

Dupl.

THE DYNAMICS OF COMMUNICATION
IN THE THOUGHT OF H.E. FOSDICK

by

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*To my family in England
and in South Africa*



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When I began my degree under the supervision of Professor N A C Heuer, I had never heard of Harry Emerson Fosdick. Professor Heuer opened a door for me, and through me to others, to the world of Fosdick. The contribution of Harry Emerson Fosdick to preaching, his communication methods, his approach to life from the aspect of theological dynamics and to his spiritual dimension of living have proved to be an inspiration to me and will remain part of my life. My appreciation goes to Professor Heuer for this experience and for his encouragement to go forward and to complete this thesis which at times was undeniably very painful.

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INTRODUCTION

1. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This thesis is undertaken in an attempt to compare the methods of the communication used by H.E. Fosdick in his dynamic communication of the Gospel with certain modern systems of communication and dynamics. This study does not endeavour to cover all aspects of dynamics and communication but only where they aid in assessing the techniques of the evident effectiveness of Fosdick's communication.

Fosdick is considered to have been one of the world's authorities on the art of preaching. The question to be answered is: "What were his dynamic communication techniques?" Were his techniques solely intuitive, cognitive or based on theory? This analysis will attempt to systematize his techniques and put forward some answers in the light of modern writers. Fosdick's success was proved by the numbers within his congregation remaining high for the many years he ministered at the Riverside Church.

In the course of this study, Fosdick's approach to preaching will be considered. This thesis is concerned with a new approach concerning the work of Fosdick in three particular fields, namely theological and personality dynamics and theories of communication. Within the field of communication, three schools of thought will be explored. These consist of the 'process', 'semiotic', and

'communication by objectives' schools. The reason for this being that these give a method for analysing and systematizing Fosdick's style and content. Fourie's steps in communication¹ allow a study of Fosdick's work in relationship to communication and highlight the need to examine Fosdick's heritage and preparation for his ministry.

The question of dynamics forms the crux of this thesis. The works of Tillich will be used to introduce the varying viewpoints concerning this challenging concept. The views of Hiltner, Heuer, Schilling, and finally Bruce Reed will also be discussed.

Professor Heuer's work concerning personality dynamics and the exploration of Fosdick's own personality will be discussed in Chapter Five with particular reference to the dynamic structures of differing personalities.

2. METHODOLOGY

The first chapter of this paper will outline the biography of Fosdick. I believe it is necessary to trace his roots because Fosdick's talents could not have grown to such heights without certain influences. His own personal sufferings, his ability to relate to the situation on hand and his recognition of other men's needs were the result of his heritage. The importance of these personal experiences will be referred to throughout this thesis.²

The subsequent chapters will deal with widely held techniques concerning communication. I will illustrate these theories with examples from Fosdick's sermons. I will use the same technique concerning the concept of dynamics.

The final chapter will be an analysis of a specific sermon illustrating Fosdick's preaching and teaching methods. It should be noted that many of Fosdick's sermons need to be heard rather than read. This point Fosdick emphasizes in his article 'How I prepare my sermons'.

"Written and spoken styles are not identical." 3

In my conclusion I shall endeavour to draw all the factors together and to give some answers as to how Fosdick's sermons remain an influence in today's changing world.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Fourie, H.P.: *Communication By Objectives*, UNISA, McGraw Hill Book Company, Johannesburg, 1975. Cf. Appendix 2.
2. In Chapter 4, Fosdick's methodology of communication will be systematized by the use of Fourie's CBO steps. It will be shown that the first step links closely to Fosdick's heritage.
3. Crocker, L. (Editor): *Harry Emerson Fosdick's Art of Preaching. An Anthology*. Charles C. Thomas, Illinois, U.S.A., 1971, p.45.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF H.E. FOSDICK'S THOUGHT AGAINST HIS PERSONAL BACKGROUND

H.E. Fosdick emerged from his own particular heritage which shaped his approach to life. His parents, their health and theological opinions, and a changing world influenced and patterned his lifestyle and views. I will show in the course of this thesis how he sought for and subsequently lived a life of congruency.¹ His personal sufferings helped to mould him into the man he became. As preacher, theologian and counsellor he stood out in a world of changing standards and norms. Over the years, the dynamics of his communication brought many thousands of people to the Lord. His polemic² approach challenged his listeners to commitment to the Lord. It will be shown that the influences of Fosdick's background helped him to develop into the man he became.³ It is necessary that his heritage and community be understood to indicate the reasons for his vitality and positive approach. His upbringing led him to understand the importance of recognizing the needs men have.

1.2 FOSDICK'S ANCESTRY

Harry Emerson Fosdick was born in 1878 in Buffalo, New York, America.⁴ His parents, Amie and Frank, were of English stock. Both their families were friendly people and visitors frequented their home. Fosdick saw personal relationships in action.

However, Fosdick's eventual strength of character can be traced to his ancestors. His forbear, Stephen Fosdick, was born in Suffolk, England in the early sixteen thirties and at the age of fifty two years decided, together with his wife and eight children, to leave England for Charlestown, Massachusetts. This seems a momentous move for a man of that age and responsibilities.

However, as a man of strong opinions and an ability to make decisions, he could no longer accept the demands of Archbishop Laud's religious conformity and so became one of a number of Suffolk citizens seeking religious freedom. Sadly, on arriving in America, this freedom was not to be his and we read that he was fined twenty pounds probably for reading heretical Anabaptist literature. At this time he was excommunicated from the Church only to be readmitted twenty-one years later. Perhaps Fosdick, some three centuries later, took courage from this incident when he preached his sermon 'Shall the Fundamentalists win?'⁵ This sermon gave witness to the fact that a Fosdick still stood for religious freedom. Stephen Fosdick had been a man prepared to stand by his opinions, a quality which was to be present in the character of Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Fosdick's lineage descended from the seventh child of Stephen Fosdick, and for several generations the family farmed or worked closely on the land. The revolutionary war against Britain ruined the fortunes of the family and they became nearly destitute. Solomon, Fosdick's great-grandfather, took his family with John Spence, Fosdick's

grandfather, in a covered wagon to Boston and there built his own log cabin. After working to make the outpost habitable, his grandfather answered the call for teachers. His children, blessed with parents of above average intellectual ability, must have enjoyed a stimulating upbringing which in time would affect Harry Fosdick. This will be seen by his wide knowledge of world literature and the deeds of spirit-filled men quoted by him in so many of his sermons. Fosdick was particularly influenced by his grandfather, John Spencer, whose rugged, vigorous, determined character inspired him. John Spencer had been brought up the hard way, to the extent of learning his Latin with the grammar propped up on his carpenter's bench. He was a man of both great gentleness and sternness.⁶

1.3 FOSDICK'S YOUTH

During the year of 1885, Fosdick, who had enjoyed a contented early childhood, experienced the trauma of his mother's collapse due to nervous prostration. He was only seven and this event was to have a profound influence upon him. The three children were sent to the Fosdick farm at Westfield and it was there that Fosdick developed and grew towards manhood.

Fosdick writes little about his reactions to his mother's breakdown in health, or his sister's death or the divorce of his maternal grandparents. Yet these incidents were all to mould him and I am led to conclude that his sensitive ability to recognize another's

needs⁷ may well have stemmed from his deep distress which arose from the early tragedies of his life and led to such deep compassion.⁸

In later years Fosdick wrote:

'That year in Westfield, I made my first momentous decision. It is not easy for me to summarize the religious background of my life. My family, deeply Christian, believed in the Church and were active in its service. Moreover, my parents' faith was so persuasively transmitted by contagion rather than by coercion that I recall in my childhood no revolt against it, only a cordial acceptance and a sensitive response.'⁹

Fosdick, even at the age of seven, was aware of a great Christian calling and at that tender age, on February 21st 1886, he committed his life to the Lord. He chose to be immersed in baptism. He made his confession of faith in the ancient ritual. It was a genuine assertion of individual self-committal, not as a result of an emotional altar call or a particular mission. Fosdick was true to God and himself, an attitude which was to remain with him throughout his life. This congruent behaviour forms a thread through this thesis as well as Fosdick's recognition of man's needs.¹⁰ These needs were to form the basis of all his sermons.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT TOWARDS MANHOOD

Towards the end of 1886, the family were reunited after Fosdick's mother's health had improved and they moved to Lancaster, ten miles from Buffalo. Grandmother Weaver came to run the household and

Harry Emerson Fosdick entered upon a decade of happiness despite the pressures and distress of a devastating country-wide economic depression. Fosdick enjoyed the companionship of a closely knit, peer group well instructed in the Presbyterian faith by a Father Bruce,¹¹ whose influence remained with Fosdick all his life. The group delighted in life to the full, fishing, swimming, tennis and other group activities. The need to feel worth and to experience the security of belonging were essential aspects of Fosdick's growth in maturity. The group developed through the mischievous escapades of boyhood undisturbed by world events but their life together included an awareness and concern for the underdog. As Fosdick comments:

'We have been underdogs ourselves.' 12

The all-pervading atmosphere in the Fosdick home was one of love and loyalty, two attributes which were to stay with Fosdick until death. Tragedies indeed there were, both his uncle and aunt died, but his mother, after her complete breakdown and considerable ill health was able slowly and gradually to take over the reins of the household again.

Fosdick grew and developed under the guidance and example of his father, a teacher of great repute affectionately known as 'Pop'. Many of the ideals held so dearly by 'Pop' concerning the upbringing of children were later to become known as progressive.¹³ This was to surprise Fosdick as they were part of his experience.

The young of the family were encouraged to talk over their problems, be they family or personal troubles. Fosdick recalls that his father never dictated but asked his children, "What do you think?" and thus enabled them to make their own decisions. This did not erode parental authority but strengthened it.

However, in one area of his life, Fosdick remained unhappy. His heritage in his Church was one of a vengeful rather than a loving God. This contrasted with his experience of the caring atmosphere of his home. His fear of hell was acute. These conflicting viewpoints perhaps were the beginning of his liberal views concerning the Church. In fact many years later, when Fosdick was in his eighties, he was to write a book called *Dear Mr Brown*, in which he led a young man searching for many answers in life towards the Christian Church. Fosdick commented:

'I need the sustaining fellowship of the Church.' 14

Despite his earnestness to be a Christian and his joy in a Christian family life, with all its attendant love and care for one another, the religion of the Church did not seem to express this essence. There was legalism, obscurantism and pettiness. The fear of hell became so real and the thought of God became a horror to him. This polemic¹⁵ experience was to have a lasting effect upon Fosdick and cannot be forgotten. Perhaps it was at this time as he questioned his church heritage that he considered the need for a free Church.

However, not all Fosdick's church experiences were unfulfilling. He enjoyed the evangelistic campaign of Dwight L Moody, a man who made a great impact in the field of mission. This was despite the sceptism of his father. He remembered for many years Moody's blazing attack on the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son. The over-riding principle in the Fosdick household concerning religion was on the side of sanity as opposed to the terrifying aspect of religion. Religion was a power in his family rather than a system and it was integrated into family life. Family prayers were an example of unity and loyalty. Fosdick's father epitomized the symbol 'father' in his commitment towards his son and Fosdick recalls many instances of true fulfilment shared with his father. In his book *The Meaning of Faith*, Fosdick highlights that the way to find the Master is in love.

'We can always find Him in the lives of people to whom we give love and help. Many will never find Him at all unless they find Him there.' 16

In his autobiography, *The Living of These Days*, Fosdick repeatedly illustrated his recognition of the changing times by recalling many childhood episodes. His preaching in later years demonstrated his awareness of his surroundings and the recognition that the ordinary and often unobserved details together build the background out of which man grows.¹⁷ He lived in a changing world as we do today. He was ever aware of these changes and the need for a preacher to keep abreast of world events. His life spanned two world wars and the Depression and he wrote and preached against the background of

these events. He contextualised his biblical interpretations. People were important to him in his childhood and people remained important to him as he grew towards old age. He challenged men to grow in Christian maturity.

'The bulk of his preaching has been devoted to the task of challenging his congregation to make certain ideals and ideas, which they hold in cold storage or to which they give mere lip service, or which they know are part of the rich Christian heritage, genuinely ruling in their hearts.' 18

1.5 TOWARDS MATURITY

In 1894 Fosdick's family moved from Lancaster to Buffalo but Fosdick did not lose touch with his 'Lancaster gang'. They met in the same High School and joined together in their early military training. Though Fosdick was a pacifist then as he was to remain, he enjoyed the need for obedience and delighted in his experience of leadership. Perhaps it was at this time that Fosdick began to see the need to serve and to learn that obedience must precede any position of leadership. Fosdick's High School education was under the headship of his father. Harry enjoyed a classical training, discovering the wonders of the old Latin and Greek scholars and the English literary masters, whose works abound with Christian symbolism.¹⁹ Fosdick also began to experiment in public speaking which was not easy for a shy, embarrassed young man. By joining the debating society he was forced into rising to his feet and saying more than 'thank you'. It could not have been easy for him as he was endowed with a

gauche awkwardness which made his teens a time of self-consciousness. Perhaps it was this very period of suffering from his own sensitivity which in part enabled him, in later years to be so able to recognise the sufferings of others. It also, however, created in him a suffering with which he was almost unable to cope.²⁰ Despite his unhappiness with his family's Church he did feel at home there, as his family's life was centred upon and integrated into the life of the Church. He had a mind which simply had to query everything around him, be it the Church or his country. He could not accept all that was taught or practised in the Church. He felt forced to question and to explore. He was to write many years later:

'I never read the Athenasian Creed without shame.' 21

Within his changing experiences and situations it becomes evident that Fosdick had a good, fulfilling and healthy upbringing. He experienced the delights of the countryside, growing in awareness of creation and its beauties which alongside developing relationships indicated the need to remember the two great commandments - to love God with all one's heart and love one's fellow men. The roots of this preacher were deep and well-nurtured.²² He was prepared to go forward to his vocation.

The other aspect of his upbringing was that his parents were truly concerned for and knew the hardships of the poor and unemployed.

Fosdick wrote:

'Despite disaster and hardship, that generation was permeated with glorification of the rugged individual who began with everything against him and achieved success.' 23

Fosdick quotes William James, a man who proved to be of great influence in Fosdick's life, as referring to "that bitch goddess success."²⁴ He also writes that straining for success was inevitable, arising as it did from the background of the pioneer virtues of grit, gumption and daring intrepidity. The world was changing, forced not only by the need of man and his discoveries but by man's personal need of striving for his self-actualisation.²⁵ This recognition of the inevitable and perhaps even the rightness of it is shown later by Fosdick in his book *The Secret of Victorious Living*. Fosdick never managed to rid himself completely of the American (and Western) dream. I find, however, in one of his early books, *The Meaning of Prayer*, suggestions of his own discomfort at the ideal of success. He suggests that success is to find true communion with God. This book has a particularly deep spiritual content in contrast with many of Fosdick's other writings which deal with man's immediate dilemmas and issues. He was forever aware of this continuing change ever-present in man's life, and challenged by it.

