

# **Congregational Participation in Preaching?**

**A Practical-Theological Inquiry within a South-Korean Context**

by

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**Dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Theology in Practical Theology  
at Stellenbosch University**

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**December 2019**

## **DECLARATION**

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: December 2019

## ABSTRACT

The value of the congregation in preaching is underestimated in the Korean church, an institution unfamiliar with having the congregation participate in preaching. Preaching has, instead, been hierarchical and preacher-centered, with the congregation playing a passive role. Authoritarianism of the preacher in the Korean church, a consequence of traditional Korean religions and Korean socio-history, was found to be a fundamental cause of hierarchical, preacher-centered preaching. However, a number of homiletical problems arise from this form of preaching. The importance of the congregation in preaching has been neglected, leaving the congregation with little opportunity to have a positive impact on preaching. Additionally, in light of the changing views towards authoritarianism, and the impact of these changes on Korean churches, much criticism for hierarchical and preacher-centered preaching has come about. In order to overcome the problems arising from hierarchical and preacher-centered preaching, this dissertation highlights the congregation as a valuable preaching partner. Using McClure's homiletics, and an understanding of the most fundamental elements of preaching, the Word of God, the preacher, and the congregation, as understood in *The Roundtable Pulpit*, an alternative to preacher-centered preaching is presented: collaborative preaching.

This form of preaching overcomes the problem of a submissive congregation, and encourages the congregation to participate in preaching. Collaborative preaching has both positive and negative attributes. While it recognizes the congregation as an important preaching partner and creates an environment in which the congregation can participate in preaching, conversations with the congregation that do not involve a certain level of theological capability in the interpretation of the Bible may cause a disconnect between the preacher and the congregation. Another anticipated limitation of applying collaborative preaching, with regards to Korean churches specifically, is that these churches are not yet sufficiently ready for it. Moving towards collaborative preaching without reducing the gap that currently exists between the preacher and the congregation may cause confusion among the congregation.

The suggestion this dissertation makes for overcoming these limitations is encouraging the preacher to abandon a distorted sense of authority and to change his perspective to one where the congregation is a partner in preaching. This is a priority for narrowing the gap between himself and his congregation. However, sufficient preparation is necessary to achieve this.

## OPSOMMING

Die waarde van die gemeente as deel van die prediking word onderskat in die Koreaanse kerk, 'n instelling wat nie bekend is met die feit dat die gemeente aan die preek kan deelneem nie. Die preek is in plaas daarvan hiërargies en predikersgesentreerd, terwyl die gemeente 'n passiewe rol speel. Gesaghebbendheid van die prediker in die Koreaanse kerk, 'n gevolg van die tradisionele Koreaanse godsdienste en die Koreaanse sosio-geskiedenis, was gevind as 'n fundamentele oorsaak van hiërargiese, prediking wat gesentreerd is om die prediker. 'n Aantal homiletiese probleme ontstaan egter uit hierdie vorm van prediking. Die belangrikheid van die gemeente in die prediking is verwaarloos, waardeur die gemeente min geleentheid gegee word om 'n positiewe invloed op die prediking te hê. In die lig van die veranderende sienswyses ten opsigte van gesaghebbendheid en die impak van hierdie veranderinge op Koreaanse kerke, het daar ook kritiek op hiërargiese en predikersgesentreerde prediking ontstaan. Om die probleme wat voortspruit uit hiërargiese en predikersgesentreerde prediking te oorkom, beklemtoon hierdie proefskrif die gemeente as 'n waardevolle mededeler van die prediking. Deur die gebruik van McClure se homiletiek, en 'n begrip van die mees fundamentele elemente van prediking, die Woord van God, die prediker en die gemeente, soos dit verstaan word in die preekstoel van die Rondetafel, word 'n alternatief vir predikersgesentreerde prediking voorgestel: samewerkende prediking.

Hierdie vorm van prediking oorkom die probleem van 'n onderdanige gemeente en moedig die gemeente aan om deel te neem aan die prediking. Samewerkende prediking het beide positiewe en negatiewe eienskappe. Terwyl dit die gemeente erken as 'n belangrike mededeler van die prediking en 'n omgewing skep waarin die gemeente kan deelneem aan die prediking, kan gesprekke met die gemeente wat nie 'n sekere vlak van teologiese bekwaamheid in die interpretasie van die Bybel het nie, 'n skeiding tussen die prediker en die gemeente veroorsaak. Nog 'n verwagte beperking van die toepassing van samewerkende prediking, veral ten opsigte van Koreaanse kerke, is dat hierdie kerke nog nie voldoende daarvoor gereed is nie. Om na 'n samewerkende prediking styl te werk sonder om die gaping tussen die prediker en die gemeente te verminder, kan 'n verwarring in die gemeente veroorsaak. Die voorstel wat hierdie proefskrif maak om hierdie beperkinge te oorkom, is om die prediker aan te moedig om 'n verwronge gesagsgevoel te laat vaar en om sy perspektief te verander na een waar die gemeente erken word as 'n mededeler in die prediking. Dit is 'n prioriteit om die gaping

tussen die prediker en sy gemeente te verklein. Hiervoor is egter voldoende voorbereiding nodig.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I give thanks to God, who opened the door for me to study at Stellenbosch University. This was a precious time in which I was able to experience God's guidance at every point, and it led me to the realization that I can only rely on God.

Much of my progress is as a result of the insights and profound teachings of Professor. Johan H. Cilliers. Without his encouragement and guidance, this dissertation would not exist. I am deeply grateful for his support.

I also want to express the deep gratitude I have for family. First of all, I am extremely grateful for my wife, Hyunjoo Lee, my most reliable companion, counselor and friend. Her sacrificial devotion while living in South Africa has made the greatest contribution to this dissertation. I am also very thankful to my two most precious daughters, Saemhee and Yena. They have always encouraged my studies with big smiles. In addition, I am grateful for the sacrificial love of my parents, Bongchan Jang and Aeseon Jeon, who have been a model example of faith, and who have supported my studies financially and with prayer. I also have an appreciation for my parents in law, Youngyong Lee and Dughi Lee, for their encouragement and financial support.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for the Jueun Church. It has been a home to me since I was a child, and has supported me spiritually and financially. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude for Daniela Favis, who has kindly edited this dissertation.

I dedicate this dissertation to everyone mentioned above.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Statement of the problem

According to Pieterse (1987, p. 25), traditional preaching is evaluated as the bow-and-arrow model.<sup>1</sup> He insisted on the weakness of this model.

This model's weaknesses lie in the fact that it presupposes a kind of one-way traffic between the sender and the receiver and that it does not see communication as a dynamic process in which interaction provides the dynamic elements.

The bow-and-arrow model describes precisely the fact that the congregation is in a passive position that merely hears the preacher. Even though Chevis F. Horne (1975, p. 21) said in his book, *Crisis in the Pulpit*, "Preaching, by its very nature, is communication", the bow-and-arrow model seems to have lost the most basic concept of communication. Dingemans (1996, p. 42) argues, "All people in the congregation lives in a circle of communication and have the vocation to assist and help their fellow members." Unfortunately, there has been no environment for the congregation to use their vocation in preaching properly. Moreover, Howe (1967, p. 35) indicates external factors to preaching also make the congregation passive.

The preacher looks down; the people look up. Often, as the lights in the church are turned down and a spotlight turned on the preacher, the congregation disappears into an identity-hiding gloom. The elevation of the pulpit lifts the Word of God above life, and would seem

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<sup>1</sup> Chartier (1981, p. 15) insists, "The model suggests that the archer's (preacher's) arrows carry God's Word (sermon) to the target (listener), with the effect of changing the listener's attitudes, beliefs or behaviours (conversion)."

to contradict the concept of its embodiment in the life of the people. The arrangement, moreover, confirms the stereotype of the relation between clergy and laity in which the Word is removed from the people and made the preacher's exclusive sphere of responsibility.

Indeed, it is undeniable that this stereotype of preaching has had a profound impact on many congregations over the years. Much criticism, however, has been raised about the preacher-centered sermon in this postmodern era where all authority is threatened. Horne points out authority as one of the crises in preaching<sup>2</sup> and says: "There is obvious rebellion against authority in all our institutions-government, the home, the school, and the church. This is one of the marks of our times" (Horne, 1975, p. 20). Additionally, Allen (2001, p. 34) says about current congregations: "While they do not know the names of leading postmodern thinkers (e.g., Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault), laypeople often reflect attitudes that resonate with themes in postmodern thinkers."

It is true that the era itself has formed the atmosphere that rejects consistent acts of authority. Even the congregation living in the postmodern era seems to be influenced by this age and has begun to open its eyes to call for changes in the existing authoritarian form.

Unfortunately, however, without reading the trend of change, many Korean preachers have still remained authoritarian in stance. Kang (2002, p. 168), who studies South Korean church leadership, argues as follows,

The Korean church leadership seems to have been characterized by authoritarianism rather than authority as expressed in the Bible. In other words, authoritarianism by position and function rather than authority by legitimacy, spirituality and character have been dominant in Korean church leadership and leaders have enjoyed controlling lay people with that authoritarian stance.

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<sup>2</sup> Horne (1975, p. 15) argues that there are four intersecting crises causing the predicament in the pulpit: "faith, the institutional church, authority, and communication."

Moreover, preaching has been used as a tool to maintain this negative leadership. Kim (1999, p. 66) also referred to authority and communication in defining Korean preaching:

The Korean preachers have kept almost the same characteristics in their sermons for the last one hundred years – a hierarchical understanding of the preacher’s authority, a topical three-point preaching style, a deductive structure, transmitting-ideas-style rather than experiencing the message, monologue-style communication, personal and spiritual content, and a proportional system in preaching.

It is natural that the congregation is always excluded from the preaching that is centered on the preacher and that they have to stay in a passive role. In a situation such as this, typical of a Korean church where everything is concentrated on the preacher, we should pay attention to what Cilliers (2004, p. 24) defines as the preacher.

The preacher indeed is part of the congregation, and the goal of his/her office is not to obstruct the view on Christ, not to come between the congregation and Christ, but rather to be a mediator, a pointer towards Christ

The preacher is a part of the congregation, not more than the congregation, but a person who breathes with the congregation. In the present day, if a preacher conducts the same sermons as well-known preachers in the past, it would be unrealistic to expect that the sermon that created great influence at that time would have the same effect on the congregation today. While the basic content of the sermon and the Word of God remains unchanged, the age and context of which the congregation forms a part is different. So the matter is not that the content of the sermon must change, but that the manner in which it is communicated must adapt to the congregation.

Unless the Korean churches cannot read the atmosphere of this changed period, and keep the act of persuading the people in an authoritarian and preacher-centered way, the future of the Korean church will be bleak. Therefore, preachers need to respond sensitively to the changes

of this age, and must show that preaching, which is a closed space for the congregation, could be an open space for the congregation.

## 1.2 Purpose of the study

As the title of this study shows, it is true that the participation of the congregation in preaching in the Korean context still feels unfamiliar. In this age where the congregation itself is becoming important,<sup>3</sup> it is not only a time to demand for them to participate actively in preaching but also a restoration to the congregation's original position.<sup>4</sup>

Concerning why the congregation should be participating in preaching, Howe (1967, 43) stated three things:

First, they should be participants because they are a part of the church, a part of the people of God! As such they are not meant to be passive recipients of, but active participants in, the witness of the church in the world.

Second, they should participate because, out of the data and experiences of their lives, they produce insights and points of view that must be taken into account if there is to be a true meeting of meaning between man and God.

Third, they should be participants because it is Christian belief that God speaks to men through men, especially through his people if they are open to him. If communication is two-way, then preaching should mean: (1) communication between congregation and preacher; and (2) between members of the congregation and people with whom they live and work. All of this transaction is part of the total act of preaching and has an important bearing upon our understanding of what a sermon is.

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<sup>3</sup> Long (1989, p. 79) remarks, "The preacher goes to the biblical text *from* the congregation and, indeed, *with* the congregation."

<sup>4</sup> McClure (1995, p. 33) argues that "In a hierarchical relationship hearers do not *have* an identity and a form of religious experience; these are *given* to them by the preacher."

As studies of preaching have progressed, the importance of the congregation in preaching is recognized and various changes have been made in preaching. McClure (1995, p. 42) said in his book, *The Roundtable Pulpit*:

Inductive and narrative preaching have gone a long way toward overcoming some of the problem associated with sovereign preaching. They represent an important attempt to include the hearer in more significant role in the preaching process.

Considering the congregation, it is very positive that other forms of preaching have emerged such as inductive and narrative preaching. However, these series of changes are focused only on how to deliver preaching to the congregation, and most of the preaching is still centered around the preacher. McClure (1995, p. 46) also argues that these styles are sometimes manipulative and ineffective.

McClure, unlike other preachers, is not simply considering the congregation, but rather inviting the congregation to participate in the preaching, which can be said to be a preaching dressed in the postmodern era. Allen (1998, p. 244) evaluates McClure in his book, *Patterns of Preaching*, as follows:

John S. McClure is among the first preachers to articulate an approach to preaching that is postmodern in character. McClure makes postmodern assumptions in formulating the nature, purpose, and norms of preaching.

In the meantime, if the congregation is the recipient of the sermon, McClure shows that the congregation is also the subject of preaching. He suggests a third way, collaborative preaching<sup>5</sup>, to involve the congregation in preaching preparation.

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<sup>5</sup> McClure (1995, p. 48) explains the collaborative preaching as follows: “It implies a form of preaching in which preacher and hearer work together to establish and interpret the topics for preaching. They also decide together what the practical results of those interpretations might be for the congregation. The preacher, then, goes into the pulpit and re-presents this collaborative process in the event of sermon delivery.”

*The main purpose of my research, therefore, is to seek the intended role of the congregation in preaching. This research will aim to identify homiletical problems associated with hierarchical and preacher-centered sermons in Korean churches, and to apply McClure's homiletics to the Korean church situation as an alternative.*

### **1.3 Research questions**

The main research question for this study is: “*What ways can the congregation be more involved in the preaching preparation process in the Korean church?*”

The main research question gives rise to the following sub-questions:

- a. What is the intended role of the congregation in preaching process?
- b. What kinds of homiletical problems have been caused by hierarchical and preacher-centered sermons in the Korean churches?
- c. What are some of the historical background and cause of the hierarchical, preacher-centered sermon in the Korean church?
- d. What do we change to work overcoming this hierarchical and preacher-centered sermon and let the congregation participate in preaching?

### **1.4 Hypothesis**

This study indicates the problem of the relationship between the preacher and the congregation in the hierarchical structure in the Korean church and presents *the hypothesis that McClure's collaborative preaching can be used to prove that the preacher and congregation are able to work together in preaching.* According to Ritschl (1960, p. 124), he refers to the corporate ministry of the Church and clarifies the participation of the

congregation as follows:

A congregation is actually disobedient if it allows its minister to suffer unduly under the burden of his office of preaching. On the other hand, it is also disobedient if the members of the Church suffer from being forced always to be silent and passive as hearers of one and the same preacher, Sunday after Sunday.

It is true that the importance of the congregation and the role of the congregation in preaching have been neglected in the meantime. The important fact is that, as Cilliers (2004, p. 136) argues, “Preaching could definitely never be a mere individualistic practice or merely a brilliant solo flight.”

In this era when the importance of the congregation is more prominent than ever, appropriate criticism should be applied to the preacher who wants to stick to preacher-centered preaching rather than encourage the congregation to participate in preaching. Cilliers (2004, pp. 136–137) also argues not only for preachers but also for a specific preaching concept:

One must guard against a preaching concept that turns the sermon into a monologue, entirely authoritarian and devoid of any criticism... An interaction, *a dialogue between pulpit and pew* should rather develop in which the current one-person system (the minister being this person) is broken through in the preaching.

It is urgently expected that the Korean church recognize the congregation as an important preaching partner and to create an environment in which the congregation can actually participate in preaching. Therefore, this study could make a contribution to recognizing the congregation as an important preaching partner in the Korean church.

## **1.5 Methodology**

To answer the proposed research question, I will conduct a literature study in the field of

homiletics. By using a literature study, I will be able to uncover what homiletical problems arise from hierarchical and preacher-centered sermons in the Korean church, and will mainly refer to McClure's homiletics, and apply his studies to the Korean church situation. In particular, McClure addresses the hierarchical problems of sovereign leadership and preaching in his book, *The Roundtable Pulpit*, and asserts that the congregation as actively participating in the preparation of preaching. Therefore, the Korean church, with a focus on preacher-centered preaching, needs to have an in-depth discussion about the role of the congregation in preaching, and apply research that encourages the participation of the congregation.

Additionally, as this is a study in practical theology, I will adopt Osmer's practical theological interpretation as a framework for this research. According to Osmer (2008, p. 4), there are four core tasks of practical theological interpretation: descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks.<sup>6</sup> The four tasks have the following four questions: What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond?

This research will answer the above four questions:

The research will analyze homiletical problems associated with hierarchical and preacher-centered sermons in the Korean church to satisfy with the first question. To answer the second question, the research will examine the causes and historical backgrounds of

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<sup>6</sup> Osmer (2008, p. 4) explains the four core tasks of practical theological interpretation as follows:

- *The descriptive-empirical task.* Gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.
- *The interpretive task.* Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring.
- *The normative task.* Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from "good practice."
- *The pragmatic task.* Determining strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering into a reflective conversation with the "talk back" emerging when they are enacted.

hierarchical, preacher-centered sermons in Korean churches. With regards to the third question, McClure's homiletical theories will be investigated to seek the intended role of the congregation in preaching. Lastly, the research will propose the application of congregational participation in preaching within the Korean context according to McClure's homiletics.

## **1.6 Delimitation**

- (1) This dissertation will deal only with the traditional Presbyterian Korean churches in as far as some of them are still authoritarian in stance.
- (2) This dissertation will mainly focus on McClure's homiletics and apply it within the Korean context.
- (3) This dissertation will deal only with the participation of the congregation in the preparation of preaching.

