comfort and steady the soul, enhancing our sense of his grace and wisdom, that we shall all have abundant proof of his holy considerateness in all possible circumstances.

What an evidence that simplicity in the things of God is the real secret of seeing things clearly. Do you know who wrote that? Keith William Kelly. Incredible.

I mean, everything he says is true. It's good. But dear Mr. Kelly, why didn't you say it in shorter sentences and easier to understand? I think so.

I think so. Style sheet. Nothing that we have to go.

So just go over to page 25, tips on how to achieve readability. And every year I've talked on this. I recommend a book.

It's not the only one, but the one I'm most familiar with. The Art of Readable Writing by Rudolf Flesch. You can still buy it in a secular bookstore.

And Flesch tells you in that book what really makes writing to be readable. And one of his great emphasis is the more you write, the way you talk, the more readable it is. And this involves using contractions, among other things, just as when you're speaking.

I've tried to illustrate this in one, two, and three here. In recent years, the emphasis has been on writing in a conversational manner. This involves using contractions.

And now I'm doing it just as you do when you're speaking. Not just as you do when you are speaking. Just as you do when you're speaking.

Using loose sentences. They used to have to be complete sentences. Not any longer.

Not any longer is a loose sentence. It doesn't have a subject and a predicate. It doesn't have to.

You don't talk that way. And I have to say, don't try this in a freshman college course in English composition. You won't get away with it, but you will in writing today.

Use repetition. Notice I try to illustrate that. Use repetition.

It's considered good style. It's considered good style now. That's contraction.

Especially when you want to get a point across. That's a loose sentence. Dress it up in different words and say it again.

That's repetition. Then use short sentences and short words too. Vary the pattern of your sentences.

For instance, you wouldn't have three sentences all beginning with the word the. Or any other word. You want to vary the pattern of your sentences, the construction.

Then of course, and you can't overemphasize this, go heavy on human interest. Readers digest. Study it.

See how they do it. Time magazine. I often think of the article that spoke of the senator coming into the chamber with his forgettable tie.

Human interest. But he didn't know how to buy ties apparently. Use sanctified imagination in your writing.

This is perfectly legitimate for Christians to do that. Ironside used to do it. He's a master at it.

Using sanctified imagination. Bunyan pictured Christian running from the tempter with his finger in his ears. How much more expressive than to say Christian refused to listen to the voice of the tempter.

That's the difference between expressive language and bland writing. Then another illustration of imagination at work is the blind beggar. His cup never did overflow until he changed the sign to read, It is springtime and I am blind.

Not I am blind, but it is springtime and I am blind. Anybody would drop a quarter in for that. Then this is very important in Rudolf Flesch's book too.

Use verbs and nouns rather than adjectives and adverbs. It's amateurish writing when you just flood your reader with all kinds of adjectives. But as he points out, verbs make it happen.

Adjectives and adverbs tell what happened. The dog lunged at me and ripped my pant leg. I mean, that conjures up an image in your mind.

The dog lunged at me and ripped my pant leg. Use verbs in an active voice, not the passive. If you ever write a long manuscript and send it to a publisher and they accept it, the first thing they will do is have an editor go through and remove every passive verb from your writing.

Passive verbs are dull. Active verbs signify that very thing, action. Use verbs in the active voice.

Make your writing crisp, clear, and quick. Only one adjective at a time because you're going to go easy on adjectives. Avoid repetitions.

Repetitions of words or of constructions. And avoid flowery words. Very rather, little pretty, rather important, a little better, or pretty sure.

They don't say anything. It doesn't help any when you use those words. Be sure that your vocabulary is current, lively, fresh, and there's plenty of variety.

There's a limit to what you can do in that regard in writing on Christian subjects. You don't want it to become earthy. And yet, a translation of the New Testament by a man named Peterson came out recently.

I think it's called The Message or something. And a copy was given to me. It's not good.

He went too far. He went too far. I just put the book aside.