Fosdick writes in his essays on preaching:

'Preaching became exhilarating. It need never fail to make a transforming difference in some lives.' 26

1.6 A PERIOD OF CONFLICT

At 18, Fosdick went to Colgate University under the auspices of the Baptists. He enjoyed himself despite the somewhat conservative approach to theology. He was introduced to the theories of Darwin and became an evolutionist. It was a quiet, unemotional time for Fosdick and as he studied diligently he developed his ability in public speaking. He was chosen from his Greek class to take part in a public debate and spoke of devotion to duty, self-control and victorious ability. These standards were to remain with Fosdick. He excelled even at such an early age in oratory but as he grew more and more facile in speech so he became more and more perplexed by what to say. He felt he could not match the content within himself. For two years he rebelled against the Church. His life was in turmoil; he thought of God but God was not real in his life. For him this was a time of incongruency.²⁷ This conflict was to take its toll. He simply was not reconciled within himself and found it intolerable. He decided first to go to Hamilton Theological College at Colgate. He remained there for one year and then enrolled in the Union Theological Seminary. He had been awarded a scholarship to cover his fees but needed money to pay for his board. He entered an essay competition and gained the third prize and thus was able to begin his studies at the seminary. By this stage he was engaged to be married. However, his financial worries and rigorous schedule finally took their toll and Fosdick suffered a breakdown. He wrote later:

'It was the most hideous experience of my life.'²⁸

There is no record of his treatment to guide us except scattered references from which to piece together some insights relevant to this thesis.

It took many months for him to climb out of the pit of despondency.²⁹ In his book *On Being a Real Person*, Fosdick describes some of his feelings at this time and this will be discussed later. He found himself without faith and with only an intellectual understanding of God. His fiancée's father sent him to England but though he regained his health, he was still spiritually dead. Only as faith returned gradually to him did the clouds of depression lift. At the end of his second year at the Union Theological Seminary he began his first pastoral charge and in 1904 was called to the pastorate of Montclair Baptist Church, New Jersey.

1.7 THE BEGINNING OF FOSDICK'S MINISTRY

Fosdick was now ready to begin his long ministry with the Church which extended far beyond the confines of a particular denomination. His life until this moment had been one of preparation, and his breakdown must be considered part of this preparation. He was to communicate with many thousands by means of radio and books. It is his dynamic of communication that this thesis will be exploring, offering a new dimension to the interpretation of Fosdick's methodology.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "Congruence means inner genuineness, integration and openness." Cf. Clinebell, H.J. *Basic Types of Pastoral Counselling*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1966, p.295. "The whole man should be involved." Lloyd Jones, D.M., *Preaching and Preachers*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1971, p.82. "The man who has not successfully grappled with himself will never grapple successfully with anybody else." Fosdick, H.E. *Twelve Tests of Character*, Associated Press, New York, 1928, p.100.
2. "If we could only live in one world or the other, all anti-Christian or all Christian, then the tension would ease." Fosdick, H.E., *Living under Tension*. S.C.M. Press, London, 1941, p.3. Fosdick tried to show both ends of the continuum, the two poles which were to contribute towards his dynamic approach.
3. Fosdick's parents had both suffered nervous breakdowns. He himself suffered in the same way. "This whole horrid experience was one of the most important factors in my preparation for the ministry." Fosdick, H.E., *The Living of These Days*, S.C.M. Press, London, 1957, p.74.
4. Ibid., p.14.
5. Fosdick, H.E. "Shall the fundamentalists win?" A discourse preached in 1922 from a Presbyterian pulpit. Fosdick demanded freedom in his preaching and when later asked to go to Riverside Church demanded that all sectarian restrictions be eliminated.
6. Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*. These attributes will be referred to later under the concept of dynamics to be discussed in Chapter Three.
7. The question of needs will be discussed in Chapter Four, paragraph 8. The recognition of another's needs forms the basis of Fourie's Communication by Objectives method.
8. 'Compassion is to have empathic understanding which means entering into another's inner world of meanings and deep feelings.' Clinebell, H.J., op. cit., 1984, p.77.
9. Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*, p.19.
10. Nouwen writes that ministry must give attention to pastors as the articulators of inner events. The preacher must be able to disclose himself to help others understand their inner beings. Nouwen, H.J., *The Wounded Healer : Ministry in Contemporary Society*. Doubleday, New York, 1932, pp.36-40. Chartier, M.R., *Preaching as Communication*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1981.

11. The influence of Father Bruce was due to his personal integrity. The group nicknamed him 'Father.' Fosdick, H.E., *The Living of These Days*, p.28.
12. Fosdick's heritage enabled him to be aware of the underprivileged. Ibid., p.25.
13. Many of Fosdick's sermons were based on the technique of encouraging his congregation to make their own decisions rather than being told what to do. This proved to be a dynamic approach, partly learned from his father.
14. Fosdick recognized his need for the people of God despite his inability to accept his own Church at this period of his life. Fosdick, H.E., *Dear Mr. Brown*. Letters to a person perplexed about Religion. Harper & Bros., New York, 1960.
15. Fosdick's polemic approach is illustrated in his book, *Living Under Tension*, p.1, by his comment that men of faith succeed in living victoriously in two worlds.
16. Fosdick, H.E. *The Meaning of Faith*, Association Press, New York, 1917, p.2.
17. Fosdick consistently showed a great perception of his surroundings. Fosdick, H.E., *The Living of These Days*, p.38.
18. Crocker, L. (Editor), Op. cit., p.91.
19. Ibid., p.43.
20. Fosdick's experience of his fear of hell and then his excessive self-consciousness would eventually play their part in his breakdown. Fosdick, H.E., *The Living of These Days*, p.34.
21. Fosdick could never believe that religion should be legalistic. Fosdick, H.E., *Dear Mr. Brown*, p.153.
22. Fosdick had a great joy in nature. His use of Psalm 1 in later sermons depended upon his understanding of the miracle of growth. Fosdick, H.E., *The Living of These Days*, p.43.
23. Ibid., p.45.
24. 'Nobody ever finds life worth living. One always has to make it worth living.' Fosdick, H.E., *The Secret of Victorious Living*, S.C.M. Press, London, 1934, p.12.

25. Maslowe, in his hierarchy of values, places self-actualisation as the goal for man. Cf. Krech, D., Crutchfield, R. & Levison, N., *Elements of Psychology*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1969, p.148. Cf. *Course for Confirmation*. A critical observation concerning his theory is given by Nicholson, R. and Gibbs-Jones, G. Unpublished. Their critique indicates Fosdick's approach to the recognition of men's needs.
26. Fosdick studied the works of men like Phillips Brooks whilst developing his own dynamic style. Crocker, L., op. cit., p.18.
27. This episode in Fosdick's history was of great importance in his growth towards maturity. At this stage he was not the 'integrated personality' it was to become. See Note 1. and Chapter Five. Fosdick, H.E., *The Living of These Days*, p.74.
28. It can be queried whether Fosdick suffered from reactive or endogenous depression. It appears that it may have been the latter. Note will be made in Chapters Three and Four of the concept of theological dynamics and the link with varying theologians such as Tillich and Jung concerning the need for man to be an integrated personality. See Note 15., Chapter Three. Crocker, L., Op. cit., p.49.
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CHAPTER TWO

2. AN OVERVIEW OF TECHNIQUES AND CONCEPTS CONCERNING COMMUNICATION AND THEIR RELEVANCE IN THE THOUGHT OF FOSDICK IN HIS SERMONS AND PUBLICATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of Fosdick's expertly-used communication techniques cannot be systematized and analysed without first examining some modern communication theories. This presentation of certain communication theories will aid in taking a new approach to the systematizing of Fosdick's work. In an analysis which Dance¹ undertook, he found 95 definitions of communication in different academic fields. He concluded that there were many and varied ways of defining communication and methods which aid the effective transmitting of information. This thesis will, therefore, be limited to an examination of certain communication models considered to be relevant to its goals which essentially concern Fosdick's dynamics of communication.

2.2 COMMUNICATION THEORIES

This chapter attempts to outline some of the main schools of communication by which the goals in understanding Fosdick's communication methods may be better understood. The novelty of this thesis is that this approach to his work has not been undertaken before. Furthermore, certain modern models of communication will aid towards a systematic analysis of Fosdick's theory of communication and dynamics.

2.2.1 Use of specific models

The three specific models, namely those mentioned in the introduction, chosen for examination will help towards categorizing data for analysing Fosdick's work. The work of Fourie has been chosen to help clarification and provides a methodology for such an analysis.² This thesis attempts to elucidate and clarify the charisma of Fosdick's sermons.³ The understanding of charisma will help to explain from a modern point of view the consistent appeal which Fosdick's sermons made.

2.2.2 The problem of defining communication

Experts agree that communication has a social dimension. This thesis is concerned only with inter-communication, i.e., between persons, and will not discuss intra-communication, i.e., introversion. In the field of dynamics it will be shown that inter-personal relationships are important to the concept of communication. This was vital to Fosdick's approach. Fosdick was concerned specifically with the problem of mass communication.⁴ However, mass communication has common ground with communication on a one to one basis, so models will explore this aspect.

Chartier in his book *Preaching as Communication* discusses theories of communication in relation to preaching.⁵ Johnson and Johnson in *Joining Together* give guidelines for sending messages effectively.⁶ These relate to the process school whereas Nida looks at the problem of the changing meaning of words together with the effect of differing cultures⁷ - an aspect of the semiotic school.

These are only a few examples of the varying shades in the understanding of communication. One vital aspect is the realisation that communication always occurs at two levels. As Blignaut writes in *Communication*:

'Communication falls into two dimensions, that of the intellectual and of the conative.' 8

It will be shown that Fosdick was aware of these two levels and addressed his congregation at both levels. A consideration of certain approaches to communication is now called for in order to set the field to analyse Fosdick's work.

2.2.3 Models of communication

The two models to be employed are the process and semiotic approaches. The former arose from the work of Shannon and Weaver⁹ and the latter from C S Peirce¹⁰ whose original thoughts were built upon by Saussure.¹¹ To complete this section I will attempt a comparative alignment of Fosdick's ideas against Fourie's criteria of communication by objectives.¹² Fourie endeavours to place both the process concept and the semiotic concept within the total process of communication. The final chapter of this thesis offers a literary analysis of one of Fosdick's sermons.¹³

2.2.3.1 The message is the core

The process school presents communication as the transmission of the message. The message is the core of communication. This theory is concerned with how 'senders' and 'receivers' encode and decode.¹⁴ Communication is stated to be a process by which one person affects

the behaviour or state of mind of another. It offers a lineal approach,¹⁵ and was first presented as a model by Shannon and Weaver in their mathematical theory of communication.¹⁶

Shannon and Weaver use a number of terminologies in their studies, the most important being those of redundancy, entropy and feedback. A consideration of these aspects follows.

2.2.3.1 (a) Redundancy aids information being understood and retained

Redundancy is a technical term which allows for the given information to be of high probability.¹⁷ The receiver can guess the probability of the message. An aspect of redundancy is that of entropy. These two concepts are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Entropy implies a low predictability and gives high information. The function of redundancy is to help overcome any practical communication problem. This aspect will be clearly identified in Fosdick's sermons as they are examined in this thesis.

2.2.3.1 (b) Feedback as a method of understanding that the message has been received

No message can be said to have been received and understood without effective feedback. This can be in terms of a verbal reply or can be non-verbal. The sender looks for signs that the message has been received. For the preacher this dimension of communication presents problems but it will be seen that Fosdick was acutely aware of the

need for feedback. Chartier¹⁸ writes that effective preaching without attentive listening is impossible since preaching is a two-way communication process. He based his thoughts upon the Shannon and Weaver model.

2.2.3.2 The Shannon and Weaver model developed

The Shannon and Weaver model only gave a basic suggestion to the communication problem.

Newcombe¹⁹ and Gerbner²⁰ both developed the model of Shannon and Weaver. Newcombe believed that the role of communication is social and is there to create relationships. Its task is to maintain an equilibrium within the social system of any cultural group. Environment then becomes an important component of communication. The model was developed to become triangular to give room for this dimension. It is significant in terms of preaching that cognisance has to be taken of the culture of the congregation. Fosdick was preaching at a specific time in history and to a particular group of society. Culture and environment were to play an important role in the success of his preaching.

Gerbner presented a more complex model which enabled the questions of perception and meaning to be studied. His model showed the perceptual as the horizontal and the means of communicating as the vertical. Thus this model introduced the dimension of dynamics, the tension between form and content. This will be discussed further in the chapter which reviews the concept of dynamics.

2.2.3.2 (a) The link with the semiotic school

Jakobson²¹ links the linear model together with the triangular model of Newcombe and begins to bridge the gap between the process and the semiotic schools of communication. His model shows both the constitutive factors and the functions of communication. He calls the emotive functions those which express the sender's emotions, attitudes, status and class. The conative function is that which refers to the effect of the message on the receiver. The conative approaches closely to the semiotic school.

Each of these theorists discusses the meaning of the message but approaches the question differently. They give emphasis to differing dimensions. Semiotics, which is now to be discussed, is concerned with the part of the message which is conveyed by the sign. This could be visual, acoustic or tactile. It will be seen that for the purpose of this thesis the visual (written) and the acoustic (heard) will be the necessary dimensions explored in relation to Fosdick's methodology.

2.2.3.3 An analysis of the semiotic school to illustrate the need to interpret communication codes

Semiotics, or semiology as it is sometimes called, is the study of communication signs. This study is extremely wide but for the purpose of systematizing the communication process in the works of Fosdick, only specific areas will be discussed, i.e., the visual and the acoustic. In the chapter concerning preaching, Fosdick's

use of semiotics will be discussed. These will be seen to complement Fourie's understanding of semiotics as well as Peirce's. The two men approach the question of communication from differing viewpoints and assist analysts in their work.

There are three main areas of study:

1. The sign itself.
2. The codes or systems into which the signs are organised.
3. The culture within which these codes and signs operate.

This last point closely relates to the question of feedback discussed in the previous paragraphs. Feedback plays such an important role in communication that it must perforce be discussed from different viewpoints.