# CHAPTER 2: THE HOMILETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONGREGATION

## 2.1 Introduction

According to Cilliers (2004, p. 26), there are four voices in preaching: “the voices of the preacher, the biblical text, the congregation (context) and that of God.” In fact, a number of homileticians have agreed that these four voices are indispensable elements of preaching.<sup>7</sup>

Cilliers (2004, p. 26) argues:

The mystery of preaching is much about the way in which these verbal categories are linked and are theologically integrated, with the way in which these voices find each other in consensus and uniformity.

In this respect, the way in which the congregation interacts with all elements of preaching will be examined, in order to shape an understanding of the congregation in preaching. By means of studying the relationships between God and the congregation, the Bible and the congregation, and lastly, the preacher and the congregation, the mystery of preaching, as Cilliers describes it, will be clarified.

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<sup>7</sup> Cilliers insists that “there are quite a number of homileticians who accept that four factors are essential for the process of preparing a sermon” (Cilliers, 2004, p. 26).

## 2.2 The congregation in relation to God

### 2.2.1 The congregation as beings before God

The key point in understanding the congregation is recognizing that they are beings before God. The congregation gathers to hear the Word of God as the people of God, who have a covenant relationship with God.<sup>8</sup> Maddix (2009, p. 216) reflects, “In 1 Peter 2:9-10, the church is described as a chosen ‘people’ and a ‘people belonging to God’ (reflecting Isaiah 43:20-21); formerly they were ‘not a people,’ but now they are the ‘people of God’.”

It is very important for the congregation to understand their identity as beings before God, created by God, and with a life purpose directed by God. Louw (1998, p. 208) emphasizes the significance of identity and argues the following:

The quality of the human answer to the question which life poses about the significance of identity, is decisive for the direction and purposefulness of life. In a theological anthropology ‘identity’ means that people discover that God calls them to respond to their destiny: To love God and their fellow human beings.

Despite the importance of preachers and the congregation recognizing the value in the congregation as people of God, some preachers do not fully understand this significance. Cilliers (2004, p. 133) considers the congregation a gift of God and, in this regard, advises preachers as follows:

This demands that preachers view their congregation with new eyes, that they use a

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<sup>8</sup> Brueggemann insists that “a central theme of the Bible is *covenant*, the notion of making commitments and keeping them, of making promises and fulfilling them. This theme emerges as central in the Bible because God revealed himself as a covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. That is who he is. That is how he meets Israel and relates to the church. That is how he relates to his creation as a faithful covenant-keeper. That is how he defines our world for us as a process of covenant-making and covenant-keeping. And that is the good news of the gospel, that he is faithful to his covenanting” (Brueggemann, 1977, p. 62).

*theological key* if they wish to unlock the congregational secrets. That they *theologically judge* those who attend the worship service, i.e. people whom God has been working on for long, people for whom Christ died and was resurrected, people for whom God's grace therefore is enough. That they regard those who sit in the church pews as gifts of God, rather than as religious clients whose interests must be dealt with as well as possible.

As Cilliers points out, if the preacher regards the congregation simply as religious clients, he will not be able to view the tremendous value of the congregation as the people of God. Therefore, the preacher not only needs to have a proper understanding of the congregation as people of God who are in a covenant relationship with God, but he is also required to recognize the role of the congregation in preaching in order to make full use of their value.

### **2.2.2 The paradoxical tension of the congregation**

When embarking on an understanding of the congregation, it is vitally important to recognize that they are in paradoxical tension with God by virtue of living in the world. As mentioned above, the congregation are people of God who have a covenant relationship with Him, but at the same time, they are living in a world where faith in God is questioned and criticized. From this point of view, Cilliers believes that the congregation is in a liminal space. He (2012, pp. 21–22) asserts:

Christians stand “in-between,” in a kind of liminal or threshold space where the two ages overlap, where the old is passing away while the new has not yet fully come. This space, like all liminal space, is a space of movement from one place to another, in this case movement from the old age to the new—a movement that is never complete until the final coming of the new creation.

The most obvious way in which the congregation is distinguished from non-Christians is that they are able to recognize themselves in a liminal space. Buttrick (1987, p. 41) also argues

that the congregation has a dual consciousness that recognizes that they are in a paradoxical tension with the world in which they live, and with God: “Every congregation must be regarded as being-saved in the world; thus congregations have a peculiar double consciousness.”

Lee (2002, p. 229), considering the congregation in a state of paradoxical tension, insists that “the congregation must be viewed as still being in the world, thus, in a theological and hermeneutical tension with God – still struggling against the (fallen) world until the last day.” As Buttrick (1987, p. 41) also points out, “Because we are *in* but not *of* the world, preaching will have to speak to a double consciousness.”

Therefore, the preacher must acknowledge that the congregation in paradoxical tension with God and the world, and through preaching, should encourage the congregation to perceive the world with a double consciousness, with hope in God, in order to overcome the world<sup>9</sup> as the people of God. In this context, it should be noted:

Preaching must do more than help people cope successfully with the challenges of the here and now. The Christian community is not at a resting place, it is on a journey. In addition to facing challenges of the present, the task of preaching is to evoke the memories of where we have been and to articulate the vision of where we are going. The language of the gospel is the language of a kingdom land toward which we are traveling. We are learning the vocabulary of that language, celebrating the customs of that land, and trying to obey its laws, even though we are not yet there (Long, 1989, p. 34).

### **2.2.3 The congregation transformed through the work of the Holy Spirit**

The congregation can only be transformed through the work of the Holy Spirit. Even

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<sup>9</sup> “The world” here means everything against God. The world God created was originally a perfect world, but it was corrupted by sin.

preaching is purposeless without the work of the Holy Spirit. Cilliers (2004, p. 28) emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching and states:

Without doubt, the mystery of preaching lies in the working of the Spirit. The secret of preaching – the theological integration of the voices – is profoundly a *pneumatological mystery*. The Spirit links the voices of the preacher, the text and of the congregation to become God’s voice.

Since the Holy Spirit has vital influence over all aspects of preaching, the congregation should be understood in a framework of pneumatology.

The dimension of *pneuma*<sup>10</sup> in the new person describes a total submission, transformation and focus upon God. Such a person is moved and motivated by God in a way that transforms the person’s volition and thoughts and enables the person to experience new life each day (Louw, 1998, p. 167).

Understanding the congregation as beings sanctified continuously within the framework of pneumatology is very important. The reason for this is not merely to retain the congregation’s identity as the people of God, as the Jews did when they emphasized only the fact that they were God’s covenant people. The congregation should also comprehend their transformation ‘to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ’ (Eph 4:13, NIV).

Based on this understanding of the congregation, both preacher and congregation can expect, not only the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching, but also a movement away from moralistic

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<sup>10</sup> “*Pneuma* is often used as an alternate term to imply human existence in terms of an inner dimension and an awareness of the ultimate. Paul accentuates the term *pneuma* when he links human existence to our new salvific condition in Christ and to the reality of resurrected life. This link between the human *pneuma* and the work of the Godly *pneuma* is prominent in Romans 8:16. Because of this connection between the human spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit (Rm 8:23; 2 Cor 1:22; 5:5) the non-believer cannot possess *pneuma*” (Louw, 1998, p. 166).

preaching<sup>11</sup>, preaching that emphasizes human effort in pursuing perfection. From this point of view, Louw (1998, pp. 121–122) claims:

The eschatological perspective does not resolve the tension between the earthly inclination towards sinfulness and being a new person in Christ: people still do evil and good. However, the indwelling presence of God’s Spirit makes growth and development possible. A mature faith does not imply perfection, but involves an ongoing process of sanctification.

Instead of seeking human perfection, developing an understanding of the congregation as taking part in an ongoing process of sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit, is clearly required of the preacher as well as of the congregation itself.

## **2.3 The congregation in relation to the Bible**

### **2.3.1 The Bible mediates the paradoxical tension of the congregation**

As discussed in 2.1.2, the paradoxical tension between God and the congregation in the world threatens the congregation’s faith in God. However, the Bible plays a mediating role, assisting the congregation in turning to God with new perspectives. Brueggemann (1977, p. 23) asserts:

The Bible provides us with an alternative identity, an alternative way of understanding

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<sup>11</sup> Cilliers (2004, p. 98) explains, “Preachers must honor Scripture wholly as a human and godly document. Interestingly, research proved that moralistic preaching, in fact, separates this connection. In fact, some of the typical characteristics of moralism are either a dehistoricization of the text (i.e. dealing with the Bible as though it is a timeless collection of words from heaven) with concomitant phenomena such as allegory; or, in fact, anthropologizing the core message, yes, the theology of Scripture, viz. the merciful acts of God, and changing them into moral appeals for self-improvement.”

ourselves, an alternative way of relating to the world. It offers a radical and uncompromising challenge to our ordinary ways of self-understanding. It invites us to join in and to participate in the ongoing pilgrimage of those who live in the shattering of history, caring in ways which matter, secured by the covenanting God who is likewise on pilgrimage in history.

In addition, Cilliers (2004, p. 89) claims:

In a narrative way, the Bible opens new horizons, new perspectives of which you would never have dreamt! It offers alternatives, which, in fact, entails that you see the world afresh – the world in which you currently live – and inhabit it newly, thus making it new.

The congregation lives in the real world, not in the spiritual world, and it is inevitable that they will be influenced by this world. To overcome this, the Bible serves as a mediator, leading the congregation to a God who reigns in this world. In fact, a large number of people testify that the Bible has transformed their lives profoundly. Prominent figures in church history, such as Augustine, Luther and Calvin, also experienced God through the message of the Bible, and even at present, there are likely to be people changing their lives through the Word of God. As Cilliers (2004, p. 95) points out, “Indeed: God’s word *incarnates* in human words – to *transform* us.”

### **2.3.2 Congregation in hermeneutical tension with the Bible**

As mentioned above, the Bible serves to guide the congregation toward God. However, when the congregation uses the Bible to turn to God, it is faced with the difficulty of interpreting the Bible. In other words, the congregation is in hermeneutical tension with the Bible.

Buttrick (1987, p. 264) feels it is necessary to interpret the Bible: “We can say that the Bible is ‘the Word of God’, contains eternal *fixed* truth, and therefore words of scripture stand true in every age; they speak *now*. While words of scripture may well speak now, surely they do

not do so without interpretation.”

To overcome this hermeneutical tension, the congregation comes to the pulpit with a desire to understand the true meaning of biblical text. As Cilliers (2004, p. 89) points out, however, “Could one exhaust the fullness of Scripture with a single sermon or method of preaching? Of course not!” Even more problematic is moralistic preaching which misuses and undermines biblical text. For these reasons, guidelines are necessary for the congregation to access interpretations of biblical text where meaning is not distorted, so that the congregation is able to fulfill their hermeneutic desire for the Bible.

In this sense, Buttrick (1987, pp. 276–279) suggests a hermeneutical proposal. Firstly, he argues that biblical text be addressed to communal consciousness. He emphasizes that in order to understand biblical text properly, it should be translated as “you-all”, rather than directed at individuals, as everything in the Bible is written to a faith-community.

Secondly, he argues that the consciousness which biblical text addresses is the “double” consciousness of being-saved in the world. This allows the reading of texts in more than one way because biblical language clearly speaks to bifocal consciousness. He, therefore, suggests that the Bible is read with a double consciousness – “a consciousness of being in the world, and a consciousness of being-saved in the world.”

Lastly, he argues that the Bible should be interpreted with a consideration of the interaction between story and symbol. The Bible contains not only a moving story line, but also many symbols. Christ, the symbol of God’s revelation, cannot be understood separately to the story of God-with-us that traverses the scriptures from beginning to end, and includes symbolic orientations such as exodus, exile, and restoration. By speaking in stories and in symbols, the Bible reveals, while at the same time, it signals mystery.

Along with the hermeneutical proposal discussed above, an environment should also be

created in which the congregation is able to actively participate with the preacher in the interpretation of the Bible. This will help to prevent the preacher's misinterpretation of the Bible and counteract any hidden agendas he might have. Cilliers (2004, p. 139) asserts:

(The preacher's) concealed motives and prejudiced judgments are unavoidable. But these are also revealed in and through the congregation and the church's broader community. The creative interaction with the biblical text has no better source of sustenance than the congregation and church as a fully-fledged congregation.

In this regard, collaborative preaching should be considered. McClure (1995, p. 48) defines collaborative preaching as follows:

It implies a form of preaching in which preacher and hearer work together to establish and interpret the topics for preaching. They also decide together what the practical results of those interpretations might be for the congregation. The preacher, then, goes into the pulpit and re-presents this collaborative process in the event of sermon delivery.

In collaborative preaching, there should be no barriers to contributing to an interpretation of the Bible for any member of the community, no matter their class, in order not to depend only on the interpretation of a preacher or an elite group of interpreters. McClure (1995, pp. 22–23) states:

We must actually allow members of the congregation to participate in the discernment of the preached Word. Otherwise, what is repeated over and over again from the pulpit is an interpretation of the biblical story that is the private property of the preacher and an elite corps of biblical interpreters.

Additionally, Cilliers argues that it is necessary for the congregation to interpret the Word of God and fulfill the hermeneutic desire of the congregation. He describes interpretation by the preacher alone as being "one-eyed":

If you wish to read biblical texts merely as an individual, then you run the risk of being one-eyed. Reading by only one person cannot do justice to the text as it is simply too profound, too rich, too multidimensional. There is more than one truth, more than one face of God in each text, too much for one eye to see. Therefore, the preacher needs the congregation's many eyes. His/her privileges as exegetist and proclaimer must be expanded to include the congregation (Cilliers, 2004, p. 132).

When the congregation in hermeneutical tension actively participates in the interpretation of the Bible, not only is this interpretation valuable for the church, but the process of reaching this interpretation encourages the church community to learn and grow together. McClure's homiletical theories related to this will be discussed in the following chapter.

## **2.4 The congregation in relation to the preacher**

The relationship between the preacher and the congregation has a profound effect on preaching. F. Dean Lueking (1985, p. 48), in his book, *Preaching: The Art of Connecting God and People*, indicates this clearly: "The nature of relationships between pastor (preacher) and people (the congregation) is no small factor in what goes into preaching. The fruits of those relationships are rich for preaching."

Furthermore, Cilliers (2004, p. 139) argues that "Preachers need the congregation, they cannot preach without a discourse with the congregation being the living comment on the Word." The preacher and the congregation are, therefore, inseparable from each other with regards to preaching. In this respect, two perspectives on the relationship between the congregation and the preacher will be discussed: a *communicative relationship* and a *relationship as partner between preacher and congregation*.

### 2.4.1 A communicative relationship

Søgaard (1996, pp. 39–40) points out that the word ‘communication’ has evolved from the Latin word *communis*, meaning ‘to share’ or ‘to have in common’, and therefore, that this word refers to relationships. It is thus impossible to separate the word ‘communication’ from implications of mutual involvement and relationship, as well as from the development of commonality between people. In this sense, when one considers the relationship between the preacher and the congregation in terms of preaching, the two parties are in a communicative relationship.

Pieterse (1987, p. 76) argues convincingly, “Preaching is, of course, a matter of human communication and always occurs within a network of relations.” Howe (1967, p. 41) also argues, “Preaching is meant to be communication. Communication is necessary for relationship, and without it there can be no relation.”

Clyde Reid (1967, pp. 68–72), in his book, *The Empty Pulpit: A Study in Preaching as Communication*, explains the communication process between the preacher and the congregation in preaching as follows:

1. *Transmission* occurs when the communicator presents his message (or delivers his sermon).
2. *Contact* occurs when a listener has heard the message.
3. *Feedback* is the return process by which the listener reflects on information heard to the original communicator.
4. *Comprehension* occurs when the listener genuinely understands what it is that the communicator means by the message he has transmitted.
5. *Acceptance* occurs when the listener, having genuinely understood the message, is in a position to accept it, ignore it, or reject it.
6. *Internalization* occurs when the listener makes the message transmitted his or her

own.

7. *Action* occurs when the listener, having made the message his or her own, begins to act on the basis of its content.

The relationship between preacher and congregation, therefore, functions at all seven stages of the communication process described above. However, the Holy Spirit cannot be overlooked in the communication process. In other words, the communicative relationship is not merely communication between the preacher and the congregation, but it is also the working of the Holy Spirit between them. Pieterse (1987, p. 15) argues:

We confess that we can only hear the living Word in preaching through the work of the Holy Spirit. The inspiration of the Word in its coming into being is followed by the enlightenment of the Spirit, working through the Word in the lives of the preacher and congregation.

Søgaard (1996, p. 36) also emphasizes the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching and asserts:

Christian communication is a spiritual work, and, ultimately, all results will depend on the Holy Spirit. In the task of proclaiming the gospel, the Spirit utilizes the church as his agent, but the task of bringing a person from darkness into the light of Christ is the exclusive role of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44; Titus 3:5-7). The communicator is a witness and a channel, not the power.

Therefore, the work of the Holy Spirit plays a decisive role in preaching. As discussed in 2.2.3, preaching is purposeless without the work of the Holy Spirit. The communicative relationship between preacher and congregation, and the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching, reveal, according to Bohren (1979, pp. 94–96), that the human elements of preaching and the work of the Holy Spirit do not reject each other, but rather, that they are interdependent. The purpose of preaching is thus achieved through the interaction of these two factors. However, it should be noted that the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching is dependent on a properly-formed communicative relationship between the preacher and the congregation.

#### 2.4.2 A relationship as partner between preacher and congregation

Although “preaching, by its very nature, is communication.” (Horne, 1975, p. 21), the congregation, is often in a passive position of merely listening to the preacher. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that preaching is recognized as the duty of the preacher. Howe (1967, p. 41) says, “Preaching and the sermon have been thought of as the exclusive work of the clergy, and the laity has been assigned the role of passive consumer rather than active participant.” Another reason for the congregation taking a passive position is their being accustomed to a tradition of silence in the pews. Cilliers (2004, p. 137) adds, “After all, in church one hears...and remains silent.”