I'm finished with it. Watch out for gobbledygook, hackneyed expressions, cliches. Eliminate unnecessary words.

Male peacock. All peacocks are male. Otherwise it's a peahen.

Or nod your head. What else would you nod? I saw it in the New King James the other day. I forget where I was reading in the Old Testament.

They knelt on their knees. In the New King James, they knelt on their knees. What else would you kneel on? Write as you should talk.

Make your writing less formal and less stilted. This is good. Guard against identical words beginning or ending.

The president was contemplating resigning. Two words together ending in ing doesn't read smoothly. You try to avoid something like that.

Of course, the old one don't end a sentence with a preposition. But that's not good. I like this illustration.

Sometimes a student's field of study influences his outlook in surprising ways. A friend of mine was having problems with her boyfriend who was an English major. After much discussion one evening, she finally confronted him.

Does this mean we're breaking up? I'd hate to think we were ending this relationship with a preposition on it. And, of course, a well-known one about Churchill. When somebody reminded him you shouldn't end a sentence with a preposition, he said, that is the type of errant nonsense up with which I will not put.

You don't talk that way. You say, that is the type of errant nonsense I will not put up with. Which is good.

It's perfectly all right. I'm skipping some. Don't overuse I. Watch out for dangling modifiers.

Looking out the window, the moon rose over the tree. This is a very common fault in writing. Very common fault.

When you have a word like looking, the next word after the comma has to tell you who was looking. In this case, it was not the moon. Watch antecedents of pronouns.

You can get ridiculous. Jesus became my Lord while speeding along a Philadelphia freeway. How fast are you going? Don't split the subject of a sentence from the verb or the verb from the subject.

The document was filed by the employee who had been working on it in the wrong drawer. Give me help. Check all your facts for accuracy.

This is very important. I was told that last night I had Daniel in the fiery furnace. Check all your facts for accuracy.

It's rather helpful. And incidentally, if you do quote, if you do quote, always give credit to the source of your quotation. Steve Hochheiser was talking about footnotes, and he didn't mention endnotes, too.

But that's very, very important. It's okay to quote, but just tell the source. If any of you want to be serious about writing, it's good to build up a file over the years.

Any time I read a book, and I've done a couple since I've been here, if I see something that I think I can use, I just put a pencil mark in the book like that. And then when I finish the book, I go and put it all through a copy machine. And then at the bottom of each one I tell where it's from.

It tells the author, the title, the place of publication, the name of the publisher, the year of publication, and the page number. And then I throw it in a file. Twice a year I go through that file and file it.

And I have quite an elaborate file after 40, almost 50 years. And I think some of the young men out there are waiting for me to die so they can get that file. Actually, it won't do them any good.

In my mind, I have a general idea of what's in the file, but they wouldn't have any idea at all, another person. So I think it would be of very limited value. So be careful how you pray about my longevity.

Okay. This is good. Don't ground your readers in punctuation number 21.

The purpose of punctuation is to enable your reader to read along smoothly and get the flow of thought and know where to pause, that sort of thing. Know how to inflect as well. And this is a rule that seems to be the current rule, although it won't be popular with some of you.

In the series, put a comma after each member, Tom comma, Dick comma, and Harry. That's not the way you learned it, is it? No, you learned it Tom comma, Dick, and Harry. But that's not the rule anymore, and the publishers want it Tom comma, Dick comma, and Harry.

Dick and Harry. Steve again was talking about underlining, italic, boldface. Generally, generally the attitude is don't depend on mechanical things to create an effect in writing.

For instance, I've read books where they wanted to emphasize something and they wrote whole sentences in capitals. That's considered very amateurish and very poor. So if you use boldface, you do it sparingly.

If you use italics, it's always been a problem with me. You use italics to emphasize a word, but to me an italic is weaker than the regular text. You know, it's a much thinner font of type.

But anyway, you do what you're told. Number 24, use words that paint a picture, resemblances, metaphors, his heart was steel, similes, his heart was like steel, onomatopoeia, buzz, kiss, words that have the sound to them, and alliteration. But use alliteration sparingly.