Most of the early research in the field of semiotics was undertaken by Peirce in America and Ogden and Richards in England.²²

Saussure²³ clarified, explored and systematized this field.

Fourie²⁴ includes semiotics within his schema of communication by objectives. This schema gives a foundation from which to systematize Fosdick's sermons. However, something must first be said of the work of Peirce, the founder of the school of semiotics.

2.2.3.3. (a) Peirce as the founder of the school of semiotics

Peirce explained his model in the following terms:

'A sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object.' 25

Peirce's model shows his elements of meaning. The sign indicates something which is understood in the mind of the user and depends upon his experience. It can thus be seen that the sign may mean one thing to the user but something different to the interpretant, who also is conditioned by his experience. This indicates a differing stand from the process school. The semiotic school is not so much concerned with the encoding and the decoding but with the mental concept of the sign for the interpretant, whether he is listening or reading.

This school highlights an interesting area to be examined in the method of Fosdick. Killinger writes that Fosdick attempted to do four things in each sermon:

- '(1) To identify a pressing human problem and gain each hearer's personal interest in it.
- (2) To develop understanding of the problem in terms of common solutions people have tried, usually without success.
- (3) To set the problem in the biblical perspective and secure the hearer's co-operation in discovering how much richer and more satisfying that perspective is than any other.
- (4) To encourage the hearer to accept and act on the biblical answer to his or her problem and preparing to meet life at a higher level.'

Fosdick always tried to fulfil these four points but he gave little emphasis to them in his discussion concerning how he learnt to preach except to emphasize his realisation that he listened to man's needs. Fosdick saw his sermons as personal counselling on a group scale.²⁷ Certainly he read profusely before he began his sermon preparation, allowing a free association of ideas.²⁸ The question to be asked is whether he heeded the cultural background of his hearers and whether research in this field was undertaken by Fosdick. Perhaps his success depended in part on the fact that he was only preaching to the Western world and that to a degree his congregation showed a certain homogeneous background. As Nida writes in *Religion across Cultures*, the content of a message is communicated by its symbols. The question of culture will be discussed later in this thesis.²⁹

2.2.3.4 Fourie's CBO method used to analyse Fosdick's sermons

Fosdick's sermons were the result of careful preparation and editing. Fourie's model assists in the analysis of Fosdick's aim. Fourie's 20 steps aid in highlighting the structural aspect of Fosdick's sermons. They assist in giving a new approach to Fosdick's work. In this thesis, which explores a novel method of evaluation to give new insights into Fosdick's communication techniques, Fourie's steps provide a useful tool.

Fourie states that communication by objectives starts from the premise that all communication is motivated and directed at the

satisfaction of one or more needs. Fosdick was ever aware of man's needs in his sermons and many, if not all, are directed to helping man in this regard.

Fourie suggests that there are three areas of need:

- (1) Universal needs.
- (2) General communication needs.
- (3) Specific needs.³⁰

The CBO technique sets out steps to enable the communication process to be systematized and clarified in order that these needs are met. These steps will be used when analysing sermons of Fosdick's. A later chapter will refer to the above paragraph. The next step in this thesis is to systematize aspects of Fosdick's communication technique within the framework of the above theories.

2.3 SYSTEMATIZING ASPECTS OF FOSDICK'S COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES IN RELATION TO THE COMMUNICATION THEORIES ALREADY EXPLORED

Fosdick has been called 'the father of modern preaching'. He preached at a time when Lloyd Jones³¹ says there was a primacy of preaching. Today, 'There is a loss of belief in the authority of the Scriptures and a diminution in the belief of the truth'.³² A critical analysis of Fosdick's thought has to be seen with this background. Fosdick, in common with others, struggled with the communication problem which has already been noted. He reached certain decisions by means of feedback from the congregation and

by his own observations. Standards and methods of preaching may have changed so that Fosdick's title of "Father" may be outdated. The purpose of this thesis is to respond to this statement specifically in terms of the concept of dynamics. Analysis within this framework has not been undertaken before.

Is Fosdick's methodology still valid for today? Robert McCracken described the sermonic genius of Fosdick in these words:

'What a craftsman he was! He had a native inability to do anything badly. The versatility of the man! Sixteen hours on average for the writing of a sermon to say nothing of the long preparation, and then, come Sunday morning, sermon after sermon a masterpiece, a tour de force - the vivid, vigorous style, "animated conversation" was how he described what he aimed at; the lucidity of the thought; the orderly sequence of exposition culminating in the compelling conclusions; the skill, aptness, felicity of illustrations and quotations drawn from wide reading and from keen observation of everyday life and experience. He was at once the inspiration and despair of countless fellow preachers, his sermons models of the preaching art, and how often more than models God alone knows. To read them was to be tempted sharply not to merely borrow but to plagiarize.'

33

However glowing these terms are, the task of this thesis is to uncover Fosdick's techniques in regard to communication theories and theological dynamics.

2.3.1 Fosdick's struggle

Fosdick desired excellence in his preaching. His struggle involved wrestling with two styles of preaching in use at the time he was a

young man. Fosdick analysed these approaches and named them the expository, which elucidated the text, and the topical, which sought contemporary life topics. Tradition upheld that the message was the core of the sermon, which linked it closely to the process school of thought. Fosdick realised that man came to Church for his own needs to be met. He came to receive a specific message. In terms of the process school, if this message was not received, there was no communication. Fosdick observed that these approaches were not fulfilling the communication goal of the sending and receiving of a message. Fosdick was able to diagnose the flaw in these two methods and intuitively devised what he described as the project method.

2.3.1.1 Fosdick's Dictum - No Problem, No Message

Fosdick deduced that he had to respond to the needs of man. He wrote that every sermon had to have a definite object and relevant truth. His project method highlights the use of the techniques of process school. This can be demonstrated in the following diagram:

Sender (Fosdick).....Message.....Receiver
(Congregation)

The success of this method depended upon the data collected. Fosdick's method of data collecting depended partly upon his own personal experience. As was seen in the first chapter, his heritage could be described as enriched. Though his sermons do not refer

specifically to his breakdown, except in passing in his book *On Being a Real Person* and in his autobiography, Fosdick's positive approach to problems may well relate to the fact that he himself did, by the Grace of God, grow out of his depression and this depression did not surface again during his life-time. This point will be further discussed in a following chapter.

Fosdick also collected much data from his observations of man and his behaviour and he also read extensively to widen both his resource material and his ability to reflect on mankind. In his sermon preparation, Fosdick allowed himself to have a free association of ideas. He let this continue until some idea 'jelled'. This step in fact depends upon the semiotic approach and it appears that Fosdick was led by the Spirit to recognise the need of the man in the pew. This step can be seen to relate to the 14th step in Fourie's model, that of selecting the code. A model presented by Johnson and Johnson in *Joining Together* is helpful.³⁴ Fosdick's 'co-operative enterprise' can be identified in Johnson and Johnson's methods.

2.3.1.2 Co-operative enterprise

Despite Fosdick's prominent use of the process school he was not unaware of the need of the semiotic. He wished to develop a rapport or a form of communication with the man in the pew. The message ceased to be an imposition of Fosdick's thoughts but became the answer to the needs of the congregation. A particular episode in

Fosdick's life made him aware of the need for this involvement of the congregation. He writes in *'Learning to Preach'* of the following event:

'A Headmaster in his school chapel who had plunged into the first statement of his sermon theme, when a Professor arose from the congregation, mounted the pulpit beside the preacher, and offered criticism of what he had said. Excitement reigned. The Headmaster answered the objection but the Professor remained in the pulpit, and the sermon that day was a dialogue on a great theme of religion. The boys had never been so entranced by a sermon.'

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Fosdick did not want the man in the pew only to hear but to become actively involved. He saw two outcomes to his sermons. Either they ceased to be dogmatic and became personal counselling on a group scale or creative change happened. Fosdick writes how in preaching a sermon on 'joy', the congregation needs to become joy-filled and a joyous group, that is, it is a preacher's task to create in his congregation the thing he is talking about.³⁶ Fosdick knew that he achieved the preacher's task which he discusses in his autobiography.

2.3.1.3 Fosdick's methodology - the project method

Fosdick was convinced that his sermons must be object-orientated and not subject-orientated.³⁷ He first discussed this in 1926. This was after twenty-two years in the ministry. He wrote:

'Every wise preacher will take this new mood into account. It will provoke him to humility and searching of heart. It will despoil him of scribal pretense and will send him to his sermon on Sunday with a method of approach to his hearers very different from that which authoritarian pulpiteers commonly use. The psychologists call it the 'project method' and the prescript for it can be briefly put: start with a real life issue, a real problem, personal or social, perplexing to the mind or disturbing to the conscience of the people; face that problem fairly, deal with it honestly, and throw such light on it from the Spirit of Christ that the people will go out able to think more clearly and live more nobly because of that sermon's illumination. That is real preaching, and not only has such preaching not been outgrown, but here are few things that modern folk are hungrier for than that.' 38

These words speak for themselves. . . They indicate Fosdick's awareness of man's needs.

It is interesting to note that thirty years later he again highlighted the needed difference between subject- and object-orientated sermons. He wrote his autobiography:

'A lecture is chiefly concerned with a subject to be elucidated; a sermon is chiefly concerned with an object to be achieved.' 39

Fosdick reiterated that a preacher had to have a well-defined goal relating to the needs, problems, concerns and interests of the people before whom he is to stand the following Sunday. He discusses this approach in his book *What is the Matter with Preaching?* Edmund Holt Linn in his book *Preaching as Counselling* writes:

'Thus the sermon subject is not merely the whim of the preacher, nor a late item from the newspaper, nor an exposition of a Bible passage, but is the satisfaction of some personal need of one or more of the congregation.' 40

Fosdick's sermon 'When life all goes to pieces', printed in his book *The Power to See it Through*, clearly illustrates this approach:

'What living in this modern world habitually does to us may be described in many ways, but no description comes closer to the mark than to say that this world keeps tearing us apart so that we deeply need those forces which pull life together again.' 41

Fosdick's method did not depreciate the use of the Bible in any way and he writes that he was suckled on the Bible and knew it and loved it. He fully recognised the greatness and wealth of human experience recorded in the Bible. His objection was to when the sermon remained only an exegesis. He maintained that he did indeed use the expository method but his kerygmatic method revealed the message behind his words. He believed that a preacher's task was not historical, literary or even theological but to do something creative with those seated in front of him.

Fosdick again reiterated his trust in the project method four years after his sermon, 'What is the matter with preaching?' in his discourse *Animated Conversation*.

'He is after his audience to create a change in them, and therefore, must be able to arrange his thoughts in a psychological fashion, so that he may start where they are in their thinking, and lead them on from one step to another along an inclined plane that is most natural for their feet to mount.' 42

Fosdick was not solely concerned with the problems of people but his deliberate goal was one step further. He set out to help people first to wrestle with their problem and then to help them see the solution. Fosdick's ability to elicit a response is described by Edgar de Witt Jones:

'He can take a theme, say an appraisal of modern Protestantism, and in a series of pungent paragraphs bare to the bone every weakness, uncover and expose every blemish of organised Christianity, so that when he finishes there seems nothing left worth preserving. As you listen, you become alarmed, apprehensive, indignant. You say to yourself, "This man has gone too far, he has given his case away." You are humiliated and chagrined, when la! Fosdick begins an assessment of the world's debt to Protestantism and what remains that is of priceless value, and marshals brilliantly the reasons for conserving the same. He becomes constructive; the man speaks with the fire of the crusader. Your heart beats faster, your cheeks are warm, something stirs within you in response to the preacher, and you feel that a real discipleship of Jesus Christ in these modern days is the mightiest challenge and the grandest thing in the world.' 43

2.3.1.4 Limitations of the project method

Did the project method actually fulfil the communication in terms of the semiotic school? Fosdick reached the ears of his listeners, many

he influenced and changed their lives and can preaching be expected to do more than that? Fosdick himself had to reach the depths of depression as a young man and succeeded in reforming his life. He became a person with a totally positive approach to life. This quality is seen in his sermons. Landry in his unpublished dissertation reports on a survey made of 52 of Fosdick's sermons.⁴⁴ This took the form of a word frequency analysis and the result showed that Fosdick's vocabulary was frequented with positive expressions. He used very few negative words.⁴⁵ Landry's report certainly offers an interesting conclusion but possibly Fosdick's use of words show more of a polemic approach rather than an emphasis on the positive. Note has to be taken of Fosdick's background which was discussed in Chapter One, where it was shown that Fosdick did recover from a complete breakdown and this experience perhaps gave rise to his dynamic approach in his sermons rather than a constant positive approach as suggested by Landry.

Fosdick used so-called negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, worry, and enabled people to transform the negative into something which was positive. For example, in his sermon, 'The constructive use of fear', fear moves from being a curse to becoming a blessing. As Fosdick used the two poles of fear and the curse of fear, so the dynamic offered became a blessing. In 'Making the best of a bad mess', Fosdick encouraged people to look for the good in the situation where God has placed them. He uses for his text "for this cause I left you in Crete."⁴⁶ However, this approach leaves two questions unanswered, namely:

1. Did Fosdick take note of the cultural demands of his congregation?
2. Were people helped to pass through the crucifixion to the resurrection; can people really experience Easter without Good Friday?

The answers to these questions lie within the scope of the semiotic school where the interpretant is the priority. Nida, in his book *Message and Mission*, sees the question of man's needs in a wider perspective. He believes that the sender, the message and the receiver are all culturally influenced.⁴⁷ Richard Niebuhr has also contributed to this school of thought in his work discussing Christ and Culture.⁴⁸

Chartier, in his book *Preaching as Communication*, offers a model which also includes the need to recognise the total man and the need for both the preacher and the hearers to explore the need for self-disclosure.⁴⁹

The answer to the second question lies in the need for conversion to take place in the form of the Christian parabola.⁵⁰ Man has to pass through death in order to rise again. This process is not a once-only event but a continuing one on the path of the Christian life. The consistently positive approach of Fosdick helped people to look at their goals. His sermon 'The cross, an amazing paradox', will be referred to in a later chapter as the dimension shown in this sermon reveals a dynamic tension rather than a solely positive

approach. However, the overall positive approach of Fosdick did indeed help people to look at their goals and perhaps a preacher can only go so far in helping people to move towards satisfying their needs and reaching their goals.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE SYSTEMATIZING OF FOSDICK'S COMMUNICATION METHODS

In terms of communication, questions concerning Fosdick's awareness of cultural influences and techniques do have to be answered in considering the dynamics of Fosdick's communication. His apparent lack of recognition of cultural influences has been referred to and will be again.⁵¹ His positive methodology with reference to his goal of creating change will also be discussed.⁵² Fosdick's preaching techniques fall to a large extent within the scope of the process school, but also take into account the semiotic school of thought. An attempt to explore these techniques fully will be made in the following chapters making use of Fourie's schema.⁵³ However, before this analysis is undertaken, concepts concerning dynamics will be discussed.