The hierarchical relationship between the preacher and the congregation, which results in the congregation being excluded from preaching, has a negative impact on preaching. McClure (1995, p. 33) argues, “In a hierarchical relationship hearers do not have an identity and a form of religious experience; these are given to them by the preacher.” In hierarchical relationships where the preacher is at the center, it becomes difficult to establish an appropriate relationship between the preacher and the congregation.

Cilliers (2004, p. 24) indicates, “The preacher is part of the congregation, and the goal of his/her office is not to obstruct the view on Christ, not to come between the congregation and Christ, but rather to be a mediator, a pointer towards Christ.” However, this view of the preacher is at odds with a preacher who is viewed from a perspective of hierarchy. Concerning leadership in the hierarchical relationship, McClure (1995, pp. 20–21) has the following to say:

Such leadership is formal, impersonal, and instrumental, centering on task accomplishment and conformity to policies and rules. Leaders usually settle for hierarchical patterns of relationship that require a minimum of personal interaction. Preachers become lone prophets of a divinely inspired Word and expect obedience, or at least compliance, once this Word has been spoken.

McClure (1995, p. 20) points out that there is a relative absence of face-to-face relationships between the preacher and the congregation, and he suggests that they can be equal partners if this kind of relationship is established:

Preacher and hearer can work to establish face-to-face relationships as a response to the vision of righteousness that prevails in Christian *koinonia* (partnership). Face-to-face relationships are rooted in a profound respect of the other person as truly *other* rather than as an instrumental object or a self-projection. In face-to-face relationships, preachers and hearers do not relate to one another in order to achieve obedience or identification. Rather, they strive to ‘come to terms’ with one another (McClure, 1995, p. 21).

In conclusion, the preacher, who is part of the congregation, should respect the congregation and consider the congregation a partner in preaching.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the homiletical understanding of the congregation, in relation to God, the Bible and the preacher, was examined.

The congregation was defined as a group of beings before God. However, this congregation, living in the world, was noted to be in paradoxical tension with God. The work of the Holy Spirit was discussed as the way in which the congregation is transformed, and the Bible as the way in which the paradoxical tension of the congregation is mediated. A further tension, this time a hermeneutical tension, was also noted to exist between the congregation and the Bible. In this instance, collaborative preaching, encouraging the congregation to participate in the interpretation of the Bible, was proposed to solve this difficulty. With regards to the relationship between preacher and congregation, the preacher was shown to achieve the purpose of preaching through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and through considering the

congregation a partner in preaching.

The next chapter will examine the homilectical problems of authoritarianism in the Korean church, and the consequent damaging of the noble values of the congregation.

# CHAPTER 3: A STUDY ON AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE KOREAN CHURCH

## 3.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, the congregation have noble values as people of God and these individuals can play an important role in a preacher's preaching. Unfortunately, the reality of the congregation in the Korean church is not that way at all. According to Jeong (2010, pp. 118-120), who researched *A Practical Theological Study of the Preacher's Ethos in a Korean Context*, through his empirical survey, "the majority in the congregation regard preachers in Korea as authoritarian." While Allen (1988, p. 38) argues that "the preacher is clearly not above the congregation, but in solidarity with them" and that "this is also theologically correct," in the Korean church, the preacher reigns above the congregation, and the congregation is influenced by this authoritarianism. This places the congregation in a passive position and prevents them having value. The authoritarianism in the Korean church creates a hierarchical structure, thus keeping the congregation dependent and submissive without an opportunity to influence preaching. This has a serious effect on the relationship between the preacher and the congregation.

In this regard, traditional Korean religions and socio-historical events that have influenced authoritarianism in the Korean church, along with authoritarianism in Korean society as a whole, will be examined in order to evaluate the manner in which this authoritarianism has been indigenized in Korean churches. Furthermore, the direct causes of authoritarianism in

Korean churches will be investigated.

## **3.2 Authoritarianism in traditional Korean religious perspective**

Among traditional Korean religions, Shamanism and Confucianism had the greatest impact on the formation of authoritarianism in Korean churches. In fact, elements of Shamanism and Confucianism were regarded as part of Korean culture beyond religion long before Christianity was introduced to Korea. This is the reason for authoritarian features of these traditional religions naturally influencing the Korean church. Therefore, these features will be examined.

### **3.2.1 Shamanism**

Shamanism is the oldest religion in Korea and is deeply rooted in the ethos and the lives of Korean people. Unlike other religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity, which were introduced to Korea from outside of the country, Shamanism has been understood as a native religion, and it still influences the lives of the Korean people today (Lee, 1997, p. 29).

Eliade (2004, p. 4) defined shamanism as a technique of ecstasy, permitting people to come into contact with spirits through a shaman, the great master of ecstasy (Eliade, 2004, p. 4). The function of Shamanism in the minds of Koreans is also to seek help from the spirit world to avoid misfortune and to gain blessings (Lee and Smith, 2011, p. 115). For this purpose, a “shaman” plays an important role. The word ‘shaman’ derives from *saman*, a word taken from the Tungus in Siberia, where it means ‘spirit healer’ (Turner, 2004, p. 12). The Shaman, called *mudang* in Korea, are mediators between humans and spirits or gods, performing a ritual service called a *gut* in order to grant humans their various wishes, such as a good fortune, the healing of a physical or mental illness, or a good harvest (Lee and Smith, 2011, p. 115). Lee (1997, p. 102) explains the role of shamans in Korea as follows:

Shamans, relying on their tutorial god, have the power to summon the spirit or spirits and to demand their obedience. Shamans can travel from this world to the spiritual world and communicate with the spirits. They are persons of the spirit.

As a result, a peaceful life depends absolutely on the shaman, whose authority is consequently ensured. As Lee (1997, p. 105) points out, “Shamanism is not an institutionalized religion. It is based on the clientele, who come to the shaman for the service.” Thus, shamans can exert a lot of power and authority on the people looking for their services.

In fact, shamanism is regarded as idolatry by Christians in Korea and they feel a sense of hostility towards it. However, ironically, there are some shamanistic features found in Korean churches, one of them being that the congregation instinctively sees the preacher as a shamanic figure (Lee, 1997, p. 102). For some congregations, a preacher is seen to carry out a similar role to a shaman: a ‘go-between’ God and the people. Therefore, the congregation obediently follows the preacher in order to avoid what they fear will be a retribution from God.

Additionally, they understand the purpose of attending a church worship service in the same way that a shamanist understands attending a shamanic ritual: in order to satisfy a secular desire without the personal relational aspect of a true faith (Lee and Smith, 2011, pp. 115–116). In this respect, Lee (1997, p. 31) claims that shamanism has become an internal characteristic of the Korean ethos, and that the Korean mindset being somewhat shamanistic cannot be denied.

Moreover, even more severe problems occur when preachers abuse their authority, as shamans have done. Indeed, Lee (1997, p. 102) pointed out that there are many preachers who behave like shamans in Korea. He argues, “Many preachers of rapidly growing Korean churches today are shamans in Christian guise. Like shamans, they promise personal blessing through emotional and spiritual experiences in the church.” As a result, it can be concluded

that shamanism has deeply penetrated Korean churches, distorting the original form of Christianity and causing authoritarianism in preachers.

### 3.2.2 Confucianism

Geert Hofstede (1991), in his book, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the mind*, explains the individualism and collectivism trends in 50 countries and three regions of the world, and indicates that South Korea has a very high collectivist culture. Only ten countries have a higher tendency toward collectivism than Korea does.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Triandis and Gelfand (1998, pp. 118-126) added the elements of *vertical* (emphasizing hierarchy) and *horizontal* (emphasizing equality) when referring to individualism-collectivism in order to define culture more clearly, and South Korea is indicated below to have a vertical-collectivistic culture.

Vertical	Vertical-individualistic (examples: United States)	Vertical-Collectivistic (examples: Korea, China)
Horizontal	Horizontal-Individualistic (examples: Sweden, Australia)	Horizontal-Collectivistic (examples: Japan, Israel)
	Individualistic	Collectivistic

<sup>12</sup> Hofstede's other book, *Culture's consequences: Comparing values behaviors, institutions and organizations across nations*, which measured the individualism of each country, showed that the level of individualism in Korea was significantly lower than in other countries; USA(91), Australia(90), UK(89), Sweden(71), South Africa(65), Japan(46), Mexico(30), Malaysia(26) and South Korea(18) (Hofstede, 2001, p. 263).

### Table 1. Four types of culture

(Source: Kim et al., 2004)

In a vertical-collective culture like Korea, people take for granted discriminatory and differential treatment according to class and status, or determined by age, seniority, and group contribution (Kye, 2010, pp. 83–84).

One of the reasons why Korean society tends to have a vertical-collectivistic culture is the influence of Confucianism. The ruling class in the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910) attempted to rationalize and systematize the vertical hierarchy, which is the basis of a collectivist society, ideologically and ethically through Confucianism (Kim, 2001, p. 2). As a result, today, despite Korea having been westernized, industrialized and urbanized, traditional values, particularly Confucianism, still influence the society.

Under the influence of the Confucian culture that rationalizes and systematizes the vertical hierarchy, Koreans naturally try to determine ranking when confronted with a group because, according to Im (1992, p. 2), Confucianism emphasizes “unilateral obedience on the part of the subordinates to the superior”. Keel (1993, p. 47) argues, “No matter what religious affiliation one may have, all Koreans are practically Confucianists in the sense that they all follow Confucian norms of behavior and share Confucian moral values in their way of life and thinking.”

In order to understand Korean society, it is necessary to consider how these Confucian features mentioned above came about. Originally, Confucianism was composed of set of political and moral doctrines based on the teachings of Confucius (BC 551-479), the greatest philosopher of China. His thoughts influenced much of East Asia, including China, Japan and Korea. In Korea, Confucianism was introduced in the second century BC, but did not spread widely until the fifteenth century (Haboush, 1991, pp. 84–110). After the Koryu Dynasty (935-1392), which was Buddhism’s golden age, the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910) adopted

Confucianism as the state's governing ideology. More specifically, Neo-Confucianism, a form of Confucianism modified by the Chinese philosopher Zhu Xi (1130-1200) influenced the Yi Dynasty (Grayson, 1995, p. 44).

Confucianism in Korea, which inherited characteristics of Neo-Confucianism, emphasized social order from the beginning and took root in Korea when it criticized 'disorder' in late Koryu Dynasty that resulted from military rule, Mongol interference, and the corruption of secularized Buddhism (Kye, 2008, p. 77). Although, theoretically, Confucianism values harmonizing the virtues, social order and harmony of its people, practically it was used as a political tool to achieve the purpose of the ruling class. It was transformed into a form of authoritarianism during the Yi Dynasty (Kye, 2010, p. 87).

The concept of authority is essential in Confucianism. Authority is based on five relationships: father and son, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, old and young, as well as ruler and the ruled (Lee, 1997, p. 36; Lee and Smith, 2011, p. 116). Lee (1997, p. 36) argues that "these relationships are vertical and hierarchical in order" according to sex, age and rank. A man's superiority to woman appears in the relationship between husband and wife, the old's superiority to the young appears in the relationship between older and younger persons, and the higher ranked person's superiority to the lower appears in the relationship between the ruler and the ruled (Lee, 1997, p. 94). Among these five relationships, the relationship between the father and the son is the basis of all other relationships and it was a decisive factor in forming the patriarchal collectivism of Korean society (Kim, 2001, p. 16). Just as the father has unconditional authority over his son, this hierarchy applies to the other relationships as well.

Under the influence of Confucian culture, Koreans identify the position of each person in a group and try to determine their relationship with others according to their hierarchical structure. Lee (1997, p. 36) asserts, "For most Koreans, knowing their place or position in relation to others is essential for socialization. By knowing their relationship with others,

each can act and speak properly.” Such a Confucian culture appears throughout Korean society, and the church is no exception. Grayson (1995, p. 50), who served as a United Methodist missionary in Korea from 1971 to 1987, analyzed the existence of Confucian culture in the Korean church and asserts the following:

The leadership system in Korea functions very differently from the way in which Presbyterian type of church structure function in Western nations. The minister holds a paramount place in all affairs of the church both religious and administrative, while the elders are expected to play a subordinate and supporting role. This perception of the minister’s role represents an assimilation of both the Confucian concept of the benevolent but autocratic father of the family and the Christian concept of the minister as pastor of his flock. Another Confucian parallel to the minister’s role would be with that of the teacher who acts as a surrogate father.

What should be noted in Grayson’s explanation is his accurate description of the minister in Korea as a father figure. The authority of a preacher who is often viewed as a father figure in Korea can be clarified by the very structure of Korean society. As Lee (1997, p. 94) points out, in the structure of Korean society, the father holds the greatest influence in the family, and the family is the basis of a Korean community. Therefore, fathers are the most powerful members of their communities. As a result, Lee (1997, p. 94) argues, “(the Korean) preacher, symbolically the head of the religious community, has unlimited power.”

Therefore, with the influence of Confucian authoritarianism, which emphasizes an absolute obedience according to place or position in relation to others, the preacher has the same authority over his congregation as a father does over his family. Naturally, as a result, the authority of the preacher has become absolute in the church. Park (2012, p. 60) insists on the influence of Confucianism on Korean Christianity as follows:

A bitter fruit of Confucianism in Korean Christianity has been the development of clericalism, with clergy exercising excessive power in both the faith and the polity of the

church.

### **3.3 Authoritarianism in Korea: a socio-historical perspective**

As we have seen above, traditional religion became the basis for authoritarianism. However, the peculiar sociopolitical events to be discussed strengthened authoritarianism in Korean society even further. According to Sales (1973, pp. 44-57), environmental threat is one of the basic causes of strict authoritarianism.<sup>13</sup> From the Japanese colonial period to the military dictatorship, the two most representative environmental threats in Korean history, Korea was under the influence of authoritarianism. The following chart illustrates the political transitions in Korea:

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<sup>13</sup> In order to determine whether authoritarianism correlates with threats from the environment, Sales (1973, pp. 44-57) examines data from two unfavorable, and two calm periods in American history.

Before 1910	Feudal Dynasty
1910-1945	<b>Japanese Colony</b>
Since 1945	Divided nation; North communist vs South capitalist
1950-1953	Korean War – now being in the condition of ceasefire
1948-1960	Lee Seung Man government / civic dictatorship
1960, 19 April	Democratic revolution
1961, 16 May	Coup d’etat by Park Jung Hee
1961-1979	Park Jung Hee government ( <b>military dictatorship</b> )
1980, May	Democratization movement in Kwang-ju
1980-1987	Chun Doo Whan government ( <b>military dictatorship</b> )
1987, 10 June	June Democratic Uprising
1987-1992	Noh Tae Woo government ( <b>military dictatorship</b> )
1993-1998	Kim Young Sam government (semi-civilian government)
1998-	Kim Dae Jung government (civilian government)

Table 2. Political transition in Korea

(Source: Kang, 2002, p. 319)

The authoritarianism that emerged through the series of events represented in the table above will be discussed.

### 3.3.1 Authoritarianism under the Japanese colonial period

The Japanese colonial period resulted in a strengthening of authoritarianism and a greater consciousness of the hierarchy in Korean society. According to Kang (2002, p. 316), colonial rule in Japan had the intention to create a people who were forever regarded as less important,

and who would provide the Japanese with cheap colonial labor. As a result, Kang (2002, p. 316) argued, this authority “developed a centralized political administration with strong control of the Korean people, so at that time the educational system was entirely controlled by the Japanese military.”

In particular, the authority distorted the existing Confucian norms in order to justify their domination. In designing the curriculum for the colonial education system, the Japanese paid close attention to the Confucian values of loyalty and submissiveness to the state. Thus, whenever possible, the colonial authority chose to use the power of Confucian values to gain support for their rule and to further their own policies (Robinson, 1991, p. 214).

In addition, Robinson (1991, p. 215) explained, “the Japanese also attempted to preserve useful aspects of the traditional Korean class system, and in doing so became official patrons of Confucianism.” For example, Governor Saito, who gave stipends to high officials of the Yi Dynasty in the immediate aftermath of annexation in 1910, started to patronize Korean Confucian scholars while providing financial support for organizations devoted to the preservation and maintenance of Confucian values (Robinson, 1991, p. 215).

Furthermore, in order to reinforce Japanese colonial rule, one of the values of Confucianism, family ideology, was utilized. The Japanese colonial authority encouraged the Koreans to consider themselves as part of the family that constituted the Japanese empire (Robinson, 1991, p. 216). Through this Confucian value, the Japanese attempted to help Koreans feel as if they were younger brothers in the greater imperial family. Confucian values were used to support the political mythology of assimilation in the hierarchical system (Robinson, 1991, p. 216). Robison (1991, p. 215) pointed out the misuse of Confucian values for Japanese colonial policy and asserted the following:

(The colonial state) was very different from the Yi Dynasty and even more removed from an ideal version of the Confucian state. Japanese created the first modern, centralized state in

Korea, and its authoritarian excesses, in combination, perhaps, with the long-lived Confucian political tradition.

In this way, the Japanese colonial authority in Korea transformed Confucian values into their own forms, exercising authoritarianism in a more powerful and highly centralized style. Unfortunately, this type of authoritarianism has remained in Korean society since the liberation from Japanese colonial rule and still holds influence over the society today.

### **3.3.2 Authoritarianism under military dictatorship**

After Japanese colonial rule and the Korean War thereafter, more than half of the total population of Korea was in extreme poverty, and economic growth through industrial development was the most important goal in Korea's modernization (Kye, 2010, p. 88). It was no surprise, therefore, that Korean society began to rebuild the national economic system. In order to do so, Korea required strong authoritarian leadership. The military government that ruled from 1961 to 1992 helped to accelerate the development of the national economy through industrialization. However, the military government that became the subject of industrialization also led to the strengthening of authoritarianism in all of Korean society. Kye (2010, p. 89) asserts the authoritarian characteristics of military dictatorship as follows:

The authoritarianism of military dictatorship, characterized by command and obedience, emphasized unilateral obedience, in which subordinates were not allowed to question the authority granted to the superiors.

