

# **The Fundamentals of Religious Speakers & Rhetoric (The mobility of the Church)**

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## *Introduction*

Religious organizations encompass a unique way of communicating. Historically, religious leaders in formal and informal organizations utilize rhetoric to penetrate their audience. Marks of great leader's traces back to Ancient times and exist in present day. For example, Paul (The Great Missionary of the gospels) speaks at a public address in Thessalonica. Martin Luther (The Great reformer of biblical history), was known to place emphasizes on scripture over tradition, served as a preacher, catechist, and Bible translator. Alexander Crummell (African American Pastor & Nationalist), Martin Luther King Jr. (Pastor & Civil Rights Leader), and Malcom X (Muslim minister & human rights leader) all share in one commonality, rhetoric and religion. These men mastered crafting messages that connected the speaker to the audience. This paper will provide an introspective glance at rhetoric and religion of the speaker and its audience in religious organizations. It will demonstrate the historical significance of theology amongst various religious organizations and its effects on the current culture of the church.

Distinctively, in religious settings learning takes place with one speaker addressing an audience comprised of completely diverse backgrounds. The great philosopher, Aristotle recognizes the complexity of reaching these types of audiences. Thus, he defines rhetoric as, (Dustin Crewell) "the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion." He categorizes persuasion in three groups, "ethos (character), logos (logic), and pathos

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(emotion).” Therefore, the priority of the uniqueness of religious organizations must be the focus of the leader speaking to their audience.

### *Foundations and Fundamental of religious organizations*

The delicate intricacies of fundamental facts in religious organization further define the importance of rhetoric between the speaker and the audience. For instance, most Christian organization is intracultural and they share the same primary fundamentals of Christ. But their fundamental truths cause their organization to have various operating styles that effects message delivery and member’s actions. Throughout history, Christianity has undergone drastic transformation because of differing theories in theology. Let us take a glance at three foundations of the Christian religion known as Fundamentalism, Moderates, and Radical Theories.

First, Fundamentalism- (Enns 361) “has been used to identify one holding to the five fundamentals of the faith adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. in 1910. The five fundamentals were the miracles of Christ, the virgin birth of Christ, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and the inspiration of Scripture”

Secondly, (Enns 435) “Moderate realists, who followed Aristotle, taught that universal ideas such as truth and goodness have an objective existence but are not separate from their existence in individual things. Abelard and Thomas Aquinas (who was the greatest of the scholastics) were representative of this view. Nominalism, which was a reaction against realism, taught that ideas have no existence outside the mind. Occam represented this view. Nominalists denied anything outside of human experience; hence, they denied the Trinity. The concept of nominalism was

seen in later centuries in empiricism and pragmatism.”

Finally, (Enns 579) William Hamilton was the founder of *Radical Theology and the Death of God* (with Altizer). “Hamilton rejects the traditional, orthodox view of God, but sees the death of God as a cultural event occurring in the last two hundred years. Man, therefore, must adapt himself to the death of God, not expecting any help from God; rather, solutions to life’s problems are found in the secular world. “God is no longer necessary to deliver man from restlessness, despair, or self-righteousness; indeed, there is no God to do so.” The aforementioned, information explains the reasoning behind the speaker’s presentation.

Effective communication demands a response from the audience. Therefore, fundamentalist speakers teach the message of salvation as a tool to reach the ethos, logos, and pathos of the individual. In response to the teaching of salvation, members are moved by the perception of their interpretation of scripture concerning the minister. The message delivery of weaving practical life through divine words stabilizes the logical reasoning behind the scriptures. And the subtle tugging of emotional worship of a divine creator ties the story together. Therefore, rhetoric creates a spiritual encounter that demands a practical response from its audience.

### *Intentional Communication Errors*

Creative tension produces effective rhetoric and communication. Problems occur when the intentional fallacies occur by misinterpretations of scripture by the speaker in an effort to gain influence over members. Richard Hall states, (Tolbert 137) “Organizations receive and filter information, and process it in light of what they have already learned, interpret it, change it, and finally act on it.” Hall states this in an effort to prove that regurgitated information has shaped the world. The mastery of reorganizing information comes with negative and positive

effects. Agreeably, research and the expansion of religious studies have created an educated church. On the contrary, the rhetoric of religious leaders has clearly displayed that through the form of service to God they manipulate the trust of people for selfish gain. For example, the recent sex scandal of Bishop Eddie Long has once again put the church in a negative spot light. (Johns) “CNN's Joe Johns reports on efforts to mediate a settlement in the case of Bishop Eddie Long who was accused in court filings of having sex with young men.” The case was settled out of court. People from all over the world tuned in to watch this scandal unfold that started from the pulpit of a religious organization. Angela Schuller Wyatt states, “Pastors of megachurches learn to love the spotlight and power,” she says. Long’s new church franchise is only the first of many to follow. Even in the face of scandal, famous preachers will do anything to maintain their platform.” But this situation raises a question. What are the effects of education and persuasion within the church the church body?

### *The Effects of Expanded Studies*

Aforementioned, biblical knowledge has expanded. Shifts in religious organizations such as mega church’s now make up a wide array of groups. Due to the expansion of theological studies through colleges such as College of Biblical studies in Houston, TX or Dallas Theological Seminary School members of churches join congregations with different levels of biblical knowledge. Differing situations include those individuals with no degrees, high school degrees, Bachelor’s degrees, Masters Degrees and Ph. D’s. The various cultures, status, and age’s produce a certain level of insight, intimacy and maturity. Therefore, the heart of the speaker must dictate the mobility of the organization. The power of the speaker can create a worshipper with moderate views, nominalism views, fundamental views, or radical views. Once the speakers contribute to the views of this individual that person begins to interact with the

world around them through their current and previous belief system.

### *The Art of Influence through Creative teaching*

Within religious organizations speakers make use of creative biblical narratives to reach their audience. For instance, Dr. John Adolph of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas uses this method of preaching. He often opens his preaching with a detailed oriented story that allows the reader to walk down the street of the story and feel the beat of the day. Story telling has the ability to paint a picture for the youngest person to the oldest person in the audience. Stories also possess the ability to turn ears to eyes. The story becomes the niche that holds spirituality and practicality together. The listener becomes a character within the story. Clearly, this method has effective power within its grasp because Jesus Christ of Nazareth used storytelling to teach the (Systems John 7:20-24) multitudes. Not only did he use this method to reach an audience from various backgrounds but history tells us that he utilized this method to (Systems John 21:15-17) personally train his disciples and one-on-one contact with people such as the (Systems John 4:7-42) woman at the well.

### *Conclusion*

Rhetoric and religion is rooted in the nature of the church. The dynamics of influence within religious organizations through rhetoric encompass various facets. For instance, leaders, historians and theologians contribute to those who have turned the test of times. The facets include works of great theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, Williams Hamilton and many others that challenged and expanded the studies of those before and after them. The deterrent of moral responsibility by leaders adds to what is known of the influence within religious organization. Above all the dynamics of rhetoric amongst religious organization proves that the connection between the speaker and the audience is more than a monologue and a dialogue;

rather it is a triologue between what is known of Him (God) with us and us with Him.

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