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53. Cf. paragraph 8 of Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

3. COMPARATIVE IDENTIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF DYNAMICS IN THE THOUGHT OF CERTAIN THEOLOGIANS AS BACKGROUND TO H.E. FOSDICK'S CONCEPT

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CONCEPT OF THE TERM 'DYNAMICS'

This thesis is directed at Fosdick's explanation of the concept 'dynamics'.

Fosdick's preaching has been described by many as 'dynamic' and this aspect will be highlighted in the following chapter. This chapter is concerned with the noun 'dynamics', the definition of which is given in the Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary as:

'moving forces.'

These forces are something which generate to give energy. Fosdick himself does not define or even comment upon this concept of 'dynamics', yet it can clearly be seen in so many of the sermons he preached. *Living Under Tension* is an example of his application of dynamics. His application of Psalm 1 as an outstanding illustration of energetic interaction can be seen in his sermon 'Family religion' where he comments upon the need for branches to have roots. A further example is seen in the book *On Being a Real Person* where he discusses power as being dynamic.

However, it is possible to explore and systematize Fosdick's use of dynamics after consulting the works of other theologians since he never referred technically to usage of the concept. His use was pragmatic. A similar approach was used in Chapter Two of this thesis, using known theories to lead to a discussion of Fosdick's modes of communication and then considering modern theories. The use of 'dynamics' will be shown to be present in Fosdick's thought and an attempt will be made to clarify and systematize this fact.

It has already been mentioned that this aspect, as in communication, forms a unique contribution by this thesis to the study of Fosdick as a preacher. In approaching the formation of a suitable definition in connection with the subject, it is necessary to explore the many uses which the term has been given by other theologians.

3.2 TILLICH'S INSIGHTS

In explaining the use and development of the concept of dynamics Professor N.A.C. Heuer, in his book *Interpretative Theological Dynamics*, investigated the use made of the term by Paul Tillich.¹ Tillich's pupil Hiltner gave a broad basis to the concept in terms of 'action theology', but it was Tillich who pinpointed the concept more clearly.²

Tillich's concept is concerned with the interaction of opposite polarities. His words describing the interaction between 'being' and 'non-being' will point towards an understanding of the concept of dynamics.³ I quote his statement at length as I believe this is the starting point for an understanding of his concept of dynamics. It is also significant because it establishes the basis for an approach to the term in relation to the other theologians to be discussed.

'Every form forms something. The question is: What is the something? We have called it 'dynamics', a very complex concept with a rich history and many connotations and implications. The problematic character of the concept, and of all concepts related to it, is due to the fact that everything which can be conceptualised must have being and that there is no being without form. Dynamics, therefore, cannot be thought of as something that is; nor can it be thought of as something that is not. It is the *me-on*, the potentiality of being, which is non-being in contrast to things that have a form, and the power of being in contrast to pure non-being. This highly dialectical concept is not an invention of the philosophers. It underlies most mythologies and is indicated in the chaos, the *tohu-va-bohu*, the night, the emptiness, which precedes creation.'

4

This quotation needs to be carefully understood and analysed.

Tillich's concept took note of metaphysical speculations; the will to power, as seen by Nietzsche; the unconscious as used by Freud and explored by Jung in his system of analytical psychology. The concept of Jung will be mentioned again in this chapter as it throws light on Fosdick's concept of dynamics. Freud will be mentioned again in Chapter Four.

Tillich offered a practical theology of praxis - the study of encounter - balanced by an answering theology. Greatly influenced by the discipline of psychology, Tillich saw life in terms of polarities, e.g., individualisation and participation; being and non-being; chaos and creation. Tillich leaned heavily on Freudian insights into the concept of the 'unconscious'. Later, too late for incorporation into his Systematic Theology, he discovered Carl Jung's analytical or complex psychology. This latter point is significant for Fosdick who, in his sermon preparation, worked to recognize and answer man's problems. This will be discussed again in Chapter Four, paragraph 8.

Tillich saw that man, caught up in these polarities, found his faith challenged and the meaning of the cross increased. Tillich said that love is the driving force, dynamic, to bring the finite and the infinite together. Being is seen as the affirmation of life and non-being the negation of life. This interpretative form of theology depends upon three criteria of theological judgement being applied to any given message or situation:

- (a) Man's created goodness.
- (b) Man's predicament.
- (c) Essential healing or reconciliation.

Reconciliation is seen in terms of man to God, man to man and man to himself.

It is possible to see these dynamic threads in many of the sermons preached and written by Fosdick. He simplified this concept so that it could be grasped by the man in the pew. He preached using language and symbols which could be easily understood. But the balancing of being with non-being can be seen in Fosdick's work giving his sermons their dynamic quality. Tillich further demonstrates his understanding of his concept of dynamics in his book, *The Dynamics of Faith*.

'Since faith is an act of the personality as a whole, it participates in the dynamics of personal life. These dynamics have been described in many ways, especially in the recent developments of analytic psychology. Thinking in polarities, their tensions and their possible conflicts, is a common characteristic of most of them.' 5

However, Tillich was not a psychologist but a theologian and therefore it is necessary to take his argument further. It will be shown that the same approach was to be taken by Fosdick in contradiction to those who described him as a humanist. Tillich writes:

'Out of this criterion comes the message which is the very heart of Christianity and makes possible the courage to affirm faith in the Christ, namely, that in spite of all forces of separation between God and man this is overcome from the side of God.' 6

The works of Seward Hiltner help to sustain Tillich's theme of dynamics and consideration of his thoughts and systems will now be presented.

3.3 THE THEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS OF SEWARD HILTNER

Seward Hiltner, a contemporary theologian too, and student of Tillich, defines the word 'dynamic' in its precise Greek sense. Karl Menniger in his introduction to Hiltner's *Theological Dynamics*, gives the following insight:

'Seward Hiltner uses 'dynamics' in its precise Greek sense of the relation between the tensions and equilibriums. And he believes theology is dynamic in this sense. People are still seeking relief and hope and clarification from this ancient discipline as well as from some new ones.'

7

Hiltner does indeed introduce the disciplines of psychiatry and psychology as did Fosdick. His real concern is the dynamics of human personality as perceived within the framework of theology. This topic is dealt with in the work of Chartier⁸ in his book *Preaching as Communication*, which helps us to understand more about Hiltner's idea. Chartier explores the interpersonal aspect of preaching. He demonstrates the need for human relationships in the theological discipline.

Hiltner acknowledged that his understanding of dynamics is different to that of Tillich's. Hiltner writes:

'My attempt to apply dynamics to theology arose from quite another source (from that of Tillich), mainly in dynamic psychologies

beginning with that of Freud but with some reference also to dynamics in sociology. In those disciplines the forces of tension and equilibrium within and between persons and groups studied, often along with efforts to help relieve those tensions that are so great as to cause pain or anxiety or discomfort.... The level of theological thinking done by Tillich does for theology important things that I could never attempt. But I believe that my 'lower case' level of analysis can make a contribution that even Tillich did not attempt.' 9

Hiltner worked on an experience-centred approach rather than the academic, as did Tillich; and as did Fosdick to some extent. In the above quote Hiltner is commenting upon the academic approach of Tillich as opposed to his own pragmatic approach.

In this thesis both approaches help to clarify Fosdick's thought and method in communication.

The continuous tension between praxis and exploration continues to evolve and will be shown to be present in Fosdick's sermons.¹⁰ For that reason Hiltner's thought must be dwelt upon in this context for a while longer. Hiltner was essentially grounded in the dynamics of inter- and intra-personal relationships. His exploration of dynamic interpersonalism is closer to being within the 'body of divinity' as opposed to Tillich's assumption that it is one of the 'empirical disciplines'.¹¹ Hiltner's approach was experience-based as is seen in his book *Pastoral Counselling*. His aim was to enable man to become integrated. His methodology was essentially practical, based on his interviews with clients relating their own needs and anxieties.

Hiltner recognised that his work was closely linked to the work of Jung who was concerned with personality difficulties understood from a one-sidedness. Jung believed that there is a tendency in all to develop recognising only one aspect of ourselves and losing touch with another.¹² He, together with Freud, explored the collective unconscious of man.¹³

Hiltner believed that health can only be regained by regaining contact with all aspects of self.¹⁴ He describes his aim as:

'To allow an interpersonal process has provided what might be called the setting in which a person can look in a more integrated manner at himself. We know that such a view of self inevitably means at the same time a new view of relationship with other people and with the cosmic framework in which we live. Hence a new view of the self means a new view of one's destiny.'¹⁵

This viewpoint can be seen to be similar to Jung's but is not quite the same. Jung is mentioned here because his influence on Fosdick will be traced later in this thesis. There was a shift from seeing man as 'ontic' towards man being a self-actualizing personality.¹⁶ This point is vital for Fosdick as he encouraged man forward towards his potential with the dynamics of interpersonalism. From the above analysis of the work of Hiltner, it will be understood that the concept of 'dynamics' refers to the dynamics created by interpersonal relationships. A particular form of power is created. This aspect will be shown to be present in the thought of Fosdick but it does

not define the whole concept of 'dynamics' and does not fully serve to systematize Fosdick's work; therefore further definitions will be explored.

3.4 FURTHER DEVELOPMENTAL INSIGHTS INTO THE CONCEPT OF 'DYNAMICS'

Recognition must be given at this point to the work of Paul Johnson concerning dynamic interpersonalism,¹⁷ as it throws light on Fosdick's dynamic preaching. Fosdick rated the success of a sermon by the number of requests for personal counselling, recognizing the need for the trust relationship of a one-to-one communication. Counselling is dependent upon that trust relationship. Fosdick believed that personal counselling could develop from a preaching ministry but that a preaching ministry could also develop from a counselling ministry.¹⁸ His recognition of men's potential led Fosdick into the field of dynamic interpersonalism.

Johnson's work regarding the nature and relation of conscious persons, to each other and to God, indicates a polemic approach.¹⁹ Johnson took the personalistic view of man rather than the ontic.²⁰ Fosdick was more concerned with bringing God to man rather than stating his reflections about his concepts but it appears that he viewed man from the personalistic approach.

Will Herberg's analysis of the three basic understandings of man aids clarification.²¹ These understandings are the intellectualistic stemming from Plato and Greek philosophers; the naturalistic of the

eighteenth century where man was seen as an organism; and the personalistic which finds its roots in scripture and in Judaeo-Christian thinking. This latter understanding indicates the rationale of many of Fosdick's sermons. The 'I - Thou' theology of Martin Buber helped Johnson to work towards formulating the theological aspect of his work.²² It is the 'I - Thou' relationship which marks man's acceptance of a duality with its inevitable tensions. Paul Schilling, writing about the work of Johnson, says:

'Thus interperson relations are a clue to and grounded in the ultimate character of reality.' 23

This thought can be identified in the dynamic sermons of Fosdick.

More recently John Macquarrie reaffirms the need for interpersonalism. He writes of the 'dynamic' "letting be."²⁴ Macquarrie interprets love as 'letting be' and in this context interprets love between persons. I will refer to this point again later in this chapter. These thoughts are quoted here in order to be able to ground Fosdick's sermons in their dynamic quality as it has come to be understood. However, there is still one further aspect of dynamics to be discussed which further helps in the assessment of Fosdick. In recent times Bruce Reed has offered a different interpretation to theological dynamics which can aid the systematization of Fosdick's sermons and these will now be examined.

3.5 THEOLOGICAL DYNAMICS IN A MODERN INTERPRETATION

It is interesting to notice in passing the contemporary development of this concept as Bruce Reed sets it up.

BRUCE REED'S THEORY OF OSCILLATION

Bruce Reed's book *Dynamics of Religion* was published in 1980, some years after the death of Fosdick. I believe, however, that part of the dynamics of Fosdick's approach to the Church indicated a moving towards the awareness of Reed's theory. Reed's book focusses on worship as an important illustration of the oscillation theory. For example, if one is to embark on an act of worship, one has to enter into a frame of mind which enables one to interpret one's feelings and experiences into the language and symbols of religious belief. Reed describes the activity of the world as w(world)-activity and that of worship as s(symbol)-activity. He says that this corporate oscillation forms the dynamic of religion.

Fosdick preached week after week to approximately two thousand people for twenty years. These people were not necessarily from the same denomination but Fosdick enabled them to come together in worship (S-activity) from their varying work and home situations (W-activity). Reed says that the real success of any congregation comes when it scatters to serve the Kingdom of God in the world. I believe the words of Rev. Samuel Miller in *A Young Preacher Looks at Fosdick*, indicate Fosdick's awareness of the need to enable the man in the pew to go from the S-activity into the W-activity.

'The characteristic constantly impressing me as I listen to Doctor Fosdick's preaching is its utter confidence in the intrinsic power of goodness to produce its like in human life. I am not exhorted, urged, pressed but the good and the true is unveiled before my eyes that I may see it. My soul leaps up intuitively and finds reality. I take it in and it becomes mine. Then at last, it is me.' 25

The dynamic of oscillation can be identified in the above quotation. This dynamic is the dynamic of co-operative dialogue.

In concluding this chapter, I will discuss a Biblical aspect of dynamics. This paragraph has been left until this point in order to form a link from Chapter Three to Chapter Four. Fosdick recognised that the lessons of the Bible are dynamic and not static, either in Biblical times or in the present world.

3.6 A BIBLICAL DIMENSION OF DYNAMICS

As has been previously said, Biblical study does not remain in the past, as did the Pharisees, for the God of the Bible is alive and man is to be alive in and with Him. Life demands growth and dynamic change.