Despite the fact that South Korea is considered a model example for developing countries, Korean people were forced to part with freedom and democracy at the hands of the authoritarian military government in the process of rapid economic development in the country (Kang, 2002, pp. 315–316). According to Cho (2002, pp. 163-164), “under the authoritarian military regimes from the 1960s to the 1980s, violent state governance forced

many to endure torture, dismissal from jobs and imprisonment; many sacrificed their lives and health while participating in anti-dictatorship movements.”

Consequentially, the tension caused by military confrontation between South Korea and North Korea after the Korean War allowed military culture to permeate Korean society. Furthermore, the military dictatorship that lasted for a long time post war further promoted a top-down military culture under the guise of economic growth. As a result, it is no surprise that authoritarianism permeated the church.

### **3.4 Authoritarianism in the Korean church**

We have examined authoritarianism in Korea from a traditional religious perspective as well as from a socio-historical perspective, strengthening the case that these perspectives have influenced Korean churches, and most especially the preachers therein. Therefore, the fact that the greater portion of congregations considers preachers in Korea as authoritarian, as mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, is convincing. In this section, authoritarianism in the Korean church as a whole will be examined in order to find a more detailed cause for preachers' authoritarianism.

#### **3.4.1 Preachers' distorted sense of authority**

Lueking (1985, p. 53) states that “the authority of the Word punctures and exposes authoritarianism in those who preach.” The authority of the Bible and the authority of the preacher are easily reversed if it is forgotten that “the authority of the preacher depends wholly on the authority of Scripture” (Cilliers, 2004, p. 222). In this instance, the preacher becomes authoritarian, the authority in the Word disappears, and authority is assumed to have originated from the preacher him-/herself (Cilliers, 2004, p. 219).

Shin (2008, p. 16) points out that one of the most prevalent reasons for the authoritarianism of preachers in the Korean church today is that preachers have a misunderstanding of authority. In other words, preachers attempt to distinguish themselves from the congregation merely because they are ordained (cf. Shin, 2008, p. 16, Kang, 2002, p. 5).

According to Carroll (1991, p. 14), within the Christian tradition, the preacher has the authority “through ordination to proclaim the Word of God, to administer the sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, and to equip the laity for ministry.” This authority, however, is by no means the preacher’s excuse to bring the congregation under his authority.

Messer (1989, p. 64) argues, “Those of us who are ordained are set apart by the church to the representative ministry – not because we are less sinful or more holy, but in order to serve different functions within the life and mission of the church in the world.”

Even though a preacher’s distorted sense of authority is a serious concern for the Korean church, it is not seen as such, as this authoritarianism is universalized in Korean churches (Shin, 2008, p. 16). Therefore, it becomes important to pay attention to what Cilliers (2004, p. 184) says about the authority of the preacher:

Our concept of authority has probably been contaminated by caricatures thereof. A preacher’s authority does not reside in autocracy, especially not spiritual or clerical autocracy, or in bureaucracy. Our authority resides in brokenness, our empowerment in being disempowered.

When the preacher has a distorted sense of authority, Carroll (1991, p. 37) has described that he exercises this authority “in a hierarchical, top-down, authoritarian fashion that insists the congregation be dependent and submissive.” Therefore, the genuine authority of a preacher is not given to or bestowed upon him at ordination, but rather comes from the trust of the people whom he serves (cf. Lee, 1997, p. 113). Messer (1989, p. 72) asserts the authority of ordination as follows:

The authority of ordination, however, is not the power charted on hierarchical corporation pyramids or university organization tables... People do not automatically follow a member of the clergy; authority and trust must be gained through loving, caring service.

Richards and Hoeldtke (1979, p. 136) have a similar comment on the authority granted to church leaders:

God gives human leaders authority. But it is a unique authority. It does not rest on power in any way. Most importantly, it does not imply a right to control the behavior of others. The authority of Christian leaders is an authority granted to build up brothers and sisters so they will be able to live out the will, not of men, but of God.

### **3.4.2 Hierarchy in the Korean church**

The office of the Korean church has been vertically fixed by elders, senior deacons and deaconesses, deacons, laymen, and with the pastor as head. In the pulpit, this hierarchy is denied; however, it is implicitly regarded as such (cf. Kim, 1994, pp. 86–98; Shin, 2008, pp. 18–20). This reflects the hierarchical values that exist in the consciousness of Korean society under the social and historical influence mentioned previously, such as Confucian patriarchy, Japanese colonial rule, and military dictatorship, and these values are applied in the Korean church as well. Park (2012, p.60) asserts that “the persistent influence of a Confucian vision of a harmonious society based on hierarchical relationships has kept the Korean church from overcoming social stratification among its members.”

As a result, the pastor is dominant in the church because the church has a centralized vertical structure rather than a decentralized horizontal structure. This vertical structure strengthens the authority given to the pastor and eventually becomes the fundamental cause of authoritarianism in the Korean church. It is, thus, necessary to pay attention to the structure of the early church. Donald Guthrie (1981, p. 789), a New Testament scholar, asserts the

following in his book, *New Testament Theology*, about the leadership of the early church:

With regard to *organization*, it is clear that on the matter of leadership there was no universal policy. Even within the Pauline churches there was wide variety, from the charismatic type of leadership within the Corinthian church to the more structured approach at Philippi, Ephesus and Crete. There was certainly no hierarchical system. The purpose of the church officers was to ensure orderliness and to teach. The New Testament does not present any clear indications of one man being in charge of one community. This looseness of structure is in keeping with the view of the church as the body, with Christ himself as the head.

According to this claim, hierarchy in the Korean church conflicts with the view of the early church. In fact, the office of the church, as described by Guthrie (1981, p. 789), is a horizontal order according to the gifts, rather than a vertical sequence. The preacher is the one who conveys the word of God, but he is not at the peak in the structure of the pyramid (cf. Won, 2009, pp. 66–67).

McClure (1995, p. 33) argues that in a hierarchical relationship, congregations do not have an identity and a form of religious experience, and that these are only given to them by the preacher. He then emphasizes that “hierarchy should not become a fixed form of leader-follower relationship in the church” (McClure, 1995, p. 38). Therefore, the Korean church should clearly recognize that authoritarianism generated by the hierarchy, which is contrary to the early church, is inappropriate.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, authoritarianism in Korean churches from the perspectives of traditional Korean religion, as well as social history was examined.

Firstly, authoritarianism that influenced Korean churches through shamanism and

Confucianism, traditional Korean religions, was discussed. Shamanism and Confucianism, which have become a part of Korean culture beyond religion, have influenced authoritarianism throughout Korean society. It was confirmed that the fundamental background of Korean vertical and collectivist culture came from Confucianism, and it was identified that the authoritarian element of a shaman, who acted as a mediator between God and man, was assumed by Korean church pastors.

Secondly, authoritarianism of Korean society from a socio-historical point of view was examined. Through Japanese colonial rule, an environment which easily accommodated authoritarianism was created, and authoritarianism was even further advanced in society through the military culture of vertical class structure during the military dictatorship era.

Thirdly, the direct cause of the authoritarianism of the preacher in the Korean church was considered. The authority of the preacher who distinguishes himself from his audience as a result of his ordination was noted as a distorted authority, and the hierarchy of Korean churches, naturally provoking authoritarianism in pastors and encouraging them to understand the position of the church as a vertical sequence, was also raised.

In the next chapter, the current Korean society standing against authoritarianism, as well as the reality of Korean churches today, where hierarchical and preacher-centered sermons are criticized, will be reviewed. McClure's homiletics will be applied to the Korean church situation as an alternative.

# CHAPTER 4: A STUDY ON MCCLURE'S HOMILETICAL THEORIES IN THE ROUNDTABLE PULPIT

## 4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, various perspectives from traditional Korean religion, social history as well as inside the Korean church were examined in order to understand what causes authoritarianism in the Korean church. In Chapter 4, the changing feelings of Korean society towards authoritarianism, as well as the impact of these changes on the Korean church, will be examined.

Due to the fact that the Korean Church is dominated by authoritarianism, the congregation does not play a role in preaching. In order to overcome this, McClure's homiletical theory, which allows the congregation to participate in preaching, will be discussed. In particular, the background of *the roundtable*, a symbol of McClure's homiletical theory, will be explained. In addition, three of the most fundamental elements of preaching mentioned in Chapter 2, the Word of God, the preacher, and the congregation, will be compared with respect to traditional preaching and McClure's homiletical theory.

McClure's homiletical theory, which allows the congregation to participate in preaching together with the preacher, rather than being under the authority of the preacher, will reveal the limitations of traditional preaching.

## 4.2 The Crisis of Authoritarianism in the Korean church

### 4.2.1 Changing views towards authoritarianism in Korean society.

There has been a history of attempts to escape from oppressive authoritarianism in Korean society. In particular, the Democratic Revolution on 19 April, 1960, the Democratization Movement in May, 1980, and the Democratic Uprising of June, 1987, which are specified in Table 2, were explosions of civil society that rejected dictatorship and fought for democracy. The democratization of politics and society has begun to progress since electoral democracy was introduced in 1987 (Diamond et al., 2000, p. 2), and the impeachment of the former president, Park Geun-hye, by means of the candlelight protests from November 2016 to March 2017, can be seen as a demonstration of democracy that surprised the world.<sup>14</sup>



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<sup>14</sup> Kim explains the candlelight protest as follows: “The candlelight protest that took place in South Korea from October 2016 to March 2017 was a landmark political event, not least because it ultimately led to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. Arguably, its more historically important meaning lies in the fact that it marks the first nation-wide political struggle since the June Uprising of 1987, where civil society won an unequivocal victory over a regime that was found to be corrupt, unjust, and undemocratic, making it the most orderly, civil, and peaceful political revolution in modern Korean history” (Kim, 2018, p. 1).

Figure 1. Candlelight vigil in Seoul

Source: <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0923714182>

According to Craddock (1979, p. 15), “the vigorous processes of democracy are undermining high places, including pulpits.” He points out that the preacher can no longer “presuppose the general recognition of his authority as a clergyman, or the authority of his institution, or the authority of Scripture” (Craddock, 1979, p. 14). In the past, preachers were recognized for their special authority as those who preached the Word of God. However, the present generation does not readily accept the same authority (Rhee, 2008, p. 292).

In fact, while older generations are accustomed to listening and submitting to the authority, the present generation is better at two-way communication, and they prefer to engage in dialogue together (Kye, 2010, p. 97). As a result, it is true that authoritarianism is threatened in the Korea church and indeed, throughout society. Kim (2014, p. 39) focused on the changes in Korean society and asserted that:

The Korean society has experienced more severe changes over the last 50 years than it had for the last 500 years. The pulpit also faces the socio-cultural revolution, caused by the collapse of Korean traditional values. Authoritative and hierarchical cultures are also rapidly changing as a result of postmodernism and political change.

The most popular trend in the challenge of authoritarianism is free communication by means of the Internet. Unlike older generations, the N generation, which emerged with the development of the network, is very critical of authority. The N generation, an abbreviation for Internet Generation, was first used in a book titled *The Growth of Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation*, written by American sociologist, Don Tapscott.

According to Tapscott (1998, pp. 15–33), the N Generation is the generation born after 1977, who considers television a hierarchical, centralized form of media making use of one-way communication. Instead, the N Generation prefers computers that can share power and

participate in both directions, possessing multimedia characteristics that ensure individual subjectivity.

Unlike with traditional one-way media, many people today, especially those belonging to the N generation, are free to voice their opinions and have discussions on the Internet, and as a result, individuals and minorities are able to take systematic action. Indeed, the candlelight protests were triggered by online communities and resulted in the impeachment of the president (Joo, 2017, p. 31). Lee (2017, p. 23) asserts that “the beginning of the candlelight revolution is not journalism, but social media. Social media, which caused the candlelight revolution, has become a major tool for communication in the era of transcendence media.”

Cyberspace has exposed and criticized various irregularities, irrationalities and authoritarian attitudes in the church. As a result, it is no wonder that authoritarianism can no longer be maintained in the Korean church. It exists within a social atmosphere that resists authoritarianism.

#### **4.2.2 Mistrust of the preacher and the changing congregation**

According to the Korean Church Reliability Survey<sup>15</sup> of 2017, the overall trust level of Korean churches is only 20.2%. This means that only approximately one in five Korean people trust the Korean church. Furthermore, the trust level of the Korean pastor is not a much larger number, only 20.5%. The following figure illustrates the outcomes of the survey:

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<sup>15</sup> The Korean Church Reliability Survey by the Christian Ethics Movement of Korea (CEMK) has been conducted five times from 2008 to 2017 in order to collect basic data for an understanding of the Korean church and the development of the church. The method and results of the survey are detailed on the website (<http://cemk.org>).

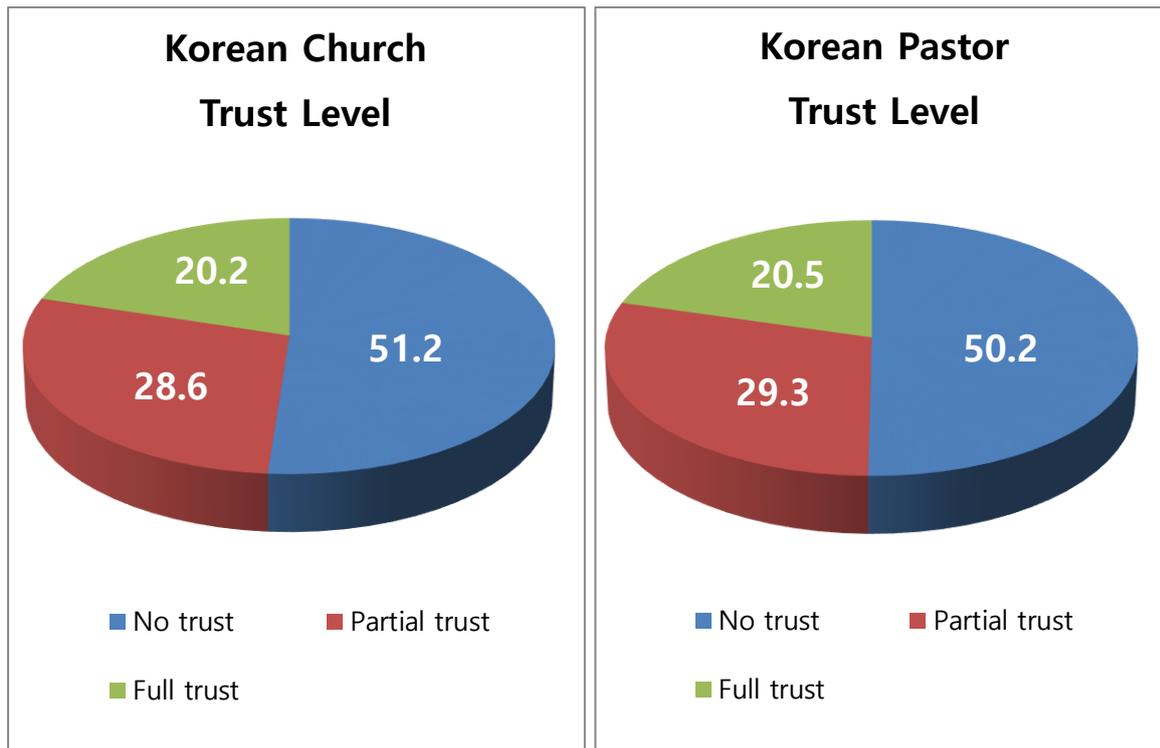


Figure 2. Korean Church and Pastor Trust Level

Source: <http://www.cemk.org>

The results in this survey are shocking. In particular, the pastor, who should be one of the most highly trusted members of society, is perceived as an untrustworthy being by the majority of people in Korea. There are numerous factors that have led to this result, for instance, the authoritarianism of pastors, negative scandals surrounding pastors, as well as abusive and unethical preaching.

Despite the fact that pastors should show the highest moral standards, frequent scandals involving pastors are exposed in the media. Therefore, not only are changing views towards authoritarianism undermining the trustworthiness of pastors, but pastors are undermining their own trustworthiness with their misdemeanors, of which society is becoming increasingly aware (cf. Kim, 2011, p. 85).

Particularly noteworthy in this survey is that the trustworthiness of Korean churches

compared to that of the pastors is a similar figure. It is true that the pastor has great influence over the Korean church. Therefore, if the negative social impression of the pastor is not counteracted, the Korean church will continue to receive a similar evaluation. In order to counteract this impression, the cause of the pastor's unreliability should be determined.

