

ARTIFICIAL PREACHERS*

by A.W. Tozer

"When I was a young lad and first beginning to observe the human scene, one thing that struck me forcibly was the artificiality of preachers. The world they inhabited was, it seemed to me, always once removed from reality.

They were men, obviously, but they lacked completely the candor and downrightness I knew so well in other men. The bold, man-to-man approach was missing. They seemed to be afraid of something, though I could not tell what, for certainly the tame, patient, almost indifferent persons who listened to them were harmless enough.

No one paid much attention to what they said anyway. I am sure that if one of them had slyly interspersed into his sermon stray bits of the Gettysburg Address repeated backwards, few of those present would have noticed or cared. Yet they spoke so gingerly and apologetically that one got the impression they would rather remain silent forever than to offend anyone.

After listening to some of them now and again, I knew the meaning of the French saying (though I did not hear it till many years later), *'There are three sexes: men, women, and preachers.'*

Now I am all for preachers and I do not expect them to be perfect, but I am all for downrightness too. I think it highly improbable that anyone who speaks cautiously can speak effectively.

It is true that the church has suffered from pugnacious men who would rather fight than pray, but she has suffered more from timid preachers who would rather be nice than be right. The latter have done more harm, if for no other reason than that there are so many more of them...

Every man who stands to proclaim the Word should speak with something of the bold authority of the Word itself. The Bible is the book of supreme love, but it is at the same time altogether frank. Its writers are never rude or unkind, but they are invariably honest and entirely sincere. A great sense of urgency is upon them...

To escape the snare of artificiality, it is necessary that a man enjoy a satisfying personal experience with God. He must be totally committed to Christ and deeply anointed with the Holy Spirit. Further, he must be delivered from the fear of man. The focus of his attention must be God and not men.

He must let everything dear to him ride out on each sermon. He must preach as to jeopardize his future, his ministry, even his life itself. He must make God responsible for the consequences and speak as one who will not have long to speak before he is called to judgment. Then the people will know they are hearing a **voice** instead of a mere echo!"

*reprinted from "*Power for Living*", circa 1971.