Alliteration is good, but until it becomes forced. If it flows easily and naturally, it's okay. But when you have to force into words that really don't quite say it, I say forget the alliteration.

27, avoid tautologies. The hearing would not be heard for at least an hour. What should you say? Pardon? Well, would not be for at least an hour.

Or would not be held for at least an hour. Take familiar sayings and reword them. This is very, very hard.

Very, very hard. Take familiar sayings and reword them. For instance, I say to you, please reword this for me as cold as ice.

Oh boy, that really is hard to think of. I mean, we're so used to that, it's hard to think of something else. And yet, it's considered, you want to use things like that.

You want to say it in a different way. Number 30 is very important. Don't let your conclusion peter out.

This is especially true in writing gospel tracts or articles. The general temptation in writing tracts or in writing articles is you spend too much time on the introduction, then you go through the body of the tract, and then you're tired when you get to the end, and you just throw a bunch of verses at the reader. Whereas the tract should really build up to a challenge at the end, where the person is really put on the spot and is required to take some action.

But most tracts generally, that is, by beginners, peter out at the end. Rewrite carefully. Edit correct.

Blue pencil. Keep it simple. You see, this comes over and over again.

John Owen wrote, Repeated acts of the consent of the will unto sin may beget a disposition and inclinableness of the will unto a proneness and readiness to consent unto sin for an easy solicitation. That means the more we sin, the more we're inclined to sin. Anybody know what it means? Yeah, it's just a general expression.

You cross it out and rewrite it. Blue pencil it. If you'd rather read it, fine.

Any. Number 33 is interesting. You know, there's a tremendous pressure on writers today to write with genderless words.

When I wrote Alone in Majesty, they wrote back from Thomas Nelson. They had given it to some, I guess, a feminist editor. I don't know.

And it came back, and all references to male gender were eliminated. And I wrote back and said, What are you doing? You're destroying my style, if I have any. And I told them, I just wasn't willing to have that published like that.

And they gave in. They gave in. That's the tendency today.

So I say here, resist the pressure toward genderless writing. On the other hand, don't needlessly flaunt male words when generic ones will do just as well. And you'll hear that tonight in the message tonight.

It's so easy for us to say man when we mean man in a generic way, meaning man and woman. I like the Germans. They have a word that means brothers or sisters.

Geschwester. We don't have a word like that in the English language. Let's invent one.

What? Sibling. Well, it doesn't quite say that, does it? Would sibling be good for a 60-year-old person? Would it? Okay. Page 28, there are some other books that are recommended there, including style manuals, if you get that far and want to do that.

Abbreviations of Bible books. There's nothing standard about those abbreviations of Bible books. You can almost use your own, whatever suits you best because different publishers would use different ones.

Any questions that any of you would like to ask? Yes, Ken. Well, you want to be consistent. That's very important in writing.

You write from a consistent outlook and you're consistent in your use. If you start singular, you continue singular. You don't switch back and forth.

Is that what you mean? Yeah, well, there are synonyms you can use. Person. Person.

The word person doesn't indicate male or female. People. And some of these pronouns don't tell whether it's... There are ways to get around it, although it doesn't flow as smoothly, actually.

Anybody else? Yes, Keith. Do you think it's the... If you can get somebody else, no man is a judge of his own... No person, pardon me. Genderless.

No person is a judge of his or her own writing. You can write things that are absolutely clear to you. Absolutely clear.

And you give it to somebody else and their mind just jerks on it, you know. So if you can get some... somebody with background to edit it for you and be very... You're very fortunate, yes. If you can get more than one, that's even better.

Anybody else? Well, don't forget what I say. Everybody's life is interesting. God has made it that way.

Just don't lapse into the idea that everybody else's life is interesting, but yours is drab. Especially as Christians, we should be seeing the hand of God in answered prayer and in guidance and in provision. I'm sure that in a room like this it's of necessity that many of you have seen marvelous instances of the provision of God in the right amount at the right time.