The following survey is a survey of laity and pastors conducted in 2017 detailing the means by which the Korean church can transform:

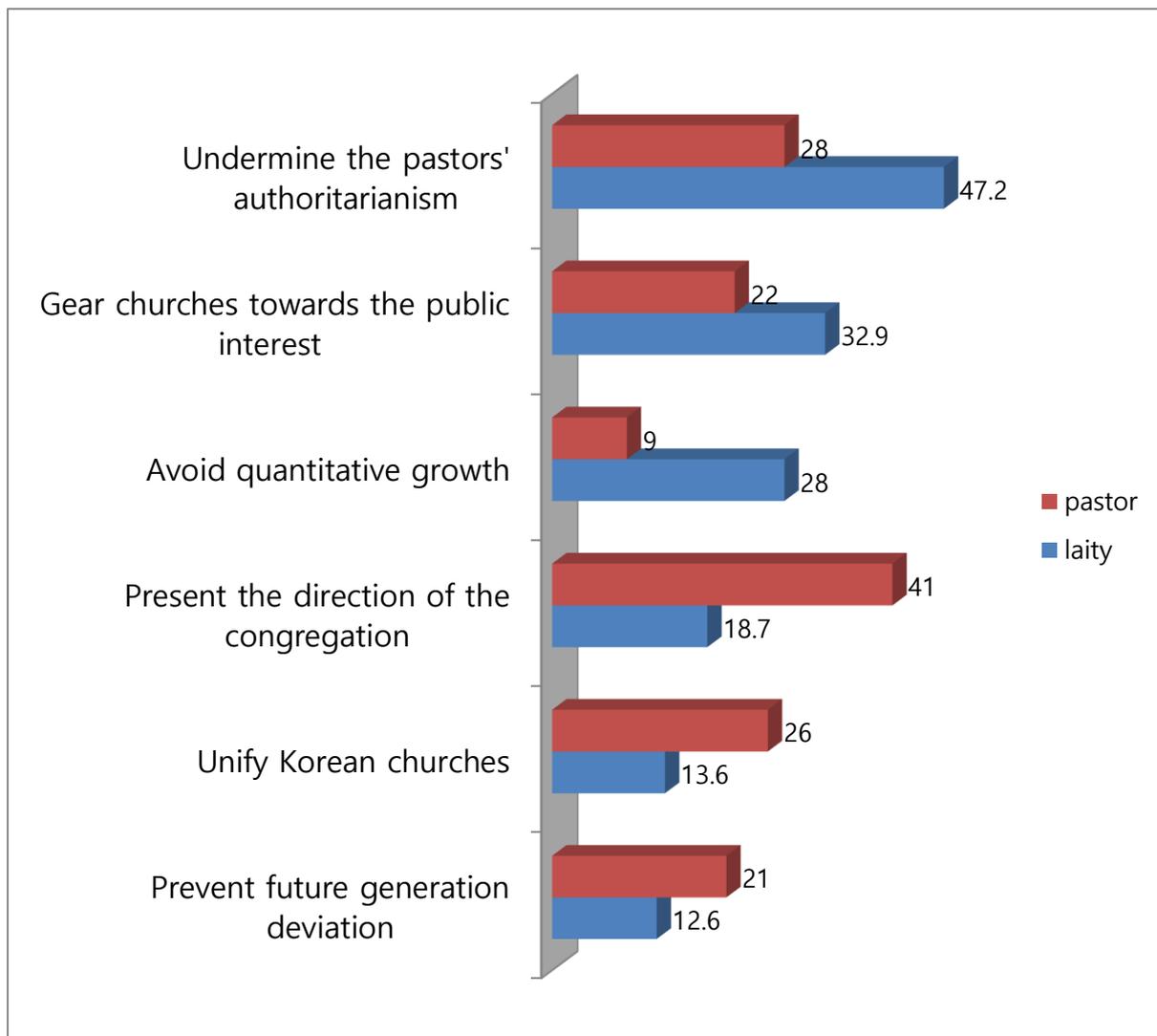


Figure 3. The main tasks of Korean church reform practice

Source: <http://news.kmib.co.kr/article/view.asp?arcid=0923711707&code=23111111&cp=nv>

The results of this survey show that the laity feel most strongly about undermining the pastors' authoritarianism when considering Korean church reform. Although 28% of pastors agree that authoritarianism should be challenged, this is not the contribution they feel to be the most important to church reform. The fact that the laity feel it to be the most significant contribution shows that the negativity towards authoritarianism in Korean society as a whole is also emerging in Korean churches.

Cilliers (2004, p. 24) claims that a "Congregation is neither fictional nor ideal people, but people who belong to a certain time, place and culture." This clearly indicates that a congregation's thoughts on the church and the pastor are directly influenced by the current culture, unlike the culture in the past simply wasn't concerned about authoritarianism like it is now.

Moreover, it should be noted that today's congregations in Korea have furthered their education. In the past, few people received university education, but today, it is not easy to find people who have not attended university. As a result, there are many experts in the congregation, and the number of people in the congregation who have studied theology, in particular, is increasing (cf. Rhee, 2008, p. 290).

Cilliers (2004, p. 7) insists that "in many congregations, one experiences a growing diversity in spirituality, views on the church and the world, religious perceptions, etc." Stott (2014, p. 52) also asserts that "now, everybody has his own opinions and his own convictions, and considers them just as good as the preacher's." Thus, it should be noted that today's congregation is different to past congregations that submitted to authority.

As pastors face an era in which the laity are becoming increasingly educated, opinionated and untrusting, the credibility of the Korean church will deteriorate unless pastors relinquish their authoritarian views.

### 4.2.3 Application of McClure's homiletical theory to the Korean church

In light of the changing views towards authoritarianism, much criticism for authoritarian and preacher-centered preaching has come about. As mentioned above, the congregation feel authoritarianism of the pastor to be the priority when addressing Korean church reform. A call for changes to the existing authoritarian form, including preaching has come about. Thus, preaching, in order to support a congregation of a new culture, requires a shift. Scott Gibson (2004, pp. 11–12) asserts the following in his book, *Preaching to a Shifting Culture*:

Preaching has had to change. For evangelicals, hopefully, the content of the sermon has not changed. However, preachers are confronted with how they engage with the challenges of culture's shift. People who preach, moreover, people who live in the culture, cannot help but be influenced by their culture.

The preacher should have the ability to interpret the changes that come of a new age, and he should find ways to cope with these changes. In this era, when the importance of the congregation has been more prominent than ever since the New Homiletic<sup>16</sup> emerged, it is illogical to opt for preacher-centered preaching and the authoritarianism of the preacher. Cilliers asserts that the authority of the preacher depends entirely on whether or not God is illuminated in the biblical text and the sermon: "Preachers' power is a powerless power; their authority is a broken authority" (Cilliers, 2004, p. 222).

Furthermore, Cilliers (2004, p. 136) argues that the preacher should oppose a preaching concept that is totally authoritarian, with a sermon as monologue, and the rejection of any

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<sup>16</sup> The term 'the New Homiletic' refers to three recent notable homiletical approaches that go beyond the old topical preaching convention: "an inductive approach to preaching, the narrative or story form, and finally, a method based on the movement and structure of the biblical text." (Kim, 2014, p. 40); Allen (2010, p. 1,8) also describes the New Homiletic as an "inductive, narrative, experiential approach" and claims that "the New Homiletic represented a turn to the hearer." According to McClure (2001, p. 11), the term "the New Homiletic" was coined by Homiletician, David Randolph, at the founding meeting of the American Academy of Homiletics, a guild for scholars and teachers of preaching.

criticism. He then made the following assertions about the interaction between the preacher and the congregation:

An interaction, *a dialogue between pulpit and pew* should rather develop in which the current one-person system (the minister being this person) is broken through in the preaching. This will not only do justice to the congregation, but also to the preacher's office (Cilliers, 2004, p. 137).

As mentioned above, it is true that the New Homiletic has led to the consideration of the congregation in preaching. However, the series of changes, including inductive and narrative preaching, are focused only on the manner in which preaching is delivered to the congregation, leaving much of the preaching still centered on the preacher. McClure argues that these styles are sometimes manipulative and ineffective, and suggests that the congregation be invited to participate in the preaching (McClure, 1995, p. 46).

Therefore, the Korean church should recognize the congregation as an important preaching partner, and create an environment in which the congregation can participate in the preaching. Thus, a homiletical theory that leads to an interaction between the preacher and the congregation during preaching is required, and *The Round-table Pulpit* of McClure's, which will be dealt with, is one that meets this demand.

### **4.3 Background of *The Roundtable Pulpit* for the collaborative approach**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Korean church has maintained preacher-centered preaching under the influence of authoritarianism. As a result, the values of the congregation have been ignored, leaving the congregation in a passive position, with little opportunity to have a positive impact on preaching. Despite a recent change in society's views towards

authoritarianism, as well as the influence of the New Homiletic on preaching, preacher-centered preaching is still influential in the Korean church.

In this crisis of preaching, McClure (1995, p. 20) presents three criteria for forming a relationship between the preacher and the congregation that establishes a healthy leadership and valuable preaching: “preaching must embody *face-to-face relationships, participative roles* in decision- making, and *interactive forms of persuasion.*”

Based on these three criteria, homiletical limitations of sovereign preaching, dialogue preaching, and inductive preaching, will be observed, and McClure’s homiletical theories presented in his book, *The Roundtable Pulpit*, will be discussed.

### **4.3.1 McClure’s three criteria for the building of a relationship between preacher and congregation**

#### **4.3.1.1 Face-to-face relationships**

As discussed in chapter 2, the authoritarianism of the preacher in the Korean church creates a hierarchical structure, thus keeping the congregation dependent and submissive without an opportunity to influence preaching. This has a serious effect on the relationship between the preacher and the congregation. McClure (1995, p. 20) argues that this type of relationship is characterized by a lack of personal face-to-face interactions. He asserts:

In the case of the congregation a culture of anonymity develops, and *alienated* forms of clergy-laity relationship usually prevail... Leaders usually settle for hierarchical patterns of relationship that require a minimum of personal interaction. Preachers become lone prophets of a divinely Word and expect obedience, or at least compliance, once this Word has been spoken (McClure, 1995, p. 20).

McClure added that the wider the gap between the preacher and the congregation, the more formal, impersonal, and instrumental, centering on task accomplishment results can be obtained. In order to reduce this gap between the preacher and the congregation, at the other extreme, preacher and the congregation relationships can become *symbiotic*. However, McClure (1995, p. 21) claims that symbiotic relationships eventually allow preachers to assume that their congregations are extensions of their personality. He asserts:

The church and its mission are identified solely with the personality of the leader. Preaching feeds the “cult of personality”. Preachers globalize their own experience and identify the hearer’s personality with their own (McClure, 1995, p. 21).

Accordingly, McClure (1995, p. 21) suggests that preacher and congregation should establish a face-to-face relationship as a response to the vision of righteousness that prevails in Christian *koinonia* (partnership) rather than the preacher identifying the congregation as his own. McClure’s explanation (1995, p. 21) of the face-to-face relationship is as follows:

Face-to-face relationships are rooted in a profound respect of the other person as truly *other* rather than as an instrumental object or a self-projection. In face-to-face relationships, preachers and hearers do not relate to one another in order to achieve obedience or identification. Rather, they strive to “come to terms” with one another.

Therefore, what is important about face-to-face relationships is the equality of both parties, and the sharing of the ministry of preaching, rather than regarding the congregation as being in a lower position to the preacher.

#### **4.3.1.2 Participative Roles**

According to Oh (2004, p. 186), despite the fact that participation of the congregation in every area of the ministry is constantly increasing in the Korean church, the preacher is

exclusively dominant in the preaching ministry. This is because the participation of the congregation in the preaching ministry is understood to invade the preacher's own domain. Therefore, the participation of the congregation in the preaching ministry is very limited in the Korean church.

Dingemans (1996, p. 42) argues that "all people in the congregation live in a circle of communication and have the vocation to assist and help their fellow members." Unfortunately, there has been little opportunity for the congregation to use their vocation, and as a result, it has become natural that the congregation be excluded from preaching that is centered on the preacher, insisting the congregation play a passive role. In a situation such as this, one that is typical of a Korean church, McClure's argument (1995, pp. 19–20) is important:

Preachers must not stand on platforms and harangue congregations for being victims of privatization. Instead, we must slowly pry open the private realm by placing people face to face with one another in a context in which otherness, rather than homogeneity, is valued and taken seriously. We must help to recreate the church as a learning community where Christians share power and permit themselves to be instructed by one another's differences.

Therefore, preachers in Korean churches should consider the congregation an important partner in preaching, and allow them to participate in the preaching process. In order for the congregation to play a role in perceiving the Word that will be preached, McClure (1995, p. 21) points out that preachers should "revise their traditional understanding of the Word of God in preaching in several crucial ways." He understands the Word of God to be a communal Word, an emergent Word, and a "real" Word, which will be explained in 4.4.1 Understanding of the Word of God in *The roundtable pulpit*.

#### **4.3.1.3 Interactive Persuasion**

According to Pieterse (1987, p. 25), traditional preaching corresponds to the bow-and-arrow

model. Since Chevis F. Horne (1975, p. 21) says in his book, *Crisis in the Pulpit*, that “preaching, by its very nature, is communication”, the bow-and-arrow model seems to have lost the most basic concept of communication. James W. Cox (2002, p. 51) understands the purpose of traditional preaching to be “to get what is in the mind and heart of the preacher into the mind and heart of the hearer. This suggests that preaching is a one-way street, a one-dimensional kind of communication.”

The concept of persuasion in traditional preaching is, therefore, merely to have the preacher’s thoughts permeate the congregation. However, McClure (1995, p. 25) argues that persuasion, in contrast to how it is considered with respect to traditional preaching, is a two-way street, and that congregations may persuade preachers as well. He then points out that if the congregation’s freedom of choice is taken away from them, persuasion becomes *coercion*, and if the choice of the congregation is subconsciously and skillfully influenced, persuasion becomes manipulation. Therefore, McClure (1995, p. 25) makes the following argument to avoid such coercion and manipulation:

In face-to-face relationships, persuasive leaders learn to respect the spiritual freedom and power of the *other* in the communication process...Persuasion is not an action *on* someone, but an action *with* someone.

Thus, although the congregation has previously been persuaded only by the preacher, McClure suggested that the congregation could also persuade the preacher. This two-way persuasion between the preacher and the congregation revives the original meaning of face-to-face relationships.

#### **4.3.2 The limitation of sovereign, dialogue, and inductive forms of preaching**

The following three forms of preaching listed by McClure have been used extensively in the

preaching ministry. In particular, sovereign (traditional) preaching, which has influenced Korean churches for a long time, still remains in the Korean church. Kim (1999, p. 66) defines Korean preaching as follows:

The Korean preachers have kept almost the same characteristics in their sermons for the last one hundred years – a hierarchical understanding of the preacher’s authority, a topical three-point preaching style, a deductive structure, transmitting-ideas-style rather than experiencing the message, monologue-style communication, personal and spiritual content, and a proportional system in preaching.

The features of Korean preaching listed above imply preacher-centered preaching that excludes the congregation. Kim (2014, p. 4) also argues that “Korean preaching considers the preacher as the living oracle of God, the privileged speaker who conveys God’s Word to the community.” Thus, the congregation naturally perceives the preacher as having authority.

However, in recent years, inductive or narrative approaches have been introduced to Korean churches as an alternative to traditional forms of preaching. McClure (1995, p. 30) explains this as “a clear shift towards empowering forms of preaching and congregational leadership.” As a result, the importance of the congregation in preaching has begun to be considered in the Korean church.

McClure points out, however, that there are also limitations to inductive or narrative forms of preaching, giving weight to his own theory of preaching.

#### **4.3.2.1 Limitations of sovereign preaching**

As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest homiletical problems in the Korean church is hierarchical and preacher-centered preaching. In particular, as discussed in chapter 2, with the influence of Confucianism, which emphasizes an absolute obedience according to place or position in relation to others, the preacher has the same authority over his congregation as a

father does over his family. This stimulates the authoritarianism of the preacher, helping him to maintain a passive congregation.

McClure also points out the issue of sovereign and hierarchical preaching similar to the preaching situation of the Korean church, and asserts: “Sovereign leadership and sovereign preaching have come under severe criticism as potentially, if not inherently, authoritarian” (McClure, 1995, p. 37).

McClure (1995, p. 32) indicates sovereign preaching to be the result of hierarchical relationships:

A sovereign style from the pulpit suggests that people in the congregation related to their preachers as members of a spiritual hierarchy.

In particular, McClure (1995, p. 32) says that at least two aspects of hierarchy are practiced in preaching:

First, the congregation is placed in a position of dependence and submission...Second, a sovereign style communicates that relationships are built on emulation, obligation, and obedience.

Based on all of these aspects, McClure (1995, p. 37) claims that the fundamental issues with sovereign methods to preaching is that they do not “adequately represent the servant charisma, hospitality, and reciprocity, which are fundamental to an empowering Christian ministry.”

McClure (1995, p. 37) points out four problems that tend to result from sovereign styles of preaching and leadership:

- (1) The tendency to deny the relevance of the hearer’s experience in critically responding to the sovereign Word.

- (2) The tendency of “direct inspired utterance” to preclude communal interpretation of the Word.
- (3) The tendency of assertive rhetoric to become coercive rhetoric.
- (4) The tendency to foreclose on God’s transforming Word as fixed and final and to deny that this Word may change in new contexts.

In conclusion, it can be seen that the traditional preaching elements shown in sovereign preaching are at the limits of relevance and appropriateness in this era.

#### **4.3.2.2 Limitations of dialogue preaching**

The authoritarian pulpit is one of the biggest problems revealed not only in sovereign preaching mentioned above but also in the Korean church. McClure (1995, p. 40) asserts that the short-lived dialogue preaching movement in the 1960s is the initial result of the backlash against authoritarianism in the pulpit. He briefly explains dialogue preaching as follows:

Some preachers began to experiment with two-party dialogue sermons, postsermon feedback sessions, involvement of laity in sermon exegesis, removal of manuscripts and pulpits, and walk-around sermon delivery (McClure, 1995, p. 40).

Despite the various efforts of this dialogue preaching, McClure points out that it failed to gain a significant foothold in the church. In this regard, he presents several reasons:

In some instances preachers were insensitive, even authoritarianism, in the ways that they introduced dialogue preaching in their congregations. Congregants were suddenly confronted by a preacher walking up and down the aisles “self-disclosing” within inches of their faces. Sometimes two-party dialogues exasperated congregations by appearing contrived and exclusive. While two preachers engaged in a staged dialogue, members of the congregation felt as if they had been sent offstage and were merely overhearing a pastoral conversation. Feedback sessions often became gripe sessions or back-patting sessions. Little effort was made to include feedback in forthcoming sermons (McClure, 1995, p. 40).

In particular, in addition to the problems explained above, he points out a more fundamental problem as to why dialogue preaching failed: it did not discern the precise nature of dialogical speech. For this reason, McClure (1995, p. 40) presents the following questions:

- (1) How could preachers transform the actual principles of dialogue into the nuts-and-bolts of homiletical practice?
- (2) Given the monological character of preaching, what would the language of dialogue sound like in a sermon?
- (3) What kinds of logic and rhetoric would be inclusive of the experience and thoughts of the hearer?

In the end, the most fundamental failure of dialogue preaching was that, as is evident from the questions above, the preachers of the time attempted to apply it too hastily to the church without fully understanding the true nature of dialogue preaching. It was a form of dialogue that was seemingly plausible; however, it was still preacher-centered preaching.

#### **4.3.2.3 Limitations of inductive preaching**

The New Homiletic moves from a deductive process in preaching to an inductive one (Lowry, 1993, pp. 101–102). In particular, Craddock's book, *As One Without Authority*, made a pivotal contribution to this notable shift.