Fosdick indicates his appreciation of this dynamic in his studies concerning Jeremiah - his favourite prophet. In his book *A Guide to Understanding the Bible*, he says that Jeremiah made one of the supreme contributions to man's spiritual history as he wrestled with

the dilemma of the need to belong to a group and the need to be an individual. Jeremiah's struggle to be in relationship with a personal God was intense as the Jews saw God in terms of His care for the tribal group. It will be shown that Fosdick preached a personal God yet he showed that God is in the community. This form of dynamics gave rise to Fosdick's project style of preaching. Charles Kraft comments:

'So God enters into inter personal relationships
with us in terms of our frame of reference.' 26

This quote brings this thesis to the point where an analytical discussion of Fosdick's sermons is necessary to define and systematize the ground covered in this and the previous chapters. This approach opens new understandings and presents new values of the dynamics in communication of Fosdick's preaching.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Tillich, P. Born 1886, died 1949.
2. Refers to the need for both action and teaching.
3. Dynamics defines the balancing of interrelated forces and tensions.
4. Tillich, P. *Systematic Theology Vol. 1*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1951.
5. Tillich, P. *Dynamics of Faith*. George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1957, p.4.
6. Ibid., p.104.
7. Hiltner, S. *Theological Dynamics*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1972, cf. Menninger, K. Foreword, p.10.
8. Chartier, M.B. Op. cit., p.13.
9. Hiltner, S. *Pastoral Counselling*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1949, p.183.
10. 'Praxis' is the study of encounter.
11. Strunk, O. (Editor) *Dynamic Interpersonalism for Ministry*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1973.
12. Hiltner, S. Op. cit., p.63.
13. Strunk, O. Op. cit., p.51.
14. Hiltner's approach was holistic.
15. Hiltner, S. Op. cit., p.63.
16. Strunk, O. Op. cit., cf. Bertocci, P.A. *Dynamic Interpersonalism and Personalistic Philosophy*, p.32, cf. Chapter One, note 25.
17. Strunk, O. assesses the significance and impact of Paul Johnson in the field of dynamic interpersonalism for the ministry today and in the future. His work helps to analyze Fosdick's theological dynamic approach.
18. Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*, p.94. This thesis does not include an analysis of Fosdick's counselling ability but note must be made of it at this point.

19. *Dynamic Interpersonalism* was edited by Oslo Strunk. in honour of Paul Johnson.
20. Strunk, O. (Editor) Op. cit., p.30.
21. Herberg, W. *The Three Basic Understandings of Man*. Drew University. An unpublished article.
22. "In Martin Buber's writings, Johnson has found theological support for his dynamic interpersonalism." Strunk, O. (Editor) Op. cit., cf. Schilling, S.P. *Dynamic Interpersonalism and Contemporary Theology*, p.52.
23. Ibid., p.53.
24. Ibid., p.59.
25. Crocker, L. (Editor) Op. cit., p.76.
26. Kraft, C.H. *Christianity in Culture*. Orbis Books. Mary Knoll, New York, 1979, p.172. Cf. Appendix 3.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. A GENERAL AND PRACTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF DYNAMICS IN THE THOUGHT OF H.E. FOSDICK

4.1 FOSDICK'S MESSAGE - CONTENT AND FORM

In Chapter Two discussion centred on Fosdick's struggle to find his own effective method of preaching. It has already been noted that his approach was kerygmatic.¹ Few of his sermons identify by chapter and verse the text from which he highlighted his theme. For example, in his sermon 'The ghost of a chance', he discussed the prophet Jeremiah. He quoted Jeremiah's words² but a Bible student seeking for a didactic approach would have to locate the phrase for himself. Fosdick, in line with the process school, and relating this to step 14 of Fourie's schema, sought to highlight the message by this method. However, a message without form would not be rooted in the way that Fosdick interpreted Psalm 1 and its dynamic impact would be lessened. Fosdick realized that if his presentation lacked a real recognition of man's needs and the interpersonal relationship failed, his message was lost. He knew that a form had to be found.

In his book *What is the Matter with Preaching?* Fosdick set out to analyse the problem.³ Mention of Fosdick's struggle has been made in Chapter Two. Fosdick could accept neither the exegetal method

or the problem method. Fosdick ends with the comment:

Preaching is wrestling with individuals over questions of life and death, and until that idea of it commands a preacher's mind and method, eloquence will avail him little and theology not at all.' 4

4.2 FOSDICK'S MESSAGE AND THE SITUATION FROM WHICH IT AROSE

Fosdick's responding message was clearly directed at man's need. Tillich's concept of being and non-being can be seen in Fosdick's sermons. In his sermon, 'Living under tension', Fosdick said that man had to live in two worlds. Fosdick described the two worlds as the actual and the possible; the shaken and the unshaken; the temporal and the eternal. Fosdick's message was the way forward, that men of faith could live in both worlds.⁵ In Fosdick's sermon 'On being a real person', Fosdick again names the two poles - the actual and the imagined; the dominant and the submissive. His message in this sermon was the principle of self-acceptance.⁶

A further example, taken from his book *On Being a Real Person*, illustrates again this polemic approach, to have access to God, yet to be humble; to bear trouble but to have humour; to have self-regard but to be submissive to the Lord. The message arising from this situation was the need really to believe in God and partake in genuine worship.⁷ In this same book, Fosdick also discusses the principle of self-acceptance and examines the



tension between the actual and the imagined self; the existant and the desired; the dominant and the submissive and finally the tension between a death wish and a life wish. He seems almost Freudian in his approach for, as Freud writes:

'Starting from speculation on the beginnings of life and from biological parallels I drew the conclusion that, beside the instinct to preserve living substance, there must exist another, contrary, instinct seeking to dissolve those units and to bring them back to their primeval inorganic state. That is to say as well as Eros there was an instinct of death.'

8

Professor N.A.C. Heuer in his book *Interpretative Theological Dynamics*, explains Freud's viewpoint as:

'Man is caught in the drive to destroy himself and others.'

9

Fosdick felt compelled to offer a full theology involving life in all its aspects rather than a dependence upon an exegetal approach. He used the Bible extensively but felt that God reveals Himself through the interaction of people as well as in the creative work of His people. It is clearly seen in Fosdick's approach to theology that he recognized the need to have an answering theology, i.e., the message was not offered in a vacuum but was presented within a situation. Here is the crux of dynamics and in the reference of theology, Fosdick recognized this need and met it. He answered

man's needs by giving them an interpretative view of their problems. Fosdick then as a theologian had an existence, he took man's problems and answered them.

4.3 THE NEGATIVE TRANSFORMED TO THE POSITIVE

Fosdick was always a practical man answering needs as they presented themselves. He would take two ends of a continuum and hold both poles in tension leading to the power of dynamics. This technique is clearly illustrated in one of Fosdick's earliest publications. In *The Manhood of the Master*, he writes:

'The reason for Jesus' joyfulness corresponds in a universal law that the happiest people on earth are those who are doing most for others. We say that Jesus' earthly life was the time of humiliation and self-sacrifice, but when He speaks of it, He says in joy, "My meat is to do the will of the Master."' 10

Later in the same book, he writes:

'Life does not ask simply, how much can you do? It asks how much can you endure, and still be unspoiled.' 11

Fosdick holds this concept of joy and concept of endurance in tension one with the other. It will be seen throughout his writings that he offers polemics and brings them together in Christ. This is highlighted in his book *The Greatness of God*, in the chapter 'The paradox of the Cross'.

'So the same cross that revealed man at his
worst made man believe in himself at his best.' 12

Fosdick recognised in gratitude that the paradox is the heart of the Gospel. He balanced the fulfilment Christ brings to man with man's need to serve and to accept the pain which follows. The dynamic of this approach challenged men not only to hear Fosdick's words but to respond to them. Fosdick preached and wrote to men in the expectation that they would change.

4.4 THEOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES IN FOSDICK'S CONCEPT OF DYNAMICS IN PREACHING

Fosdick balanced spirituality with the humanity of man. He looked at man as a live issue with a real problem, be it personal or social, perplexing to the mind or disturbing to the conscience of the people and endeavoured to face the problem fairly and deal with it honestly in a way that was able to be understood. He then threw such light on it from the Spirit of Christ that people could think more clearly and live more effectively because of his illumination. Fosdick could not preach a sermon which was either theological or psychological but once again both ends of the continuum were presented and the dynamic of the contrast and conflict became that which was creative.

Fosdick saw the sermon as solving a problem which was real and disturbing to the lives of his people, so he offered his dynamic

approach to lead his people towards a theological joy. Fosdick grasped at both his knowledge of psychology as well as his theological training in order to meet man as created by God. Fosdick balanced man's fears, loneliness, anxieties and angers with man's possibilities - his possibility to become one with Christ and filled with the power to persevere.

Fosdick's methodology was to persuade man to transform the negative to the positive. It is interesting to note here Jung's idea that man does not destroy wrong in his life, but works at its transformation. Fosdick's own experience discussed previously may well have brought him to the point of agreement with Jung's deductions. In his sermon 'The power to see it through', he spoke of the poles of joy and grief and of "sunlight transforming tragedy."¹³ Fosdick believed in the power of positive thought which was within the power of God.

Fosdick did not use the term dynamics but allowed the didactic dynamic to occur in his teaching. The man in the pew was led to an understanding by illustrations and symbolic ideas but given the freedom to draw his own conclusions. Fosdick credits man with a maturity to choose. For example, Fosdick did not preach about joy but tried to let the congregation go out joyfully. As he writes:

'All powerful preaching is creative.' 14

Fosdick constantly recognized that a knowledge of the personal quality of man is the major factor in producing spiritual power.

This awakened in Fosdick, as he wrote his sermons, a real need to know his people, their problems and their motives. Man's behaviour was contrasted with man's creative possibility in the power of Christ. This concept related closely to Tillich's theory of creative potentiality arising from the pull of the being and the non-being of man.¹⁵

4.5 THE INTERACTION OF PREACHER AND PEOPLE

In this paragraph the dynamic dimension moves from the approaches and techniques used by Fosdick to the power produced by the interaction of Fosdick with those in the pew. Fosdick's methodology of co-operative enterprise has been already mentioned in Chapter Two. Fosdick wrote in 'Animated conversations',¹⁶ that opposing personalities produce a dialogue. As Fabaus Landry in his unpublished dissertation writes,¹⁷ "In the past the preacher had been seen as a conveyer of freight from the pulpit to the pew."¹⁸ It was taken for granted that the preacher had the 'goods' and that the congregation was in need. In other words, the pastor fed the flock. Fosdick believed that this supposition no longer applied to the average congregation and that man had reached a greater maturity and needed to be confronted in love by the preacher. His book *12 Tests of Character* gives many examples of the stance taken by Fosdick in regard to the standards which he upheld. He compares the following poles which he believed to be relevant to his time:

Duty with self-sacrifice. 19
 Obedience to law with living above average. 20
 Primitive instincts with higher ideals. 21

These poles represent Fosdick's interpretation of the needs of man at the time he was preaching. They were dependent upon the cultural and historical experiences of his congregation.

There are further examples in Fosdick's sermon 'On being a real person'. He preached to challenge men to weigh up the poles of the continuum.

To bear trouble and to have humour. 22
 Humbling and exalting. 23

In *The Living of These Days*, Fosdick describes the dialogical principle in simple terms:

'It certainly takes more than a preacher alone in the pulpit to make an effective sermon. If however, the people can be there too, so that the sermon is not a dogmatic monologue but a co-operative dialogue in which the congregation's objections, questions, doubts and confirmations are fairly stated and dealt with, something worthwhile is likely to happen.' 24

For Fosdick co-operative dialogue replaced the declamatory delivery characteristic of the 19th Century with a mood of sharing, a spirit of exchange between the pulpit and the pew resulting in dynamic preaching. This will be referred to again in the following chapter. Implicitly, all of Fosdick's preaching drew the congregation into the pulpit.

Landry highlights a number of phrases which Fosdick used to maintain the pulpit-pew dialogue:

'Is somebody here still thinking that all there is to Christianity is keeping the Golden Rule?' 25

'Indeed, at this point someone here may wish to make a warm, protesting speech.' 26

Examples could continue as Fosdick never ceased to keep this principle in mind and thus all his sermons contain the principle of involving the man in the pew and challenging him to be part of the process, to be part of the dialogue and to respond in a positive manner. As Landry points out, this technique could easily become a gimmick or mannerism and its effectiveness destroyed.²⁷ But despite the dangers, Fosdick committed himself to this approach and he brought his congregation into the pulpit with him and together they thrashed out their problems and the Christian answer to them.

It has already been said that Fosdick believed that his starting point was the man in the pew. He began his sermon from that point. He saw that man was the object and to involve him in a total sermon experience must necessitate knowing man's needs. In other words, Fosdick personalized his sermon to one person. So it was that his prayer before a sermon became:

'O God, some one person here needs what I am going to say. Help me to reach him.' 28

This aspect of the personal God is commented upon again in the following chapter.

Fosdick points out that to start with a passage from the Bible about Moses, Jeremiah, Paul or John and then spend the first half of the sermon or more on its historic explanation presupposes that members of the congregation came to hear about the meaning of a preselected text. In fact people came to church on Sunday with every kind of personal difficulty and problem to which flesh is heir. Fosdick believed that a sermon was meant to meet such needs. It was this personal contact and recognition which led to the dynamic interaction between Fosdick and the man in the pew.

4.6 FURTHER EXAMPLES OF FOSDICK'S DYNAMIC COMMUNICATION

In many or even all of Fosdick's sermons it is possible to illustrate and highlight Fosdick's concept of dynamics within his thought as he prepared for and then delivered his sermon. One of the tensions under which man lives is that of being pulled between what he ought to be and what he is. The letters of Paul indicate that he was faced with similar tensions. Man is in a state of ambivalence. Is it possible for this state to become creative? Fosdick sets out to say "Yes" and by means of looking at the poles of a continuum he believes the tension causes a dynamic response, which is part of the paradox of the cross. Fosdick writes:

'When a man's oughts and his is are set at loggerheads, there is a difficulty of personal integration. What in his idealism he thinks he ought to be, pulls in one direction, what his philosophy thinks he really is pulls in another, then there is personal schism, that is the ought and the is are at loggerheads.'

In passing it can be noted that Hans Schwarz, in his book *Divine Communication*,³⁰ comments that this dynamic is the tension between the law and the Gospel.

Fosdick sees that man's basic problem is not being at peace with himself. Man has lost his basic goodness, he can only see in terms of what he ought to do and it is there that he needs to hear the reconciling power of Christ. This same thought comes through clearly in Fosdick's book *The Meaning of Faith*. Here Fosdick sets out what is the result when man loses faith, what happens to the thinker, the worker, the sinner and the sufferer. He ends by writing:

'When faith in God goes, man the mortal
loses his only hope.' 31

Man remains in a sterile tension without faith in God but with faith tension then becomes a creative dynamic.