Well, you know, this is really encouraging. A lot of young people today that don't know too much about the life of faith, you know. Like people in the churches when they hear how we live, they think it's a trick done

with mirrors or something, you know.

They just don't believe that you can live that way. But I think literature that tells how it actually happened has a ministry to people. So, what other things? Answers to prayer.

Miraculous converging of circumstances. And that's happening all the time. It's happening in your life, too.

You miss a plane. You miss a plane in Chicago. And then you're kind of agitated because you missed the plane.

But then you get on another plane and you sit next to a fellow and he's a truck driver by trade. And he sees two people on the plane who are famous athletes from Denver. You know.

And he wants their autograph. But he doesn't have a pencil or anything to write on. So you happen to have a 3x5 card.

And you say, well, I can give you a card to write on. And you give him a card and you give him a pen. And he goes off and he gets two autographs.

I had this experience recently. I said, well, you've got two autographs. Is there like a third autograph? And I pulled out a copy of God's Answers to Man's Questions.

You know, a gospel booklet. And I autographed it for him. Did he refuse? He was delighted.

He said, I will read this tonight, he said to me. But I had to miss a plane to do it. I was telling somebody when we had Dave Hunt down at our place last October, everything was very tightly scheduled.

The afternoon meeting was starting at 2.30. And at the last minute we got a telephone call from Dave to Seattle that he had missed the plane. He had been bumped on the plane. And we had people positioned all the way from San Francisco to San Leandro.

Cars waiting and all. Somebody to take the baggage and somebody to take Dave. So you don't have to wait for the baggage.

And I was there at the gate when he got off the plane. And the first words he said to me, I had to miss that plane. He said, there was a flight attendant on this plane that needed spiritual help.

Are you interested in that? I would be. Write it up. And share it.

Send it in to Upbook magazine. And he'll love you forever, Dave Nicholson will. Because he's looking for contemporary articles like that.

Instead of having to dig through the files to something from a previous generation. Incidentally, the truth has to be rewritten for every generation, doesn't it? Not many here could read Darby and Kelly without a glass of water. I mean, I respect these men.

Don't misunderstand me. I respect them. But Ironside's great contribution was to take the writings of those men and rewrite them for that generation and serve them up with a sprig of parsley.

I mean, so it was really interesting meetings. Okay, I see our brother Fred moving. Yeah, well I mentioned that and I mentioned the fact that Missions does like articles and I mentioned some of the things that they

like to get in them.

And that would be true at Missions too. The marvelous guidance of God. Marvelous provision of God.

Marvelous converging of circumstances. Plus the work of God that's going on on the field there. How marvelously God is working.

Okay, yes Mark. This is an encouraging work. Half a day every two months.

Right, right. And that's the marvel of the computer or the word processor. It saves you time.

You can get that body of material that you'll share with everybody and then you can personalize paragraphs at the beginning or the end or both. But instead of just thinking of yourself when you're writing what a drudgery it is to get all those letters out, think of it as a possibility of edifying and helping others. After all, Philippians was a letter of acknowledgment for a gift, wasn't it? And think of the blessing it has been.

And there was a paragraph in Ilsa's book that arose from my garden in that connection that I thought was quite good. I might not be able to find it. But it was that idea with the prayer that as this book goes forth.

Likewise, God can use this story of Camille Hart Massey to spread light beyond the geographical borders where she lived, touching and influencing the lives of many who did not know her personally. The vision of ministry, of carrying on a ministry in this word, in this way. I like it very much.

If any of you have any other questions, feel free to come up afterwards. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the possibilities that lie before us in this area.

And we thank you how you can use the printed word in ways that we can't even imagine. We just pray for the Ministry of Christian Literature. We pray for Missions Magazine today.

We pray for Uplook. We pray for Everyday Publications, for the Wazow Brothers, for all of those who have a vision for the ministry of the Word of God, Waltric and all the others. And just commend them lovingly to you, to the Savior's name.

Amen.

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