Craddock (1979, p. 54) remarks that deductive preaching, a typical feature of traditional preaching, is "a most unnatural mode of communication, unless, of course, one presupposes passive listeners who accept the right or authority of the speaker to state conclusions which he then applies to their faith and life." On the other hand, inductive preaching is a form of preaching that is created with the intention of approaching the Word by starting from the experience of life and sharing the experience with the congregation (Rhee, 2008, p. 285).

Therefore, unlike traditional preaching, this form of preaching does not regard the congregation as submissive listeners who accept the preacher's conclusions, but rather the congregation is seen as participating in the journey of preaching. The following figures show the difference between the deductive approach and the inductive approach to preaching:

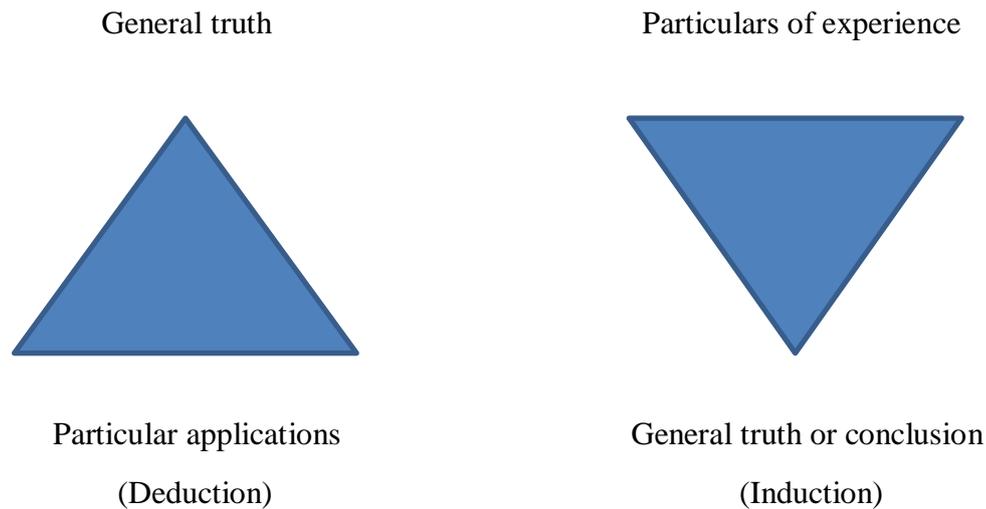


Figure 4. Different between deduction and induction

Source: Craddock, 1979, p. 57

Inductive preaching is based, not on a sudden appearance without any background, but on the limitations of traditional preaching and the failure of dialogue preaching to go beyond the limits of traditional preaching.

Along with inductive preaching, narrative preaching is also significant in the New Homiletic (Eslinger, 2002, p. 46). Lowry (1997, p. 23) defines narrative preaching as follows:

What identifies the usual narrative sermon most readily is its plot form, which always - one way or another - begins with a felt *discrepancy* or conflict, and then makes its way through *complication* (things always get worse), makes a decisively sharp turn or *reversal*, and then moves finally toward *resolution* or closure.

Both inductive and narrative forms of preaching are similar in that thought moves from the particular to the general. According to McClure (1995, p. 41), “the narrative preaching supported by Eugene Lowry in his classic book, *The Homiletical Plot*, is essentially a variation on Craddock’s inductive model.” He explains the basic similarity between inductive preaching and narrative preaching as follows: “In both instances, instead of beginning with conclusions, the preacher uses a form of logic that delays the arrival of the preacher’s ideas” (McClure, 1995, p. 41).

The preacher, especially in inductive and narrative preaching, leads the congregation to reach their own conclusions, rather than authoritatively injecting, or encouraging the coercive agreement with, that of the preacher’s, as is the case in traditional preaching. There is, however, a difference between these two forms of preaching, and McClure (1995, p. 41) explains this as follows:

Craddock’s form of delay is a series of spontaneous, experiential digressions that move toward a general conclusion. Lowry’s form of delay is a series of narrative detours that arrive at an experience of the Gospel.

McClure (1995, p. 42) gives a positive evaluation of Craddock’s inductive preaching and Lowry’s narrative preaching:

Inductive and narrative preaching have gone a long way toward overcoming some of the problems associated with sovereign preaching. They represent an important attempt to include the hearer in a more significant role in the preaching process.

However, there are three important issues that McClure points out with regards to inductive and narrative forms of preaching. The first issue is related to symmetrical preaching. Unlike traditional preaching, in which the relationship between the preacher and the congregation is hierarchical and vertical, McClure (1995, p. 42) sees the relationship between the preacher and the congregation in inductive and narrative preaching as symmetrical. This is because the

preacher allows the congregation to reach their own conclusions, and to participate in the journey of preaching with the preacher. Therefore, McClure (1995, p. 42) argues, “the preacher and hearer are in principle placed on equal ground in pursuit of clues to the solution of common problems.”

In particular, McClure (1995, p. 42) asserts that relational symmetry in inductive preaching has one fundamental premise: “the preacher can and must *identify* with hearers.” When the preacher identifies with the congregation, there is a symmetry of knowledge and experience between them. Because identifications are made, preacher and congregation can take the same inductive journey (McClure, 1995, p. 42).

This symmetrical relationship is positive on the one hand, because it has led the passive congregation to become active participants in preaching. However, McClure (1995, p. 43) argues that there are limitations to this symmetrical relationship:

In symmetrical relationships, however, what is often missing is the sense of how *different* the experience of someone else may in fact be. The urge for symmetry can preclude the experience of the other as truly *other*. When this is the case, the preacher easily overlooks either the unique gifts of those who seem similar to the preacher yet are, in reality, very different, or the unique gifts of those on the margins who are clearly very different from the preacher.

According to McClure, there is a concern that the experience of congregations which are not similar to those of the preacher, may not be acknowledged for their worth. McClure (1995, p. 43) further argues:

The assumption that the hearer is “like me” may preclude the realization that the hearer can be (temporarily) ‘above’ me – not as partner but as teacher. Both the temporary inequality of the preacher and the temporary inequality of the hearer can be sacrificed in inductive preaching.

The second issue concerns congregations drawing their own conclusions. Unlike traditional preaching, which limits the role of the congregation to be merely a recipient of the Word, inductive preaching enables the congregation to draw their own conclusions from what is preached through a mutual interaction between the preacher and the congregation. However, the problem with inductive preaching is that, as McClure (1995, p. 44) argues, “unified commitments are less important than unique personal insights.”

Charles L. Campbell (1997, p. 135), in his book, *Preaching Jesus*, also indicates a clearly individualistic tendency of inductive sermons and insists:

The purpose of open-ended, inductive preaching is to allow individuals the freedom to experience the sermon for themselves, to feel their own feelings and think their own thoughts. The focus of preaching is finally the individual hearer. Each person is to draw his or her own conclusion.

Thus, inductive preaching, which emphasizes the individual’s understanding, will limit the building and sustaining of communities of faith (Thompson, 2000, p. 14). McClure (1995, pp. 44–45) adds:

Whereas sovereign preaching foregoes communal discernment of the Word for the efficiency of individual prophetic discernment, inductive preaching forgoes communal discernment for the creativity of multiple individual insights. Neither sovereign nor inductive forms of preaching, therefore, adequately address the need for genuinely communal approach to discerning and articulating the truth claims of the gospel in preaching.

Lastly, unlike the rhetoric in sovereign preaching, which was known to be rhetoric of assertion and defense (McClure, 1995, p. 35), McClure calls rhetoric used in inductive and narrative preaching “persuasion by problem solving.” The reason is that the preacher uses stories and images as hints to a resolution, rather than directly informing the congregation of the solution to a problem. As a result, the congregation is allowed to draw their own

conclusions (McClure, 1995, pp. 45–46).

McClure (1995, p. 46) asserts that when one attempts to persuade using this type of rhetoric, on the one hand, the congregation is involved in the preacher's preaching journey, and solutions to problems often come from beyond a common frame of reference. However, on the other hand, when trying to persuade using this type of rhetoric, there is a negative side:

The most significant weakness of problem-solving rhetoric is that it can be manipulative... The preacher empathizes with the hearer's feelings and experiences but still makes ultimate decisions about sermon topics and how the homiletical journey should proceed. The spontaneity and partnership of truly participatory dialogue is lost. Instead of actually participating in the sermonic process, the hearer is simply being brought along on a pre-established homiletical trip (McClure, 1995, p. 46).

As pointed out above, the congregation seems to have been considered in the preaching journey, but in reality, they have been manipulated and induced into responding as the preacher intended.

Overall, inductive preaching is positive in that it pays attention to a congregation that had been excluded from preaching in the past. However, the congregation is still likely to be confined to the limits of the preacher.

#### **4.4 Understanding the three elements of preaching in *The Roundtable Pulpit***

As mentioned in chapter 2, most homileticians agree that there are four essential elements in preaching: God (or the Holy Spirit), the Word of God, the preacher, and the congregation. It was discussed in Chapter 2 that all four of these elements fulfill their unique functions in

relation to each other. In this section, the researcher will examine McClure's understanding of each element in the roundtable. In particular, three elements related to preaching will be discussed: the Word of God, the preacher, and the congregation. With an explanation of each three elements in the roundtable, collaborative preaching will be more clearly understood.

#### **4.4.1 Understanding the Word of God in *The Roundtable Pulpit***

As discussed in Section 4.3.1.2, in the traditional understanding of the Word of God, the participation of the congregation in the discernment of the Word of God is considered to invade the preacher's own domain. As a result, the participation of the congregation in the preaching ministry has been very limited. As such, McClure (1995, p. 21) argues that the traditional understanding of the Word of God should be revised in order for the congregation to play a role in perceiving the Word that will be preached. The following sections will present three ways in which McClure understands the Word of God.

##### **4.4.1.1. A communal Word**

An interpretation of the Word of God has been regarded as the private property of the preachers and an elite corps of biblical interpreters. McClure (1995, p. 22) also points out that "contemporary preachers act under the explicit or implicit assumption that they are commissioned as professional interpreters and proclaimers". As a result, the congregation has become passive, relying only on the wisdom of commissioned preachers, in a church unique in its approach to building a community of the Word.

Not only is this contradictory to the concept of the Reformation, the priesthood of all believers, but it also contradicts the idea conveyed by a number of biblical and historical precedents in which the community, rather than individuals, should determine the Word of God (McClure, 1995, pp. 21–22). Therefore, McClure (1995, p. 23) argues that, "the Word of

God is a communal Word when it is discerned, not from the center of the community by professional preachers, but from the margins of the community by a collaboration of everyday preachers who are developing as maturing Christian disciples”.

#### **4.4.1.2 An emergent Word**

As discussed above, a communal Word is a conversation about the Word of God among members of a community. McClure (1995, p. 23) claims that an emergent Word is one that emerges from the give-and-take of conversations that aim to seek the meaning and purpose of the gospel. Thus, this emergent Word cannot be an individual *mandate* or *insight*. McClure (1995, p. 24) asserts:

Members of the community of the Word decide on ways to stand *with* and stand *for* one another by claiming tentative directions of thought and action as God’s Word.

Therefore, an understanding of the emergent Word, revealed through dialogue with members of the community, indicates that the participation of the congregation is essential in the preaching process.

#### **4.4.1.3 A “real” Word**

McClure (1995, p. 24) defines the Word of God as follows: “The Word of God is an enfleshed, incarnate Word, not an abstract or esoteric Word.” Based on this definition, collaborative proclamation is designed to bring reality into the pulpit, and therefore, sermons should be about what happens in the congregation (McClure, 1995, p. 24).

McClure (1995, p. 24) argues that if interpretation of the diverse experience of the gospel is excluded from preaching, the Word of God may not only lose its authenticity, but it may also become meaningless “sound and fury”.

#### 4.4.2 Understanding the preacher in *The Roundtable Pulpit*

According to Long (1989, p. 11), it is very important for preachers to understand themselves and their roles in relation to the whole community of faith. The reason for this is that the direction of the preaching ministry is entirely dependent on how the preacher understands himself and his role. Rose (1997, p. 14) insists on the following understanding of the preacher in traditional preaching:

Traditional homiletical theory envisions the preacher as the authority figure whose main duty is to tell people what to believe and why they should believe it.

This traditional understanding of the preacher creates a wide gap between the preacher and the congregation, resulting in a hierarchical church structure which strengthens the authority given to the preacher. This is the root cause of authoritarianism in the Korean church, as mentioned in the previous chapter.

McClure (1995, p. 38) emphasizes that “hierarchy should not become a fixed form of leader-follower relationship in the church.” Additionally, several contemporary homileticians agree that “the preacher comes not from God, but from the community to which the congregation belongs” (Lee, 2002, p. 201). In this regard, McClure defines the preacher as a host, which is a reflection of his homiletical theory. McClure (1995, p. 51) explains “the preacher as host” as follows:

*The preacher is a host* who opens access to the pulpit to those whose interpretations and experiences may be very different. The preacher listens, reflects, argues, and agrees, satisfied all the while to be the “last” instead of the “first” at the roundtable to receive and communicate the divine Word.

As explained above, the preacher, presented by McClure in *The Roundtable Pulpit*, is a host who encourages the congregation to actively participate in roundtable conversations.

McClure (1995, p. 49) asserts: “Leaders would create roundtable conversations designed to provide opportunities for laity to interpret the gospel and make their voices heard in ways that can have an impact on the congregation’s identity and mission.”

As a host of this roundtable conversation, he argues that the preacher should ask three general questions (McClure, 1995, pp. 49–50):

- (1) *What* are people really talking about?
- (2) *How* are they speaking to one another?
- (3) What influence should I have in either of these areas in order to empower people as interpreters and agents of Christian mission?

These three questions reveal that the role of the preacher is not to present the objectives of the church from a distance through sovereign declaration or an inductive journey, but rather to collaborate with members of the congregation, stimulating conversations in response to biblical messages so that the community can experience its own congregational life and mission (McClure, 1995, p. 50). In fact, when the preacher is considered a host, he is seen only as the one who opens the conversation of the congregation. In case of a misunderstanding, McClure (1995, p. 54) clarifies:

Preachers are not only instructed by others at the table. It is essential that preachers assert their own instructive “otherness” as well. Preachers choose moments to express clearly their premises and thoughts. Otherwise the preacher would not be a presence *in the homiletical conversation*, only a referee or facilitator *of the conversation*.

As explained above, the preacher is not a referee or facilitator, but an active participant in roundtable conversation with the congregation. He is not a person who is distinguished from the congregation, but a person who belongs to the congregation and preaches the Word of God based on roundtable conversations. McClure (1995, p. 54) explains how true leadership of the preacher should be exercised:

Preachers, as ministers of the Christian church, ensure that the homiletical conversation is rooted in the gospel story and focused on the mission of the church. They exercise leadership both by *welcoming* all followers as equals and by *engaging* them deeply *in* conversation about Jesus Christ and what it means to be a Christian in today's world.

#### 4.4.3 Understanding the congregation in *The Roundtable Pulpit*

In *The Roundtable Pulpit*, the congregation is understood in terms of the word *collaboration*. McClure (1995, p. 48) explains the meaning of the word in collaborative preaching as follows:

The word collaboration means “working together.” It implies a form of preaching in which preacher and hearer work together to establish and interpret the topics for preaching. They also decide together what the practical results of those interpretations might be for the congregation.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in traditional preaching, the congregation is only ever dependent on and obedient to the preacher. As a result, the congregation does not *have* an identity and a form of religious experience; these are *given* to them by the preacher (McClure, 1995, p. 33). However, in collaborative preaching, the fact that the congregation sets the topics for preaching together with the preacher, and the fact that they help to decide the practical results of their interpretation of the Word, demonstrates that the congregation is regarded as a true partner in preaching.

McClure (1995, p. 53) explains the relationship between the preacher and the congregation in collaborative preaching as different to that in sovereign preaching and the inductive approach:

Preacher-hearer relationships in collaborative preaching are built not on honor and obedience (sovereign approach) or on trust and shared experience (inductive approach) but on justice and love. Justice is expressed as members of the congregation discover that they are equally

children of God who have important insights in the interpretation of the Bible and of spiritual experience. Love is expressed as hospitality in which welcoming means more than simply hearing from others, it means living in compassionate solidarity with others.

As discussed in Chapter 2, collaborative preaching approaches an understanding of the congregation that highlights the identity of the congregation as children of God, equal to the preacher. In this regard, Howe (1967, p. 43) makes the following assertion:

They should be participants because they are a part of the church, a part of the people of God! As such they are not meant to be passive recipients of, but active participants in, the witness of the church in the world.

In particular, the fact that “the preacher places a high value on the differences that exist in the community of faith” (McClure, 1995, p. 53) is an indication that each view and opinion of each member of the congregation is respected in collaborative preaching. This recreates the church as a learning community where members of the congregation share their insights for preaching. Thus, roundtable preaching recognizes the congregation as an important preaching partner and creates an environment in which the congregation can participate in preaching. McClure (1995, p. 54) describes this as follows.

In roundtable preaching both leader and follower, preacher and hearer are given an opportunity to express charismata (gifts) and to encounter one another as (provisionally) “above” each other in the role of partner-teacher.

Therefore, it is of great significance that the collaborative preaching has rediscovered the value of the congregation, which has often been regarded as subordinate to the preacher.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the changing view of Korean society towards authoritarianism, and

the impact of these changes on Korean churches. McClure's homiletical theory and its background was introduced to provide an alternative to authoritarian churches, in order to overcome the problem of the submissive role of the congregation in preaching.

Firstly, along with historical attempts to escape from the oppressive authoritarianism of Korean society, the recent impeachment of the former president through candlelight vigils, demonstrated the way in which Korean society currently feels about authoritarianism. The development of the Internet has assisted the spread of this discontentment towards authoritarianism throughout Korean society, and the Korean church is also affected by it. Distrust of the preacher has helped to create an environment in which authoritarianism in the Korean church is being challenged.