The concept of the force of dynamics is present in Fosdick's book *On Being a Real Person*. He writes that really to believe in God is an experience both humbling and exalting. Man cannot live on the high of worship but nor can he remain humbled. Fosdick discusses the question of submission and sees that mankind has a capacity to belong to someone else and yet at the same time he belongs to the Lord.

Another issue Fosdick highlights is that no man can be an island unto himself. Man may want to be an individual but he also wants and yearns to belong. Man becomes real and congruent as he grapples with these questions but only within the framework of the love of the Lord can he hope to move towards Christian maturity.

Fosdick's book *12 Tests of Character* discusses this theme.

He looks at the responsiveness and the unresponsiveness of man.

Fosdick believed that man should seek joyful expression instead of sullen repression and that there is always the pull of duty against self-sacrifice. Fosdick challenged man to be dynamic, to be both obedient to the law and yet to live above the average.

In *A Faith for Tough Times*, Fosdick writes that vitality is mightier than size.³² His poles of the continuum are the volcano and the protoplasm. If man holds these two poles in tension then he can be the channel of a spiritual dynamic far beyond himself. It is the leaven in the lump which produces the growth. Perhaps it is in this book that Fosdick expresses himself most clearly concerning dynamics. Christianity must be personal experience not hearsay. Conversion is not from being wicked but according to Fosdick:

'This means me - inwardly and intimately it means me - a resource of spiritual power, overcoming fear, renewing courage, directing conscience, dedicating life.' 33

Fosdick's inner self created a power which was the foundation of his communication techniques. These will be explored further in the next paragraph.

4.7 SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS ON FOSDICK'S CONCEPT OF 'DYNAMICS'

The dynamic of Fosdick's ability to communicate gave his sermons power. He himself actually lived within this concept of tension. In his book, *Living Under Tension*,³⁴ Fosdick writes of his own personal conflict about pacifism as opposed to fighting in the world wars. He knew that a decision had to be reached and to live in tension without resolution is negative. I quote Fosdick's words to highlight the dynamic thoughts which he held:

'What am I pleading for - an ivory tower to escape to from the appalling facts? No. Such souls as these never found an ivory tower of escape, but tension - terrific tension - between the brutal and the beautiful, the evil and the good, the actual and the possible, the temporal and the eternal. 35

In these words Fosdick recognises that man is called to live not in a barren but in a creative tension. Man can then live to his potential when he sees that Christ is his Saviour.

However, this thesis is concerned with systematizing Fosdick's communication techniques, indicating his dynamic power when preaching. Fourie's checkpoints help to clarify the processes involved. In the light of these steps Fosdick's sermons and methodology will be

analysed and an attempt made to throw light upon comparative aspects of Fosdick's dynamic of communication.

4.8 A COMPARATIVE ALIGNMENT OF FOSDICK'S IDEAS AGAINST FOURIE'S CRITERIA OF COMMUNICATION

The following comparative analysis briefly relates Fosdick's sermon preparation and presentation to the steps required for communication as indicated by Fourie. References to particular sermons will be made with the intention to systematize the techniques used by Fosdick, in terms of communication theory.

4.8.1 Communication needs

Fourie states that all communication is motivated and directed by the satisfaction of needs.³⁶ Fosdick's sermons indicate his awareness of this fact. Fosdick comments in his autobiography that at the start of all his sermon preparation he sought to find the particular need which could be answered in that sermon.³⁷

Fourie expands on these needs by placing them into categories. These categories are relevant in systematizing Fosdick's work.

4.8.1.1 Universal needs

Psychologists agree that there are certain universal needs.

The concept of self-actualisation as mentioned in Chapter One was described by the psychologist Maslowe.³⁸ Fosdick indicates his



awareness and recognition of his background and heritage as discussed in Chapter One. He indicates his understanding that man was not created in a vacuum and has these universal needs. Fosdick implies in his book *Learning to Preach*, that his intention was to change man and to bring him to realise his potential,³⁹ and thus not be bound by these primary needs but to seek self-actualisation.

4.8.1.2 General needs

Fosdick was aware that there were indeed further specific needs which Fourie lists as information, emotional, entertainment, motivational, aesthetic and ideological needs.⁴⁰ The recognition of Fosdick's response to these needs helps to systematize his communication techniques. Fosdick gave clear information based on the many literary sources with which he was familiar. He helped people to feel of worth. His use of man's desire for tension, excitement and fear gave his sermons that particular dynamic dimension peculiar to his work. Fosdick did not rely upon the need to respond to man's entertainment need. His approach was warm but not humorous. Many of his sermons encouraged man's motivational needs. His use of the aesthetic was commented upon by the Rev. Samuel Miller who writes 'the spiritual trinity of God in beauty, truth and "goodness" was revealed in every sermon.'⁴¹

4.8.1.3 Needs of destination

Fosdick's prime destination was the man in the pew. It has been noted that in later life Fosdick wrote for the general public. Fosdick had to determine the needs of that destination. As was

noted in Chapter Three, Fosdick endeavoured to bring man and man together as well as man to God. This thread of reconciliation is clearly seen in his books *The Hope of the World* and *A Faith for Tough Times*. This step plays a vital part in illustrating Fosdick's understanding of man and his needs, and, by means of his dynamic polemic approach, enables his message to be heard. Fosdick preached to the individual as he believed God is a personal God.⁴² It is well to comment here that on page 42 of Chapter Three the three criteria of theological judgement were discussed and can be seen to be relevant to the needs of the destination.

4.8.2 Formulation of Message

This step in Fourie's schema relates to the process school as discussed in Chapter Two. Fourie widens the scope of the message to include the overt message and the covert message. In Fosdick's sermons the overt message would vary considerably but the covert message was always that of the Good News.

In this context, Fourie states that messages are not formulated within a vacuum but are formulated by communicators who have their own needs. He continues by saying that the communicator should know himself. Fosdick, as is revealed in his autobiography, knew himself. Note must again be made here of Fosdick's congruency. His self-awareness enabled him to develop his dynamic approach. The influence of his mental breakdown and the breakdown of his parents should never be forgotten when analysing his work. Fosdick's own experience of climbing out of hell has been recorded.

Fosdick's constant use of positive words and the giving of messages of hope has also been commented upon.⁴³ Fosdick's dynamic approach challenged man to live life creatively rather than introspectively. This aspect of his preaching has already been noted. His book *A Great Time to be Alive*, illustrates Fosdick's dynamic approach to life.

4.8.3 Formulation of Objective

Fosdick had varied objectives but his covert objective was to create change in his congregation. The change was towards a positive approach to life. Creative change has been commented upon in both Chapters Two and Four.⁴⁴ Fosdick's approach depended in part on his dynamic use of literary devices. This will be further discussed in Chapter Five. In this step Fourie points out that there are overt and covert objectives just as there are objective and covert messages.

4.8.4 Determining Profitability

Fourie introduces the cybernetic theory at this point. He writes that the communicator must refer back to the above step at each succeeding step.⁴⁵ It can be noted here that Edgar De Witt Jones wrote of Fosdick "For thirty years... he has spent mornings of five days a week in his study. No message can get him there.... In such seclusion he 'toils terribly' over the sermons."⁴⁶ Fosdick, in his discourse *Animated Conversations*, writes that the big problem is to decide the goal.⁴⁷ No sermon was presented by Fosdick until he felt he had reached as close to excellence as possible.

4.8.5 Data Gathering

This step allows the communicator to begin to prepare the outline of his communication. Fosdick describes his method of free association in his paper 'How I prepare my sermons'.⁴⁸ Fosdick had a background of great English literature, poetry, history, sociology and so forth. He followed Phillip Brookes' opinion that without such a background no one could "be a competent preacher."⁴⁹ Fourie writes that the communicator must consider all sources of data and should seek for perfect information upon his subject.

4.8.6 Analysis of Destination

Fourie discusses the principle of congruence. It has already been commented upon that Fosdick was a congruent man.⁵⁰ Congruency has also to be present in the communication process. The communicator should adapt to the destination and not expect the reverse. This aspect introduces the question of culture which has been discussed previously.⁵¹ Fosdick used appropriate symbols and analogies for the man in his congregation. This use enabled the dynamics of his sermon to be increased. Landry says that "Fosdick was an artist with words."⁵² In *A Great Time to be Alive*, Fosdick used the simile of having to pay for the goods we receive.⁵³ In *What is Vital in Religion?* the simile is a ship.⁵⁴ These are but two examples from many. With hard work Fosdick achieved the appropriate simile and analogy.

4.8.7 The Communicator

There can be little doubt that Fosdick fulfilled the requirements, which Fourie was later to designate, that the communicator has to be the right man with knowledge and credibility. However, a preacher has to have a further dimension in his life. He must have been called by God. Martyn Lloyd Jones writes that the preacher is the only one who is in a position to deal with the greatest need of the world,⁵⁵ which he defines as man being dead to the life of God. Fosdick's call and subsequent commitment have been commented upon in Chapter One.

4.8.8 Determination of Circumstances

Fosdick was concerned with a particular form of communication. Fourie's communication by objective method looks at the broad outline of communication. Fosdick was bound to certain circumstances. His was the use of a pulpit. Hiltner's words in his *Ferment in the Ministry*, throws light upon Fosdick's approach. "The pulpit, which represents both the people and the preacher's professional responsibility, not only shares its foundation with the preacher but is also on the same level as he. It is not he who is lifted up but his function."⁵⁶

4.8.9 Timing the Communication

As in the previous step, a preacher cannot necessarily make the decision. In this step the time for Fosdick was the morning sermon. Fosdick began his ministry in the pulpit. Later his ministry extended to broadcasting and to books.

4.8.10 The Approach

Fosdick used specific literary devices which have already been noted and will be discussed further in Chapter Five. Fourie discusses the various styles a communicator can choose to utilize. He makes no comment concerning the dynamic style which Fosdick employed. Fosdick developed his own approach which he named the combined approach. Fosdick went "through the project method and beyond it."⁵⁷ He recognised the topical method and the expository but chose the project and then elaborated upon that.

4.8.11 The Format

A preacher has no alternative but to choose a vocal format. However, Fosdick had both a speaking and a writing ministry. His style was clear and concrete, restricting the use of adjectives to a minimum but always seeking for the correct noun.⁵⁸

4.8.12 The Tempo

Tempo refers to the presentation and structural rate. Fosdick's presentation showed clear enunciation. As mentioned in Chapter One,⁵⁹ Fosdick was not a natural speaker. However, he taught himself to speak in public and this aspect ceased to be a problem. He won various prizes as a young man for his public speaking ability.

4.8.13 Structure of the Communication

Fosdick used many techniques to claim the attention of his congregation. Fourie discusses a number of different structures which it is possible

to use for communication. It is Fosdick's dynamic quality which this thesis is endeavouring to illustrate. Examples of this literary device will be given in the following chapter. It suffices here to comment on his use of attention-seeking devices, his use of redundancy and his basic sermon structure. In 'What is the matter with preaching?' Fosdick writes that preaching is "drenching a congregation with one's life blood."⁶⁰ Each sermon Fosdick delivered was carefully and painfully prepared.

4.8.14 Selection of Code

In this step Fourie comments upon semiotics. His use of the word approaches the concept from the aspect of the communicator. He enumerates the six senses but only discusses the visual, the acoustic and the tactile. This thesis has introduced another interpretation of the semiotic school which is more concerned with the destination's interpretation of the sign. Therefore Peirce's concept of semiotics must be commented upon here. He believed the interpretation of the sign became of utmost importance.⁶¹ Note of Nida's thoughts concerning culture must also be considered.⁶² Kraft's steps in transculturating are shown in Appendix 3. Fosdick's wide use of similes and analogies took note of the selection of code. This will be discussed in Chapter Five.

4.8.15 Use of Media

Fosdick made use of both the spoken and the written word. Fosdick wrote his sermons in full in order to speak them and then subsequently allowed them to be printed.

4.8.16 Encoding

Fourie points out that there are books dealing with encoding procedures for virtually all types of communication situations.⁶³ Coding is closely related to the choice of media. Fosdick worked throughout the week with the final drafting of his sermon taking place on Saturday morning. In *The Hope of the World*, he says, "I am thinking of real people."⁶⁴ This was Fosdick's crux for encoding.

4.8.17 Testing

There are two methods of testing, either to make use of expert advice or to give a sample to the destination. However, Fosdick relied upon his own evaluation. In *Animated Conversations*, Fosdick described his method of testing, which is seeing the congregation visibly before his eyes.

4.8.18 Delivering the Communication

Delivering the communication is the last stage in the communication process and is the last moment at which the communicator can change the process. For the preacher this is the actual presentation of the sermon. Fosdick's delivery was positive in both content and presentation. His sermon 'The power to see it through' illustrates this factor.

4.8.19 Feedback

Fourie lists eight kinds of feedback. Feedback indicated to Fosdick the effectiveness of his sermon. Fosdick received 125 000 letters a year.⁶⁵ This must indeed indicate the effectiveness of his ministry.

4.8.20 Evaluation

This step allows the communicator time to form his own evaluation.

One way in which Fosdick evaluated his sermon was to note the number of individuals who asked for personal counselling during the subsequent week.⁶⁶

4.9 CONCLUSION

The above paragraph and comments attempt to clarify Fosdick's communication techniques and to demonstrate his dynamic thought.

The following chapter will attempt to analyse the dynamic quality of the sermon 'The power to see it through', in terms of literary style.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Cf. Chapter Two, p.14.
2. Fosdick, H.E. *The Power to See It Through*, p.116.
3. The article set forth Fosdick's argument that a sermon must begin with a problem - the recognition that man has a need. Cf. step one of Fourie's schema "A sermon, then, is an engineering operation by which a chasm is spanned so that spiritual goods on one side are actually transported into personal lives upon the other." Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.39.
4. Ibid., p.41.
5. Fosdick, H.E. *Living Under Tension*, p.1.
6. Fosdick, H.E. *On Being a Real Person*. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1943, p.159.
7. Ibid., p.103.
8. Heuer, N.A.C. *Interpretative Theological Dynamics*. Pinetown Printers (Pty) Ltd., 1979, p.63. Cf. Freud, S. *Civilisation and its Discontent*. Hogarth Press, London, 1927-31.
9. Ibid., p.63.
10. Fosdick, H.E. *The Manhood of the Master*. Association Press, New York, 1913, p.15.
11. Ibid., p.60.
12. Fosdick, H.E. *The Greatness of God*. Collins Press, London, 1961, p.49.
13. Fosdick, H.E. *The Power to See It Through*, p.228.
14. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.48.
15. Cf. Chapter 3, p.41.
16. Fosdick sought to create a dialogue rather than a "mere monologue." Crocker, L., op. cit., p.49.
17. Landry, F. Op. cit., p.29.
18. Ibid., p.27.
19. Fosdick, H.E. *12 Tests of Character*, p.74.
20. Ibid., p.125.
21. Ibid., p.125.

