

Know Your Audience

Workshop 6—Murungi Igweta

Audience analysis is absolutely important for any **communication** to happen. Otherwise you might simply milk the best of the truths to the ground! A preacher has a business of communicating the eternal truths from the Saviour God, to a people who are lost, hungry, hurting, broken, injured and weak.

The purpose of audience analysis is so that the preachers comes the closest to meeting the spiritual need of the church. A good gospel preacher, just a good shepherd to the flock must feed the hungry, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bound up the injured, bring back the straying and seek the lost.

Ways of doing the audience analysis: In addressing this subject, Jay Adams identifies three ways of this analysis:

1. By means of informal contacts
2. By means of counseling contacts
3. By means of formal contacts.

Factors to be considered in the analysis:

1. Demographics such as:

Age, gender split, social-economic status, marital status, employment/unemployment, racial/ethnic background, cultural influences.

2. Theological backgrounds:

Christian maturity, saved or unsaved. What churches have they been part of?

3. Immediate circumstances such as;

The environment, time of the year/season, prevailing political atmosphere, current affairs. Seek to know what is occupying their minds

I. OT Example of audience analysis:

Notice the opening words of the OT books and especially prophetic books:

- Isaiah 1:1 – The vision of Isaiah...which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah...
- See Jeremiah 1:1–2; Ezekiel 1:1–3; Daniel 1:1; Hosea 1:1; Amos 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zephaniah 1:1; Zechariah 1:1.

II. The example of our Lord:

Jesus left the glory of heaven and put on the human body, in every respect expect for sin. He wore their clothes, ate their food, spoke their language, and understood their culture at its deepest level. He fully identified with his hearers, that they would marvel or be astonished after He had spoken (Matt. 7:28). This is what informed the parables He gave, the miracles he performed, the lessons and instructions He gave.

III. The Example of Peter:

Upper room address (Acts 1:15–22)	Pentecost Sermon (Acts 2:14–39)
Audience – brothers (He included himself)	Audience - men of Judea, those who dwell in Jerusalem, men of Israel. Distanced himself
Short discourse	Long discourse
Irenic (regardless of the circumstance)	Polemical
Did not belabour explain the passage	Explained one passage after another, quoted extensively
Drew implications and implementations – “So one of the men...”	Implications or implementation is: “Repent and be baptized every one of you...”
Ended with prayer & casting of lots	Ended with receiving the word/believing and being baptized
No more exhortations	“...with many more other words he bore witness...”

IV. The Example of Stephen: Compare his sermon with the Pentecost Sermon and see the similarities.

V. The Example of Paul: At the same time Paul says in 1 Cor. 9:22–23:

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

Unless you know your audience well you cannot become all things to them. But you notice that Paul does this that he *might save some... for the sake of the gospel*. Consider Paul's understanding of his audience in Athens in Acts 17:22–34. Either way, he drew some strong reactions on people.