Secondly, in an effort to overcome authoritarianism in Korean churches, McClure's homiletical theory was introduced as an alternative. In particular, three criteria for forming a relationship between the preacher and the congregation were introduced: "*face-to-face relationships, participative roles in decision-making, and interactive forms of persuasion*" (McClure, 1995, p. 20). Based on these three criteria, homiletical limitations of sovereign preaching, dialogue preaching, and inductive preaching, were investigated in order to provide a background for the introduction of *The Roundtable Pulpit*, a collaborative approach to preaching.

Lastly, the most essential elements of preaching were examined: the Word of God, the preacher, and the congregation, as understood in *The Roundtable Pulpit*. With an understanding of each of these elements, the interpretation of the Word of God was seen to be, not the preacher's own domain, but open to all, with the preacher as host and the congregation contributing value to preaching.

In the following chapter, collaborative preaching and how this functions in the church will be examined. Positive and negative evaluations of McClure's *The Roundtable Pulpit* will also be

discussed. Finally, the limitations of applying McClure's homiletical theory to Korean churches will be reviewed.

# CHAPTER 5: A STUDY ON MCCLURE'S COLLABORATIVE HOMILETICAL METHOD

## 5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, homiletical limitations of sovereign preaching, dialogue preaching, and inductive preaching were investigated in order to provide a background for the introduction to *The Roundtable Pulpit*, McClure's collaborative approach to preaching. In Chapter 5, the definition of collaborative preaching as well as *the roundtable*, a symbol of collaborative preaching will be explained. In addition, the process of collaborative preaching and how it functions will be examined. Finally, both positive and negative evaluations of McClure's *The Roundtable Pulpit*, as well as the limitations of applying McClure's homiletical theory to Korean churches, will be discussed.

## 5.2 Collaborative preaching in *The Roundtable Pulpit*

### 5.2.1 The definition of collaborative preaching

As the word *collaborative* suggests, the most important feature of collaborative preaching is that the preacher and members of the congregation work together in preaching. McClure defines collaborating preaching in the preface of his book, *The Roundtable Pulpit* (1995, p. 7):

Collaborative preaching is a method that involves members of a congregation in sermon brainstorming. Preaching becomes a ‘rhetoric of listening’ through which the biblical interpretations and theological insights of the congregation find a voice in the pulpit.

Collaboration between preacher and congregation comes about as a result of conversations about preaching, from topics of preaching to interpretation of the Bible. Collaborative preaching allows for the voices of the congregation, originally excluded in preaching, to be heard. McClure (2007, p. 13) explains how this works in another of his books, *Preaching Word*:

Collaborative preachers form small groups of laypersons, from within and outside the church, who meet with the preacher to discuss biblical, theological, and experiential materials for the upcoming sermon.

The roundtable conversation with the congregation, serving as sermon brainstorming sessions, plays a crucial role in solving the problems of traditional preaching. McClure (1995, p. 7) argues further:

When used over a period of time, collaborative preaching empowers members of a congregation to claim as their own the ideas, forms of religious experience, and theological vision articulated from the pulpit. Preaching, therefore, becomes a focal point for congregational self-leadership and mission.

Thus, in contrast to traditional preaching, in which everything preaching-related is dominated by the preacher, collaborative preaching provides an opportunity for the congregation to participate in preaching, encouraging various voices of the congregation to be directly reflected in preaching.

## 5.2.2 Images of the roundtable in collaborative preaching

The roundtable, where conversation related to preaching takes place, is a symbol for the equal value of all voices in collaborative preaching. McClure describes the roundtable as ‘the biblical image’ and ‘the homiletical image’, and an understanding of these images will shed some light on what the roundtable seeks to achieve with collaborative preaching.

### 5.2.2.1 The biblical image of the roundtable

Homileticians have focused attention on the image of the preacher as a charismatic form of authority in the pulpit (McClure, 1995, p. 28). However, today, such images represent authoritarianism of the preacher. Unlike this particular image, McClure (1995, p. 29) sees the preacher as *a host* who welcomes all with at the roundtable, where everyone enters into dialogue so that the Word of God for the community might be discerned. In particular, McClure (1995, p. 29) compares the roundtable with the Lord’s table:

The roundtable of proclamatory discernment and the Lord’s table of spiritual nourishment are coextensive. The table is at the heart of Christian hospitality. Part of the host’s role is to keep the pulpit and the Lord’s table in as close proximity as possible. Indeed, the highest symbolic expression of the communal Word of God in preaching is the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The Table of the Lord is a sign that God is present in and through the communion of very different persons who share Christ’s body and blood.

All conversations and sacramental actions that occur at the *table*, which is at the heart of Christian hospitality are, as McClure (1995, p. 29) insists, “both a liturgical and ecclesial acts in which all are welcomed to the pulpit-table of Jesus Christ.”

### 5.2.2.2 The homiletical image of the roundtable

McClure (1995, pp. 50–52) explains that the image of the roundtable implies at least five

crucial aspects of collaborative preaching:

(1) The preacher as host

The preacher is a host who provides all people, no matter their different interpretations and experiences, entry to the pulpit. The preacher, satisfied with being the last instead of the first to contribute to conversation at the roundtable, listens, reflects, argues, and agrees.

(2) A communal event

Roundtable conversations are communal. The voices of every single community member come together at the roundtable.

(3) No favored voice

Each voices is treated with equal respect at the roundtable.

(4) An open process

Roundtable conversation is open-ended, meaning there is no closure to the homiletical conversation. The fact that the roundtable conversation never ends, even if its participants change, is in harmony with the idea that no interpretation of the gospel is ever concluded.

(5) A process with a purpose

Roundtable conversation has a purpose: the putting forward of proposals for the meaning and implication of the gospel for the congregation.

### 5.2.3 A preacher equipped for collaborative preaching

According to McClure, there are several commitments that preachers should make in order to be properly equipped for collaborative preaching. Once these commitments have been made, McClure (1995, p. 17) argues that preachers will be better able to form meaningful spiritual connections between their communities and the world. McClure proposes that preachers make the following four commitments:

Firstly, preachers should attempt, with their preaching, to reconnect the public with the private realm (McClure, 1995, p. 17). Rather than being satisfied with living sheltered lives, preachers should encourage unique and strange interpretations of the gospel by seeking out strangers, both within the church and outside of it, with which to have teaching-learning encounters (McClure, 1995, p. 17). McClure (1995, pp. 17–18) believes preachers should do this, not because it appears contemporary and inclusive, not even simply to make preaching more relevant, but because the Word of God becomes known when real people endeavor to identify and declare their harmony with Christ.

Secondly, preachers should never proclaim Christ as if the redemptive work of Christ is exclusively linked to a selective history of salvation (McClure, 1995, p. 18). Homiletical imaginations of the preacher should be broad enough to accommodate the complexities of both their inner world and the one they share with the public. In order to achieve this, McClure (1995, p. 18) argues, “the focus of preaching should move from the center of the Christian community to its margins, from the pastor’s study to the sanctuary door.” McClure (1995, p. 18) adds, “Such preaching struggles to discern what the redemptive power of the Christian story is in *this* world and in *this* history.”

Third, Preachers should oppose every attempt to domesticate both God and Christian religious experience. McClure (1995, pp. 18–19) believes the God whom preachers preach does not tolerate any attempt within the culture or the church to privatize the gospel

message. Therefore, in preaching, the Word of God should be allowed to critique any aspect of the culture of privatism in which we live, and preachers should declare that there is a clear difference between public faith and privatized religion (McClure, 1995, p. 19). In order to overcome the weight of privatization, McClure (1995, p. 19) asserts the following:

We must demonstrate continuously the deep, transformative relationship between the historic symbols of the Christian faith and the realities of our public life...Preachers must show how Christian symbols reach out and encompass not only the community of the baptized, but also all of those who breathe the same air that we breathe.

Lastly, preachers should “preach in such a way that the church becomes a community of both ecclesial and public memory” (McClure, 1995, p. 19). Preaching should not only commemorate the church’s and its congregations’ history, it should also reject privatism, and thus, remember the broader social and cultural issues raised (McClure, 1995, p. 19).

In conclusion, McClure’s suggestions for the preacher to keep in mind for collaborative preaching are the avoidance of privatization of the gospel message and preacher-centered preaching, as well as the standing of the preacher at the boundary of their community, in order to include the voices of various people, even those beyond the church.

#### **5.2.4 The process of collaborative brainstorming for collaborative preaching**

As previously mentioned, collaborative preaching encourages the congregation to engage in sermon brainstorming, so that various voices of the congregation are directly reflected in preaching. In order to conduct sermon brainstorming sessions, adequate time is required to prepare for them. McClure (1995, p. 59) argues:

As you do this, try to be clear that this is not merely an experimental form of preaching. You do not plan to use it for a short period of time and then move on to something else. Commit

yourself and your congregation to this form of preaching as your ongoing homiletical method. Let them know that the long-term fruits of this approach for the vitality of the entire congregation are far more important than its short-term impact on Sunday morning.

McClure (1995, p. 60) insists that collaborative preaching arises naturally out of a collaborative process of sermon brainstorming. He has detailed each practical stage of this sermon brainstorming in order to encourage the community of faith to attempt this form of preaching. He calls the process *the sermon roundtable*, and details it as follows:

### **(1) Preparation**

McClure puts the most weight on the role of the preacher in the preparation phase. Basic research on the section of the Bible to be preached is the most fundamental task of the preacher in preparing for the sermon. The same is true for preparation of the roundtable discussion of the sermon, where the preacher shares the biblical material he has studied with members of the sermon roundtable. McClure (1995, p. 60) describes the preparation undertaken by the preacher for the sermon roundtable as follows:

Before taking a seat at the sermon roundtable, the preacher completes a thorough study of the biblical material for this Sunday's sermon. By virtue of the preacher's seminary training or the special training provided for most lay preachers, members of the sermon roundtable will look to the preacher to provide clarifications and insights along the way, based on exegetical and theological expertise. At the sermon roundtable, the preacher also represents the history, doctrine, and current theology of the church and of a particular denominational tradition.

### **(2) Hosting**

McClure (1995, pp. 60–61) describes the role of the preacher as the official host of the sermon roundtable as follows: First, the preacher welcomes the participants, then he reminds new participants that the upcoming sermon will be based on the conversation with

participants at the sermon roundtable. The preacher then encourages the participants to discuss the biblical text to be preached honestly and candidly. Lastly, the preacher ensures that the participants are aware of the fact that confidentiality is respected in the pulpit.

### **(3) The co-host**

McClure argues for the need for co-hosts to help disperse the work that is expected of a preacher in conducting the sermon roundtable efficiently. McClure (1995, p. 61) explains the role of co-hosts as follows:

It is necessary to appoint a co-host to handle the ongoing work of inviting new members to attend the sermon roundtable, making sure that preaching texts have been given out to group members well in advance, posting meeting times, publicizing and promoting involvement in the sermon roundtable, keeping a record of the names of participants, and guiding group discussions.

Co-hosts save the preacher time spent on administrative work and also help him to focus his concentration on the conversation of the sermon roundtable. The role of co-hosts in the sermon roundtable is to guide the group process, ensuring that all appropriate matters are dealt with in the allotted time. McClure (1995, p. 61) recommends that a preacher appoint a co-host once or twice a year.

### **(4) Membership**

McClure (1995, pp. 61–62) argues that members of the sermon roundtable should include men and women of various backgrounds, interests, and ages without any restrictions, especially those who are members of the church, including church staff, and those who are frequent visitors, as well as those who are not Christians, but who live or work in nearby communities.

McClure (1995, p. 62) then suggests that the members of the sermon roundtable be no more than ten at a time, so that everyone present has the opportunity to speak, and that the members change regularly, every four months. McClure (1995, p. 62) explains the reasons for this:

There are two reasons to keep the group changing. First, by changing members regularly, you will include the perspectives of more people, and more combinations of people... Second, it broadens the influence of the group. One significant result of congregational involvement in sermon roundtable is that participants learn to listen for their own input and the input of others in every sermon. This activates their interest in, and accountability for, what is said from the pulpit.

#### **(5) Publicity**

McClure (1995, p. 63) asserts that members who participate in the sermon roundtable should be publicized in a visible space so that the congregation can provide feedback on the sermon to the members before the next sermon roundtable meeting. McClure (1995, p. 64) explains, “This helps sermon roundtable members to take ownership of what is preached, and it involves the congregation in a process of communal accountability for the preached Word.”

#### **(6) Preaching texts**

Notifying members of the roundtable of the preaching text is a task of the co-host. McClure (1995, p. 64) emphasizes that members of the roundtable have a sense of the preaching text in advance so that they have time to prepare. He argues the following:

The co-host should make sure that members of the roundtable have a list of forthcoming biblical texts well in advance. If the lectionary is used, the co-host should note which of the lectionary texts will be preached. If the members of the roundtable decide which texts to preach, they should do so at least two weeks in advance so that ample time is provided for

preparation (McClure, 1995, p. 64).

McClure (1995, p. 64) claims that members who prepare to discuss the preaching text in advance will, eventually, provide useful material for group discussion.

## **(7) Group dynamics**

McClure explains that several conditions are required to ensure appropriate group dynamics at the sermon roundtable. The conditions McClure (1995, pp. 64–66) proposes are as follows:

### **① Brainstorming rather than preparation**

McClure (1995, p. 65) stresses that the purpose of the sermon roundtable is not preparation for the sermon, but the brainstorming of members' thoughts.

Sermon roundtables should be free and open discussions...The group's only task is to brainstorm: to reflect honestly and candidly on the biblical text in relation to their understandings of God, the Christian tradition, their own experience and the mission of their congregation (McClure, 1995, p. 64).

In addition, he insists that elements interfering with the conversation, such as recording the conversation, or writing down elements of the conversation on a blackboard or butcher paper, should not be allowed without the group's consent (McClure, 1995, p. 65).

### **② Avoiding Stereotypes**

McClure (1995, p. 65) suggests that the preacher discourage participants from "putting words into the mouths" of others. If the response of someone who is not at the roundtable is absolutely necessary, it is possible to call on them to discuss this topic on the phone, or invite

them to the next meeting. McClure (1995, p. 65) adds that the preacher should also “ask participants to refer, as much as possible, to specific, concrete experiences and not to generalized ‘typical’ experience, especially when appealing to those who are not present.”

### ③ Listening for side conversations

McClure (1995, p. 65) argues that side conversations, occurring after the end of the roundtable conversation, are important as they represent the beginning of the feedback process on the week’s collaboration. Thus, McClure (1995, p. 66) asserts that if a trajectory of side conversations is better developed than the conversation from the sermon roundtable, it should be used for preaching.

### ④ Participation

McClure (1995, p. 66) encourages the group process to be led entirely by the co-host, so that the preacher is able to actively participate in roundtable conversation. He (1995, p. 66) makes the following suggestion to the preacher: “Share your own insights, commitments, passions, and concerns, not only as a pastor but as a person. You will discover your own conversational voice in the pulpit only as you hear yourself engaged in conversation. Be careful, however, not to dominate.”

## **(8) Group Timing**

McClure (1995, pp. 67–68) suggests dividing the conducting of the sermon roundtable into three parts, allocating each part a certain amount of time in order to complete the conversation in 90 minutes. In his book, *The Living Voice of the Gospel*, Cilliers (2004, p. 143) summarizes the questions presented by McClure to assist with the content covered in each part:

**Feedback / preliminaries (10 minutes)**

1. How similar was last Sunday's sermon to our previous discussion?  
Must we adapt our method?
2. What feedback, of which we should take note, did you hear from the congregation?

**Discourse with the biblical text (20 minutes)**

1. What questions do you have that are related to the historical context, words, or authorship of this specific text on which the sermon will be based?  
(The minister will play a leading role here, but must not be stereotypical in anticipation!)
2. Start a discussion with the author of the biblical text. What is he saying? How would you like to respond to him?
3. If the biblical text is in the form of a story, talk to the characters, but do not identify (too quickly) with them. How do you react to their deeds and words? What would you like to say to each character?
4. Note the type of language used in the biblical text. How does it affect and make you feel?  
How would you like to react to it?

**Discussion (60 minutes)**

1. Determining themes: Let the group identify biblical-text themes (from daily labour, church and personal worlds) which they would like to discuss. An 'open agenda' must be maintained.
2. Interpretation: Pay attention to how the group interprets the above-named themes; what in their opinion, is important for themselves, the church and the world?
3. Empowerment: Allow the group to identify with the themes. Give each a reasonable opportunity to speak from their hearts. Note underlying emotions. Provide the opportunity for people to tell their own and others' stories.
4. Justification. This part may not be avoided! The demands of the gospel, in ight of the biblical text, must be clearly understood and accepted. Ask: What difference can these matters make to ourselves, the Church and the world?
5. Practice: How do we switch all this into actions? What are our sources of help? What stumbling blocks may be presented?

## **(9) Review**

After the sermon roundtable and side conversations are complete, McClure (1995, pp. 69–70) recommends that the preacher individually review and make notes on the process. McClure (1995, p. 70) advises what the preacher should keep in mind when doing so:

Your notes should cover each aspect of the roundtable conversation. First note any relevant feedback that will have an impact on your sermon preparation. Second, identify any issues or problems that arose during the group's interaction with the biblical text. Finally, and most importantly, note the dynamics of the hour-long conversation during which group members engaged one another in conversation.

In using his review notes to prepare for the sermon, the preacher avoids omitting any important points covered in the sermon roundtable conversation. McClure (1995, p. 72) advises the preacher preparing the sermon as follows:

In your sermon you are free to use material from your own exegetical, theological, and cultural reading to help you rephrase, reorder, and embellish particular sequences of conversation. You are also free to take certain lines of conversation further than they were developed in the sermon roundtable. Be sure, however, to be true to the topics and dynamics of the sermon roundtable as you prepare your sermon.

## **5.3 The evaluation of *The Roundtable Pulpit***

In this section, evaluation of McClure's collaborative preaching in *The Roundtable Pulpit* will be discussed. Unlike traditional preacher-centered preaching, McClure's collaborative preaching encourages the congregation to participate in sermon brainstorming, and presents a sermon paradigm based on the community, without privileging any particular voice. In

particular, McClure encourages a face-to-face relationship between preacher and congregation in the sermon process.