22. Fosdick, H.E. *On Being a Real Person*, p.103.
23. Ibid., p.103.
24. Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*, p.92.
25. Fosdick, H.E. *The Hope of the World*, pp.171-172.
26. Fosdick, H.E. *The Secret of Victorious Living*, p.3.
27. Landry, F. Op. cit., p.51.
28. Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*, p.100.
29. Fosdick, H.E. *The Greatness of God*, p.261.
30. Schwarz, H. *Divine Communication*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1985, p.97.
31. Fosdick, H.E. *The Meaning of Faith*, p.48.
32. Fosdick, H.E. *The Faith for Tough Times*. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952, p.67.
33. Ibid., p.119.
34. Fosdick, H.E. *Living Under Tension*, pp.vii-viii.
35. Ibid., p.5.
36. Fourie, H.P. Op. cit., p.1.
37. Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*, p.94.
38. Fourie, H.P. Op. cit., p.2.
39. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.17.
40. Fourie, H.P. Op. cit., p.4.
41. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.78.
42. Fosdick believed in "the divine-human encounter." Fosdick, H.E. *The Living of These Days*, p.234. Cf. "Even when he addresses a multitude he speaks to them as individuals and is still a personal counsellor." Crocker, L., op. cit., p.55.
43. Landry, F. Op. cit., p.66.

44. "He did not merely preach forgiveness, he helped his people experience forgiveness." Landry, F. Op. cit., p.47.
45. The cybernetic principle is part of the communication process concerned with feedback. Fiske, J. Op. cit., p.22.
46. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.102.
47. "A definite personal goal of doing something creative with the individuals in front of him." Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.49.
48. "I sit down with pen and paper and practice what the psychologists call free association of ideas." Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.49.
49. Brook, P. *Lectures on Preaching*, Allenson & Co., Ltd., London, 1877, p.9.
50. Cf. Chapter One, p.1.
51. Cf. Chapter Two, notes 7 and 29.
52. Landry, F. Op. cit., p.78.
53. Fosdick, H.E. *A Great Time to be Alive*. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1944, p.233.
54. Fosdick, H.E. "What is vital in religion?" Sermon on Contemporary Christian Problems. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1955, p.29.
55. Lloyd Jones, M. Op. cit., p.29.
56. Hiltner, S. *Ferment in the Ministry*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1969, p.56.
57. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.17.
58. Landry, F. Op. cit., p.71.
59. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.121.
60. Ibid., p.39.
61. The first deliberate theory of meaning in modern times was described by C.S. Peirce. He wrote that thought is cognitive and must be linguistic or symbolic in character. Peirce believed that communication takes place by means of signs. He saw logic as semiotic - the theory of signs. "One man catches another man's idea." Buchler, J. (Editor). Op. cit., p.99.

62. Nida, E. *Message and Mission*, cf. Chapter 8.
63. Cf. Bibliography for a selection of books concerning the communication process.
64. Fosdick, H.E. *The Hope of the World*, p.31.
65. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.116.
66. "One of the best tests of a sermon is the number of people who afterwards wish to see the preacher alone." Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.57.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 A DYNAMIC ANALYSIS OF ONE OF FOSDICK'S SERMONS

This thesis has attempted to uncover some of the dynamic devices used by Fosdick in his system of communication. It is important to notice that his literary style also supported the use of the balance of certain dynamic elements which served to increase the communicative output of his sermons. These tensions will now be further explored in an effort to give new insights into, and comprehension of, Fosdick's dynamics of communication. The value of this chapter is to show the wealth of techniques utilized by Fosdick. The chapter presents an endeavour to systematize and analyse, from various viewpoints, one of Fosdick's many sermons.

The sermon chosen for analysis is 'The power to see it through'. This sermon was one of twenty-five preached by Fosdick under the heading "Christianity today" published in New York in 1935. This particular sermon has been chosen because it appears to have been rooted in Fosdick's own personality dynamics. It could be said to be a personal reflection of latent possibilities based on the dynamics of aspects of self awareness and unconscious tendency.

The communication process inherent in this sermon includes differing literary styles which contribute to the impelling dimensions of Fosdick's preaching methods.

Fosdick's sermons were always the result of many hours of labour. He sought carefully to give an orderly construction and to maintain an exacting standard of preaching excellence.¹ His ideal was to aim towards 'animated conversation'.² Fosdick's personality tended towards that of a perfectionist and in youth this one-sidedness was exhibited by his extroverted, sensory, feeling and judging functions being in prominence. I base this comment upon an unpublished study undertaken by Professor N A C Heuer of Fosdick's personality. He further suggests that general indications show that Fosdick suffered his breakdown due to ego exhaustion. Fosdick passed through his 'breakthrough'³ period and experienced a freedom to be able to accept the intuitive, almost visionary, polarity of his personality. A similar thought is indicated by Tillich in his book "The Courage to Be" and on the model of the Christian parabola (Cf. Appendix 4).

In order to undertake this analysis, I will give a brief outline of the sermon and then itemize the various dynamic principles shown by this sermon.

5.2 OUTLINE OF THE SERMON

An outline of Fosdick's sermon "The power to see it through" shows the structure clearly and helps the approach to its analysis.

5.2.1 Introduction

Fosdick's introduction served to claim the attention of his listeners, a trend which characterizes all his sermons. This was due to his careful choice of an 'object'. It has already been noted that Fosdick chose an object and not a subject.⁴ In this sermon the introduction sets the parameters to be discussed. Fosdick always remained with the major theme. His sub-topics were introduced in order to emphasize the main objective.

Demas is the Biblical character chosen to highlight the need for staying power. This theme was chosen because of the time of the year. New Year is the time for good resolutions. Fosdick offers a good resolution that could be made. The title of the sermon remains as a refrain throughout the sermon: "The power to see it through".

5.2.2 The Body of the Sermon

The body of the sermon is concerned with steps to facilitate staying power. Fosdick's structure never allows for new themes; where they do occur, new points are only used to stress the main problem. Fosdick makes three points:

5.2.2.1 "For one thing, staying power is always associated with a certain central integrity."⁵

5.2.2.2 "In the second place, staying power is always associated with the experience of being captured by a cause."⁶

5.2.2.3 "Finally, staying power is commonly associated with profound resources of interior strength replenished by great faiths."⁷



The intention of the sermon is ever present but Fosdick makes various approaches to it. The point to notice is that he concentrates on his chosen topic throughout the sermon. The reader, or the man in the pew, is given opportunity to reflect, internalize and to move towards possible change in their life situations.

5.2.3 Conclusion

In the conclusion, the sermon is summarized and completed by repetition, challenge and encouragement. Fosdick's style of co-operative dialogue involves his listener in these elements by means of open-ended questions, as shown in the following quote:

'Is there anything a man could wish for
his friends at New Year's time better than
such a life - great convictions which life
develops, expands, elevates and glorifies,
fine at the beginning, loveliest of all at
the lasts. Is there anything a man would
better pray to avoid than the opposite?
Demas, my fellow-worker; Demas; Demas
forsook me.' 8

This paragraph is the finale of the sermon. The above outline serves to give a brief synopsis of the sermon. It is now necessary to analyse and systematize the sermon in such a way as to indicate the dynamic devices employed by Fosdick throughout the sermon.

5.3 THE USE OF LITERARY DEVICES

Fosdick was concerned with communication. He wanted his message to be heard and accepted. Accordingly he employed different techniques, which included literary devices, in order to sustain a dynamic delivery. Fosdick weighed sense with intention; feeling with tone; sensory impression with imaginative concepts and the emotional with the intellectual. Each sermon Fosdick wrote could be analysed by these criteria and demonstrate his care to reach his objective.

5.3.1 Sense balanced with intention

In this sermon, Fosdick's intention was to indicate how a good start was just not sufficient and he gives three points as to why this is so. The sense of the sermon is highlighted by the use of the story of Demas. It is evident that Fosdick felt deeply about his message. His own upbringing as mentioned in Chapter One and described in his autobiography, shows Fosdick's realisation that however enriched his background had been, he had to show staying power. Fosdick adopts a realistic tone to his hearers and reiterates his message. The dynamic of this approach is evident. Sensory and imaginative concepts are introduced claiming the attention of his readers and the man in the pew. Fosdick also acknowledges that communication takes place in both the emotional and the rational,⁹ so both dimensions are present within the structure of the sermon. Fosdick appeals to the personality dynamics of his listeners. He speaks both to the introvert and the extrovert person, also recognizing that each

person needs to uncover both dimensions of his own character. The sermon is of great insight value because it shows the interplay between these opposites and the exchange between a lack of awareness and unconscious tendency. Demas symbolizes this struggle as he slowly moves towards the values of the world and away from "tasting the powers of the age to come."¹⁰

Fosdick told the story of Demas to illustrate his theme of the need for staying power. He both quotes and refers to the Bible, not merely to justify his own ideas but to clarify his message. Demas was a real person and represents a type of person today. His experience remains relevant for today. Fosdick challenges his listeners to introspective thought. Was the challenge relevant for them at that time? Fosdick intends them to make another New Year resolution. He gives them guidelines how to do this and allows them to choose their course. He leaves them with the question: "Are you to be today's Demas?" The topic of the sermon is clear, Fosdick's intention is spelled out. Fosdick's plan in every sermon was directed towards creative change towards a fully integrated (congruent) personality. Fosdick writes, "So Chopin became Chopin."¹¹ His intention is to lead people to a fullness of life and away from one-sided living.

5.3.2 Feeling versus thinking

In the analysis of Fosdick's work, this thesis has attempted to show Fosdick as a man of integrity and genuineness. His upbringing showed

a sympathetic environment to which Fosdick responded with deep concern. Fosdick himself had problems both in his ability to face reality and its subsequent difficulties and in his personality as a quiet, shy teenager which led to his breakdown. Fosdick had to live through his experience of a breakdown, which can be seen as a 'breakthrough', and it was there he met God again. I believe the memory of this experience was with him as he wrote this sermon. It is intensely moving as he appears to sorrow for Demas and possibly mourns for himself in his awareness of the complexity of behaviour and decision-making which take place in the realms of unawareness. The sermon ends on a note of pathos. "Demas forsook me." Fosdick appears to identify not only mankind but himself as well with the personality of Demas. However, God did not desert Fosdick and Fosdick crossed over, as it were, the bottom of the parabola and moved into the joy of walking with Jesus with the vision of the power to be. This sermon not only deals with the conative aspect of communication but also with the cognitive. These dimensions as discussed by Blignaut (cf. Chapter Two) have been mentioned previously in this thesis.¹²

Fosdick registers sadness and sorrow as he recognizes man's frequent inability to have staying power. He digs deeply into the need for man to act out his feelings. He writes, "A man should not inwardly be a failure."¹³ Fosdick could not have written this if he himself had not experienced the feeling of having been an inward failure. I believe the heart of Fosdick's dynamic communication was that he

himself grew from a one-sided life view into an integrated personality recognizing the polarities of his own personality. He could accept the reality that many men live a life of separation. This sermon indicates Fosdick's awareness of man's sin - his separateness from God, his fellow man and from himself. Fosdick's quote from St. Luke's Gospel (Luke 14 v. 28) indicates his identification with St. Luke in his sadness and his feeling of loss as his fellow worker left him. Fosdick challenged his listener to recognize the cost of discipleship. Fosdick accepts man as he is but understood - even at the age of seven - that he himself was called for ministry and proved that he was prepared to pay the cost.

However, there is joy in this sermon, too. The reader can feel with Fosdick the joy as he remembers his own boyhood and acknowledges the richness of his background. As has been noted, Fosdick did not remain at the affective level, he also preached to the intellectual dimension of man. He credited his listeners with a certain culture and educated background. He expected the man in the pew and his readers to have a knowledge of the Bible, a knowledge of music and a knowledge of the world. Fosdick speaks as an intellectual equal. He gives space to his listeners in an adult manner. He does not speak down to them, yet he is clear and concise. Edgar De Witt Jones writes, "His power of clear statement is probably unexcelled in America today."¹⁴ It was this technique which aided the process of communication.

5.3.3 Emotion weighed with sensation

Fosdick points to each of the primary emotions. In this sermon he appeals to the joy of man in the recollection of the 'good start' as a child. He 'celebrates the resources of the Christian faith.' He portrays anger when he writes

'But there is a tragedy so appalling that, when one has seen it, the very reminiscence of it makes one's blood run cold - to be fortunately born, to have a glorious boyhood, to rise to responsible position, to be loved and trusted, and then to crack as though all the time the shining metal had had a flaw in it, to betray one's trust, deceive one's friends, blow out one's brains.' 15

Fosdick's sorrow, and he calls his listeners to share his sorrow, was that Demas loved this present age.¹⁶ Fosdick's discussion concerning the man who loves the present age compared to one who has tasted the powers of the age to come has an underlying recognition of the fear of the future.

As Fosdick wrote of the emotions, so he also wrote to involve sensory perceptions. Sight is evoked by the analogy of the ship; the analogy of splitting a log is kinetic. Chopping appeals to the ear and even the sense of smell could be exercised in the thought of Paul's poor prison. Throughout the sermon the emotive quality balances the sensory perceptions. This skilful balancing increased the profitability of the communication process. Cf. step four of Fourie's schema.

5.3.4 Intellectual value

The cultural background of Fosdick's listeners has been referred to previously in this thesis. Crocker wrote of Fosdick's 'cultured' audience. Fosdick expected his audience to have western values, for example that Chopin represented their taste in music.¹⁷ He expected them to know of Lincoln's history¹⁸ and to know of the day's social ills.¹⁹ Fosdick preached eternal values and truths but his similes and analogies were for the Western world. In terms of the Shannon and Weaver model, cf. Chapter Two, Fosdick's message was the core and could be understood as such.

5.4 THE DYNAMIC BETWEEN PREACHER AND PEOPLE

Fosdick endeavours to enter into the psychological frame of reference of his listeners. He knew that meanings lie within the experience and feelings of people. Chapter Four paragraph Eight discusses Fosdick's ability to be aware of the way people see, feel and act both in respect to others and to the world. He used this interaction to increase the communicative content of his sermon. He believed "that a man should not break faith with himself."²⁰ Fosdick believed in the essential goodness of man, cf. Chapter Three. Chartier's comments²¹ help to elucidate Fosdick's techniques in his discussion concerning the need for a preacher to examine the assumptions of his listeners.