Collaborative preaching has allowed for tremendous progress to be made in the understanding of the congregation. However, it is still unclear whether the role of the congregation described in theory can be practically exercised when collaborative preaching is applied to the church. In this regard, positive and negative evaluation of McClure's preaching theology in *The Roundtable Pulpit* is discussed, with respect to three elements: the preacher, the congregation, and the Word of God. Lastly, the limitations of applying collaborative preaching to the Korean church are anticipated.

### **5.3.1 The position of the preacher**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the preacher, presented by McClure in *The Roundtable Pulpit*, is a host who encourages the congregation to actively participate in roundtable conversations. McClure (1995, p. 49) asserts:

Leaders would create roundtable conversations designed to provide opportunities for laity to interpret the gospel and make their voices heard in ways that can have an impact on the congregation's identity and mission.

Based on this roundtable conversation, the preacher is not above the congregation, but he belongs to the congregation, and he delivers the Word of God emerging from roundtable conversation, on behalf of the congregation. This view of the preacher is unlike that in traditional preaching, where the preacher is regarded as the 'privileged speaker' who mediates the Word of God in the community. McClure's understanding of the preacher, however, is not one of a mediator who has all the answers. Instead, the preacher seeks a communal answer in the roundtable conversation with the congregation. Gross (1997, p. 226)

describes McClure's view of the preacher as follows:

McClure is suggesting a transformation in leadership style, from a vertical one where the preacher maintains all the power to a horizontal one where the whole people of God engage in the preaching ministry.

This understanding of the preacher highlights the necessity for collaborative work between the preacher and the congregation. If the preacher and the congregation do not work collaboratively to understand, interpret and apply the Word of God, it is possible that the preacher's own view will become the church's view. This presents a danger for the church if the preacher misinterprets the Word of God (cf. Cilliers, 2004, p. 136). Moreover, Cilliers (2004, p. 139) asserts:

Sermons – concrete sermons – are the treasure of the church, not the ministers' private property. After all, it is the congregation who must distinguish the spirits, also those who are active on the pulpit. Such a view of the preacher and the congregation is not exclusively dependent upon the charisma, or the lack thereof, of only the preacher. This counters the possibility that the preacher's concealed motives and intended judgments hold away. Within the congregation (and ecumene!) there are, indeed, enriching and controlling powers at work that can limit the tendency to individualize, at least, to a certain extent.

For this reason, McClure's understanding of the preacher is a positive one. Not only does the preacher listen to the thoughts of the congregation during roundtable conversation, and have his own understanding verified, revised, and strengthened by the various understandings of the congregation, but, as Cilliers argues above, collaborative preaching can prevent the possibility of the preacher's hidden motives and biased judgments influencing the congregation.

However, there can be negative aspects to the preacher as host. McClure (1995, p. 54) argues that when the preacher participates in roundtable conversation as the instructive "other" who

clearly expresses his premises and thoughts, the original intention of roundtable conversation is dishonored, and contributions from the congregation are not taken into account. Cilliers (2004, p. 136) asserts:

In a congregation, there are people with different views of God, which they built up over the years, inter alia by reading the Bible and hearing sermons about the Bible. These congregational perceptions are a reality which we, in preaching, cannot or may not disregard.

On the other hand, if the preacher is not involved enough, it is possible that a distorted interpretation may dominate. The various interpretations of the congregation should be respected, but the preacher's position, which mediates interpretation against Christian norms of appropriateness, cannot be overlooked. In conclusion, success of the roundtable conversation depends on the preacher effectively adapting to this conversation.

### **5.3.2 The position of the congregation**

What is particularly noteworthy in *The Roundtable Pulpit* is that the congregation is regarded, not as passive listeners of the preacher, but as people of God who are able to offer intelligent interpretations of the Bible. In other words, collaborative preaching recognizes the congregation as an important preaching partner and creates an environment in which the congregation can participate in preaching. McClure (1995, p. 108) asserts: "Collaborative preaching empowers members of a congregation to become interpreters of biblical faith and partners in the mission of the church."

Therefore, the understanding of the congregation demonstrated in *The Roundtable Pulpit* opens up the opportunity for discovering the enormous possibilities and gifts that the congregation can bring to roundtable conversation. However, conversations with the congregation that do not involve a certain level of theological capability in the interpretation

of the Bible may not advance further, and may cause a disconnect between the preacher and the congregation (cf. Kwon, 2015, pp. 191–192). As a result, roundtable conversation may become a place where the preacher unilaterally teaches the congregation.

In conclusion, the preacher should be aware that the roundtable conversation is a brainstorming process where all voices of the congregation are valuable. Therefore, he should guide the conversation to share value, at the same time as ensuring that he does not widen the gap between himself and the congregation.

### **5.3.3 The position of the Word of God**

In *The Roundtable Pulpit*, McClure understands the Word of God to be an emergent communal reality (McClure, 1995, pp. 21–25). McClure’s understanding of the Word of God is positive in that the preacher and the congregation collaborate in understanding and interpreting the Word of God for the community through roundtable conversation, and as a result, the biblical interpretations and theological insights of the congregation find a voice in the pulpit.

McClure’s understanding of the Word of God may be useful in that it represents diversity in interpretation; however, Allen (1996, pp. 283–284) points out the following:

The preacher and collaborative group need to test the drift of their conversation against Christian norms of appropriateness and intelligibility. The voice of the people – no matter how egalitarian and collaborative – is not automatically the voice of God.

Additionally, there is a possibility that authority may be shifted from the Bible itself to the interpreter of the Bible. As a result, the congregation may become more reliant on plausible interpretations rather than on the Word of God itself. In addition, if the preacher takes on the

role as interpreter of the Word of God, correctly discerning the greater truth, his position may become one of introducing his interpretations to the congregation and seeking consent from the majority of the roundtable members.

In conclusion, the preacher should focus on a variety of interpretations by the community, along with his own interpretation; however, he should ensure that all interpretations take into account Christian standards when it comes to suitability, comprehensibility and the authority of the Bible.

#### **5.3.4 The limitations of applying collaborative preaching to the Korean church**

Since the introduction of The New Homiletic to the Korean church, there have been various attempts to overcome the limitations of traditional preaching by introducing other forms of preaching, such as inductive preaching and narrative preaching. Both forms give voice to a congregation that was excluded from preaching in the past. However, McClure (1995, p. 46) argues that these forms are manipulative in that they simply take the congregation along a pre-established homiletical path, instead of allowing the congregation to participate in the process of preaching.

The alternative, McClure's collaborative preaching, brings a tremendous obstacle to the pulpit of the Korean church. When the congregation works together with the preacher in the roundtable conversation to interpret and respond to biblical texts for preaching, Confucian culture and authoritarianism of preachers, both common in the Korean church, are challenged.

The desire for a new preaching paradigm may not even exist, as the majority of Korean churches strive to maintain traditional forms of preaching, such as deductive and preacher-centered preaching. Heo (2015, p. 138) asserts:

Applying McClure's homiletics in the Korean Presbyterian context will have to be a careful attempt. The religious culture of the Korean context and the authority of the church have been mixed during the long history of the Confucianism-based society. A similarity of Korean Confucianism and Reformed/Presbyterian is that they are both 'conservative'. They emphasize the importance of traditional instruction and do not have flexibility to converse with other theologies. They want to keep their tradition as it is.

Since collaborative preaching is a form of preaching from a Western context, preachers and congregations, who have long been under the influence of a patriarchal hierarchy in a Confucian culture, may not be familiar with non-authoritarian, participatory and inter-persuasive conversations reflected by collaborative preaching.

The gap between the authoritative preacher and the congregation in the Korean church has resulted in a passive congregation finding comfort in a dependence on the preacher, rather than participating in the preaching process. Therefore, moving towards collaborative preaching may cause confusion among the congregation, and as a result, sufficient advanced preparation is necessary for roundtable conversation.

In conclusion, in order to apply collaborative preaching to the Korean church, the congregation is required to shift their role as passive listeners to active participants in the process of preaching. The preacher is also responsible for recognizing the congregation as a partner in preaching, and helping to narrow the gap between themselves and their congregation. This is the starting point from which to adopt a collaborative approach to preaching.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the process of collaborative preaching was examined to form an

understanding of how it operates in *The Roundtable Pulpit*.

Firstly, collaborative preaching was defined as a way to include members of the congregation in sermon brainstorming, by allowing them to participate in roundtable conversation. The biblical and homiletical image of the roundtable, a symbol of collaborative preaching, reveals that the voices of both the preacher and the congregation are equally valuable.

Secondly, the preacher's focus on voices of the community, was discussed as a means to assist the preacher to be better equipped for collaborative preaching, as well as to move away from the privatization of preaching. In addition, a detailed explanation of each practical stage of the sermon brainstorming process in collaborative preaching was provided.

Finally, an evaluation of collaborative preaching was discussed, focusing on the three most important elements of preaching: preachers, congregations, and the Word of God. The expected limitations to applying collaborative preaching to Korean churches was also investigated. It was decided that McClure's collaborative preaching is not yet sufficiently ready to be applied to most Korean churches. Therefore, it was recommended that the preacher in Korean churches create an environment in which the gap between preacher and congregation is narrowed, so that preaching becomes a collaborative process.

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

## 6.1 General Summary

This research paper underlined concerns with hierarchical and preacher-centered preaching in Korean churches. The congregation in Korean churches has been excluded from a form of preaching that is centered on the preacher, leaving the congregation in a passive role. In order to overcome homiletical problems arising from hierarchical and preacher-centered preaching in the Korean church, this research paper attempted to highlight the congregation as an important preaching partner, and present an environment in which the congregation is encouraged to participate in preaching, using McClure's homiletics. The hypothesis that McClure's collaborative preaching is a viable alternative to preacher-centered preaching was presented.

In order to shape an understanding of the congregation in preaching, the congregation was examined in relation to God, the Bible and the preacher. The key point in understanding the congregation is recognizing their value as people of God. However, the congregation is living in a world where faith in God is questioned and criticized. In this sense, they are in paradoxical tension with God and the world. The work of the Holy Spirit as well as the Bible was discussed as the means to transform the congregation, and mediate the paradoxical tension that exists. A further tension, hermeneutical tension between the congregation and the Bible, was also raised. Collaborative preaching, which encourages the congregation to participate in the interpretation of the Bible, was proposed to solve this difficulty.

Two perspectives on the relationship between the congregation and the preacher, a communicative relationship and a partnership, were discussed. These perspectives suggest that the work of the Holy Spirit in preaching is dependent on a properly-formed

communicative relationship between the preacher and the congregation, and that the congregation should be considered a partner in preaching.

Despite the congregation having the ability to play an important role in preaching, the traditional Korean Presbyterian church has been dominated by authoritarianism of the preacher. For this reason, the background and various causes of authoritarianism in the Korean church were examined.

Traditional Korean religions, Shamanism and Confucianism, had the greatest impact on the formation of authoritarianism in Korean churches. In fact, Shamanism and Confucianism were regarded as part of Korean culture beyond religion, and encouraged authoritarianism in Korean society as a whole. In particular, Korean vertical and collectivist culture originated from Confucianism, and this helped to create an environment for authoritarianism to thrive in the Korean church.

From a socio-historical point of view, Japanese colonial rule was examined as establishing an environment in which authoritarianism was easily accommodated in Korea. This authoritarianism was advanced during the military dictatorship era, which had an emphasis on hierarchy.

The preacher's attempt to distinguish himself from his congregation as a result of his ordination, together with the hierarchical structure of the Korean church, was discussed as further strengthening the authoritarianism of the preacher.

However, a social atmosphere that resists authoritarianism exists in this era, and its impact on Korean churches was examined. In particular, congregations, when considering Korean church reform, were shown to feel most strongly about undermining preachers' authoritarianism. Thus, McClure's homiletical theory was introduced to provide an alternative to authoritarian churches, in order to overcome the problem of the submissive role of the

congregation in preaching.

McClure's three criteria for forming a relationship between the preacher and the congregation were introduced: "*face-to-face relationships, participative roles in decision-making, and interactive forms of persuasion*" (McClure, 1995, p. 20). Based on these three criteria, homiletical limitations of sovereign preaching, dialogue preaching, and inductive preaching, were examined, in order to provide a background for the introduction of *The Roundtable Pulpit*, a collaborative approach to preaching.

The most fundamental elements of preaching, the Word of God, the preacher, and the congregation, as understood in *The Roundtable Pulpit*, were investigated in comparison to traditional preaching. With an understanding of each of these elements, the interpretation of the Word of God was seen to be, not the preacher's own domain, but open to all, with the preacher as host and the congregation contributing value to preaching. Therefore, collaborative preaching was found to realize value in the congregation.

In contrast to traditional preaching, in which everything preaching-related is dominated by the preacher, collaborative preaching was defined as a way to include members of the congregation in sermon brainstorming, by allowing them to participate in roundtable conversation. A detailed explanation of each practical stage of the collaborative preaching process was provided.

Ultimately, this research paper focused on three essential elements of preaching: the preacher, the congregation, and the Word of God, and in so doing, evaluated the positive and negative aspects of collaborative preaching. Based on this evaluation, the anticipated limitations of applying collaborative preaching to Korean churches was also examined.

This research paper concluded that McClure's collaborative preaching should only be applied to Korean churches when an environment that narrows the gap between the preacher and the

congregation is created.

## 6.2 Suggestions for the research

Many limitations to applying collaborative preaching to the Korean church were discussed. Since authoritarianism and hierarchical images of preachers have widened the gap between the preacher and the congregation in the Korean church, moving towards collaborative preaching without reducing this gap may cause confusion among the congregation. Therefore, some suggestions for narrowing this gap, in order to effectively apply collaborative preaching to the Korean church, will be discussed.

Firstly, the preacher should disregard any feelings of being distinguished from the congregation in a hierarchical, top-down, authoritarian fashion. This distorted sense of authority on the part of the preacher creates a dependent and submissive congregation. Rather than being spiritually inferior to the preacher, the congregation, like the preacher, are people of God, and the Holy Spirit is given equally to both. Cilliers (2004, p. 135) points out the following:

The Spirit was not given only to the preacher, but also to the congregation. The preacher's charisma is good, but the sum total of gifts that the Spirit gives to the congregation, is better.

Therefore, the preacher should behave, not as if he is *above* the congregation, but rather, in a way that demonstrates he is *from* the congregation.

Secondly, the physical space between pulpit and pew in the Korean church can also influence the gap between the preacher and the congregation. In the traditional Korean Presbyterian Church, the seat of the preacher is on the pulpit, clearly distinguished from the pew. This pulpit is often much higher than the congregation, overlooking them. It may be argued that the physical space between pulpit and pew is necessary in order to preach. However, it is not

necessary for preacher to sit on the pulpit at all times, reinforcing the distinction between preacher and congregation as the ‘ordained’ and the ‘ordinary’. The church is defined simply as a Christian gathering. Horne (1975, p. 74) asserts:

The church is God’s people, to do God’s work, in God’s world. The church, as the people of God, is people rather than institution-oriented. It is mobile rather than static.

As such, the image of the church as a space where people can gather, such as a classroom or even a café, has attracted attention in this era. Rather than a traditional church space, where the preacher and the congregation are strictly separated, this image paints the preacher in a friendly light and reduces the gap between the preacher and the congregation.

Thirdly, the role of the preacher should not be confined to the church. In fact, preachers are often less exposed to the secular world than the congregation because they focus primarily on work related to church responsibilities, such as preparation for sermons, as well as prayer and ministry meetings. As a result, the preacher often has a limited understanding of the congregation, unless he experiences the challenges faced by that congregation directly, by standing in liminal space with them. To this end, the preacher’s participation in voluntary services or part-time work can be an effective way to better understand congregational life, and to reduce the paradoxical tension the congregation faces with God and the world. Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles, was a tentmaker.<sup>17</sup> His successful combination of ministry work and tentmaking allowed him the opportunity to participate in the lives of the congregation. This can serve to reduce the gap between the preacher and the congregation.

Lastly, the preacher and the congregation should have frequent social encounters so that they can communicate with one another comfortably. The bigger the church, the more difficult it becomes to meet and communicate with the preacher beyond the formal meetings of the

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<sup>17</sup> *“and because he was a tentmaker, as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks”* (Act 18:3-4, NIV)

church. For this reason, it is difficult for the congregation to see the preacher as a fellow human being, rather than a holy fantasy, which inevitably widens the gap between the preacher and the congregation. According to Cilliers (2012, p. 176), people, including preachers often make an effort to see themselves as superior, as they feel this empowers them. However, it is necessary for the preacher to remove this mask and approach the congregation in a human manner. When the preacher is honest and shows vulnerability in this inter-facing, he forms a deeper connection with his congregation, narrowing the gap between himself and the congregation. Cilliers (2012, p. 177) asserts the following:

One may face others without in fact revealing one's true face. Genuine inter-facing, however, takes place with the willingness for inter-forming, the openness to being fundamentally changed in the process. Inter-facing is not about manipulating others to adopt one's own image; it is not merely mirroring one's own face. Rather, inter-facing involves being open to transformation in the encounter with others. It is not about cloning, but about *kenosis*, about giving and losing oneself for the sake of others and, in the process, also finding and discovering oneself. In this sense, truly facing others is an enactment of the foolishness of Christ, who gave and lost himself for the sake of others.

### **6.3 Contribution of the research**

This research paper indicates the importance of the congregation in preaching, and recommends that the perception of the congregation be changed to one of a preaching partner, participating in the preaching process.

Secondly, this research paper uncovers the history of preacher authoritarianism in the Korean church, from the perspectives of traditional Korean religions, Korean socio-history and the Korean church itself. It also demonstrates the serious effects of this authoritarianism, and reveals criticism to it.

Lastly, this research paper indicates the expected limitations of applying collaborative

preaching to the Korean church, and makes suggestions for reducing the gap between preacher and congregation in order to create an environment in which the congregation can effectively participate in preaching.

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