This paragraph would not be complete without a further mention of the importance of feedback. Cf. Chapter Two. Feedback helps the preacher know that meaning has been understood. It is interesting to note in this sermon that feedback on Demas' behaviour was given by Paul and Timothy. Fosdick based his sermon on this feedback dimension.

The communication process of this sermon would have been evaluated by feedback which Fosdick received. It has been noted, cf. Chapter Four, paragraph Eight and note 45, that Fosdick did indeed value the interaction of himself with the man in the pew.

5.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This sermon highlights the dynamics of Fosdick's communication in many aspects.

The sermon gives power to men to see it through in order that their lives might be changed. This sermon is representative, and Demas symbolic, of Fosdick's concept of dynamics as seen in the thought of Tillich. The tension of the being and the non-being of Demas fails to produce dynamic power but Fosdick preached that power, staying power, is available to mankind today because their model is to be Jesus as seen in the paradox of the cross.

Fosdick approached his sermon with a holistic view of Western man. His style was clear and concise and his imagery vivid and evocative.

He appealed to both the mind and the emotions of his hearers.

The major breakthrough in understanding this aspect of Fosdick's dynamics of communication lies in acknowledging his insight into the dynamic structure of different personalities and his ability to appeal to those differences.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.109.
2. Ibid., p.121.
3. The word "breakthrough" is used by Heuer, N.A.C., in his unpublished study, A Dynamic Literary Analysis of the Work of H.E. Fosdick.
4. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.123.
5. Fosdick, H.E. *The Power to See it Through*, p.12.
6. Ibid., p.14.
7. Ibid., p.18.
8. Ibid., p.20.
9. Crocker, op. cit., p.156.
10. Fosdick, op. cit., p.16.
11. Ibid., p.13.
12. Blignaut, F.W. & Fourie, H.P., op. cit., p.61.
13. Fosdick, op. cit., p.13.
14. Crocker, L. Op. cit., p.101.
15. Fosdick, op. cit., p.12.
16. Ibid., p.13.
17. Ibid., p.13.
18. Ibid., p.15.
19. Ibid., p.17.
20. Ibid., p.12.
21. Chartier, op. cit., p.56.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored certain theories of communication and concepts of theological dynamics in an endeavour to systematize Fosdick's work in a new manner. Fosdick made a considerable contribution to the spiritual life of his own and succeeding generations. This thesis has only been concerned with a particular aspect of that contribution, that is his communication techniques, and theological and personality dynamics.

Fosdick's project method established a particular approach of preaching which allowed the preacher and the man in the pew to enter into a form of dialogue. This aspect was of extreme importance as it challenged the man in the pew to that creative change which was Fosdick's powerful dynamic tool. The interpersonal relationships experienced by his congregation as Fosdick introduced the negative into the positive; the being and the non-being; the transformation of loneliness to affirmation, was captivating. Fosdick's personality dynamics enabled an interplay of the polarities of extroversion and introversion, of awareness and unconsciousness, to interact and produce energetic dynamic power. The numbers in his congregation and the numbers of people who read his books gave proof to this.

Certain queries were raised in this thesis which perhaps need to be looked at in the light of today's world. John Mbiti¹ comments that

the future of Christianity lies in Africa and the third world.

In an evaluation of Fosdick's work the problem of cultural influences cannot be ignored. This is of vital importance for today but was not seen to take such a prominent role at the time in which Fosdick was preaching.

The model of the Christian parabola was also used to aid analysis.

A preacher of Fosdick's stature and creativity is rare and his sermons remain an example of the possibility of presenting the gospel in such a manner that many can understand and respond to it. Fosdick remained "a man who was singularly devoid of preoccupation with himself."² The goal of this thesis was to systematize Fosdick's writings in terms of dynamic communication and literary techniques. By tracing accepted theories of theological dynamics and communication these were shown to relate to Fosdick's work. Certain specific points were made, namely the congruency of Fosdick, his recognition that sermons begin with the acknowledgement of man's needs, his ability to use literary devices and his recognition of personality dynamics. At Fosdick's memorial service, McCracken said in his meditation that

"Fosdick was the incarnation of what he preached. He was a great and good man, and despite all the praise heaped on him, he remained to the last unspoiled, modest and humble." 3

I believe this was at the heart of Fosdick's dynamic communication techniques.

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1. Anderson, G.H. & Stransky, T.F. (Editors): Mission Trends No. 3, Paulist Press, New York, 1976, p.9.
2. Landry, op. cit., p.100.
3. Ibid., p.100.

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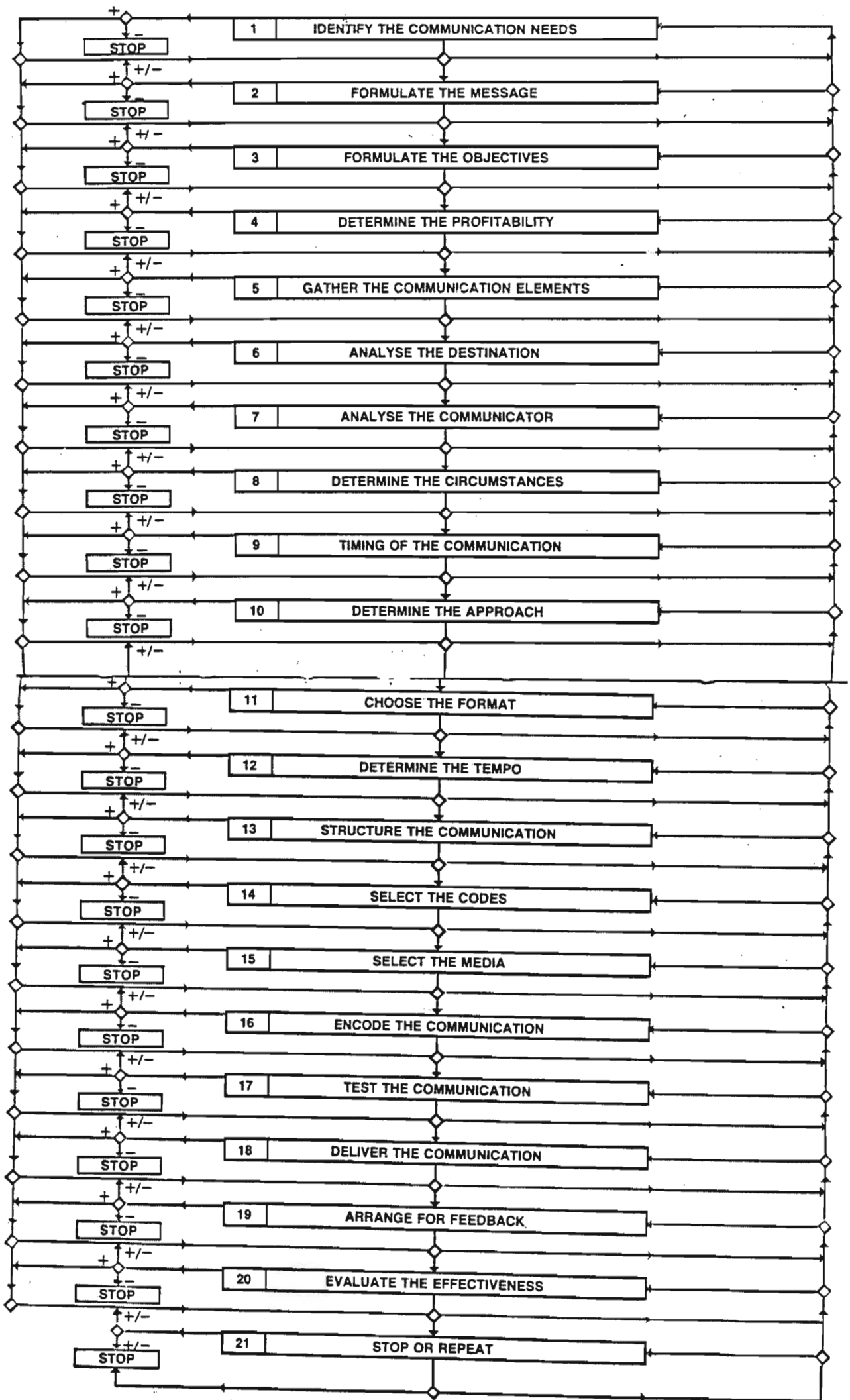
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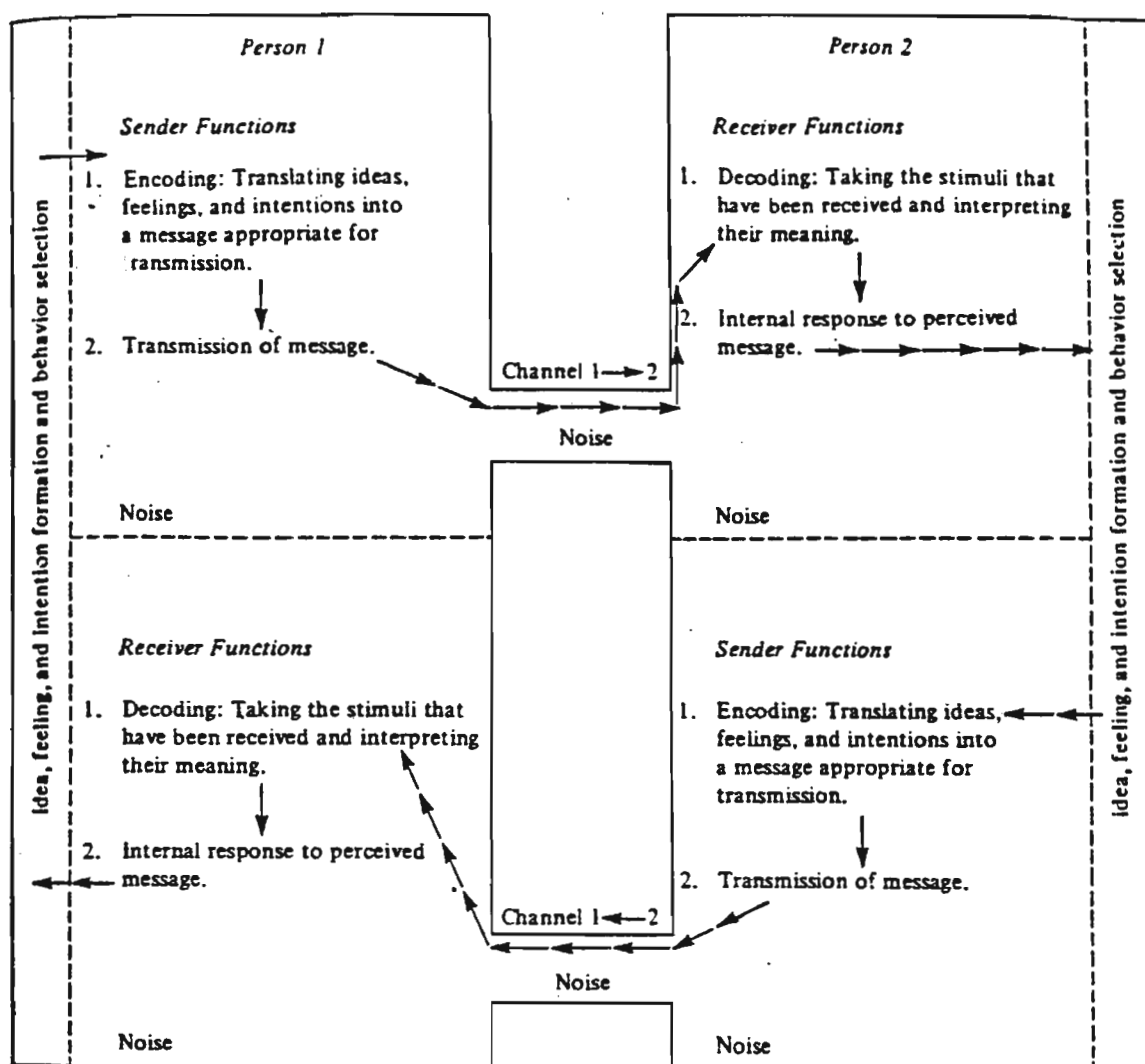
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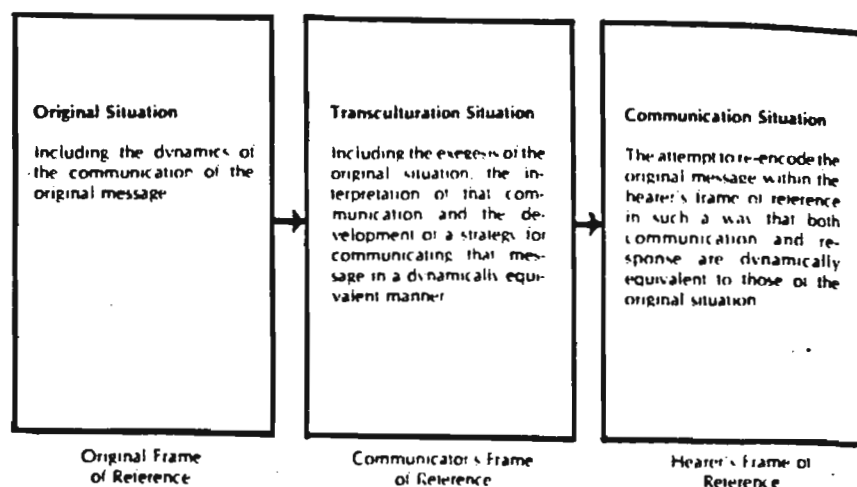
HARRY EMERSON FOSDICK

- 1878 *Born at Buffalo, New York, May 24*
- 1900 *Entered divinity school, Colgate Seminary*
- 1901 *Moved to New York City to study in Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University; suffered nervous collapse*
- 1903 *Became associate minister of Madison Avenue Baptist Church, New York City, during senior year in seminary*
- 1904 *Married Florence Whitney and became pastor of the First Baptist Church, Montclair, New Jersey; served until 1915*
- 1908 *Became instructor in Baptist principles and polity, Union Theological Seminary*
- 1911 *Made an instructor in homiletics, Union Theological Seminary*
- 1915 *Became professor of practical theology, Union Theological Seminary; resigned Montclair pastorate*
- 1924 *Delivered Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching at Yale*
- 1926 *Assumed pastorate of Park Avenue Baptist Church, which became Riverside Church, New York City*
- 1946 *Retired from pastorate and professorship*
- 1969 *Died on October 5 in Bronxville, New York*





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The steps in transculturing.

THE PARABOLA OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

