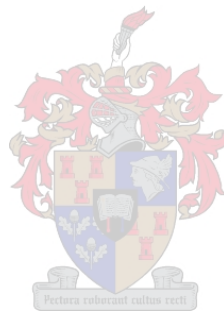


CHRISTIAN COMMUNICATION IN KOREA: A HOMILETICAL ASSESSMENT

by

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at the University of Stellenbosch**

Promoter: Prof Dr. J H Cilliers

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is intended to assess Christian communication in the light of the conundrum of sermonic language originating from Korean pulpits. In Korea, preaching is valued highly: almost everyone is aware that preaching is a crucial issue in Christian communication. In the light of communicative preaching, a sermon is composed of three “languages,” namely the language of God, the preacher, and the congregation. The language of the sermon is an important locus of effective communication through preaching. In spite of this point, many Korean preachers preach their sermons regardless of what influence the sermonic language exercises on communicative preaching, without recognizing the change of the context of preaching. In this thesis, the contention is that we should reconsider the relevance of the sermonic language conveyed from the pulpit. It should be reiterated that revisiting and appropriating the language of the sermon is a corollary of its revival and renewal. In order to ensure the relevant usage of sermonic language, it is necessary that we scrutinize communication theories within the framework of homiletical reflection.

In Chapter 2 some principles of communication with regard to preaching are outlined. The influence of communicative noise which takes place in the preaching process is illustrated. This chapter also highlights the importance of the relationship between communication and preacher, and between preacher and congregation. This analysis offers a compendium of relevant sermonic language in communicative preaching.

The third chapter elaborates on three major causes that have evoked the noises which may affect the conveying of sermonic language: the preacher, the congregation, and the environment. Disclosing these causes of irrelevant sermonic language will help us explore and develop theories, models, and applications.

Theologically, preachers should consider three major aspects in view of the language of the sermon when they prepare, deliver, and end their sermons: Christ, the Holy

Spirit, and the Church. In Chapter 4 these three perspectives on sermonic language are studied and elucidated. Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology are cornerstones in the language of the sermon. In this chapter, it has been concluded that, for the language of the sermon to be aptly used, these theological approaches should be actively applied to the reality of preaching.

In the fifth chapter I suggest several proposals for a more effective usage of sermonic language in the Korean church. In view of rampant irrelevant elements in Korean sermonic language, this chapter examines the importance and necessity of biblical role models for recovering the identity and the reality of sermonic language: prophets, Jesus Christ and Paul.

OPSOMMING

Die bedoeling van hierdie tesis is om Christelike kommunikasie vanaf Koreaanse kantsels te evalueer in die lig van die krisis waarin preektaal tans is. In Korea word prediking hoog aangeslaan: feitlik almal is bewus daarvan dat prediking 'n wesenlike onderdeel vorm van Christelike kommunikasie. Gesien as kommunikatiewe prediking, word 'n preek saamgestel deur drie "tale", naamlik die taal van God, die prediker en die gemeente. Die taal van die preek is 'n belangrike lokus van effektiewe kommunikasie tydens prediking. Desnieteenstaande lewer baie Koreaanse predikers hulle preke sonder om die invloed van taal op hulle preke in berekening te bring. In hierdie tesis is die uitgangspunt dat ons die relevansie van taal vir die prediking in heroorweging moet neem. Dit word benadruk dat 'n herwaardering van taal noodsaaklik is vir die vernuwing van prediking. Met die oog daarop word sekere kommunikatiewe teorieë binne die raamwerk van homiletiese refleksie ondersoek.

In Hoofstuk 2 word sekere beginsels van kommunikasie met die oog op prediking bespreek. Die invloed van kommunikatiewe "geraas" tydens die preekproses word geïllustreer. Hierdie hoofstuk lig ook die belang van die relasie tussen kommunikasie en prediker, asook tussen prediker en gemeente uit. Hierdie analise bied 'n samestelling van voorbeelde van relevante preektaal in kommunikatiewe prediking.

Die derde hoofstuk brei uit op drie primêre oorsake van geraas wat die taal van prediking mag beïnvloed: die prediker, die gemeente, en die konteks. Openbaarmaking van hierdie oorsake van irrelevante preektaal stel ons in staat om teorieë, modelle en toepassings te ondersoek en ontwikkel.

Teologiese gesproke behoort predikers drie primêre faktore in ag te neem met die oog op die voorbereiding en lewering van hulle preke: Christus, die Gees, en die Kerk. In Hoofstuk 4 word hierdie drie perspektiewe op preektaal aan die orde gestel. Christologie, pneumatologie, en ekklesiologie vorm hoekpilare van preektaal. In hierdie hoofstuk word die konklusie bereik dat daar 'n daadwerklike toepassing van hierdie beginsels in terme van preektaal noodsaaklik is vir Christelike kommunikasie

in prediking.

In die vyfde hoofstuk word 'n aantal voorstelle vir meer effektiewe gebruikmaking van taal in prediking in die Koreaanse Kerk gemaak. In die lig van sekere wangedaltes in Koreaanse preektaal, ondersoek hierdie hoofstuk die belang en noodsaaklikheid van Bybelse rolmodelle vir die herontdekking van die wese van preektaal: die profete, Jesus Christus en Paulus.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Motivation and background	1
1.2 Problem.....	1
1.3 Hypothesis	6
1.4 Methodology	7
1.5 Purpose.....	10
1.6 Delimitation	10
CHAPTER 2	11
UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATIVE PREACHING	11
2.1 Communication	11
2.1.1 The general definition of communication.....	11
2.1.2 The theological definition of communication.....	13
2.2 Noise.....	15
2.2.1 The definition of noise.....	15
2.2.2 The influence of noise.....	15
2.3 The relationship between communication and preaching	17
2.3.1 Viewing preaching as communication	17
2.3.2 Viewing preacher as communicator	18
2.3.3 Understanding communicative Christian preaching	20
2.4 The role of language in preaching	21
2.4.1 Making relationship.....	22
2.4.2 Congregational consciousness and experience	23
2.4.3 Relevance.....	25
2.4.4 God's revelation.....	27
2.5 The crisis in preaching language	28
2.5.1 General view of crisis in preaching.....	28
2.5.2 Barrier of language	29
2.5.3 Neglecting the audience	30
2.5.4 Irrelevant language	32
2.6 The relationship between pulpit and pew.....	34
2.6.1 Reciprocal relationship.....	34
2.6.2 Communicative relationship.....	35
2.6.2.1 Active audience, not passive	35
2.6.2.2 Preacher listening rather than speaking.....	37
2.6.2.3 Two-way communication	38
2.6.3 Pastoral relationship based on contextual understanding	40
2.7 Conclusion	42

CHAPTER 3	44
CAUSES PROVOKING IRRELEVANT SERMONIC LANGUAGE	44
3.1 Causes originating from preacher.....	44
3.1.1 Recklessly stimulating audience interest.....	45
3.1.2 Lack of audience analysis.....	46
3.1.3 Elitism separated from audience.....	47
3.1.4 Mistaken sermonic approaches.....	49
3.1.5 Accentuated image of the herald	50
3.1.6 Untrustworthy character.....	51
3.2 Causes originating from congregation	52
3.2.1 Audience encased by the electronic media	53
3.2.2 Nondisclosing behaviour from closed mind	54
3.2.3 Rebellion against authority.....	55
3.2.4 Passive participation	56
3.2.5 Avoiding constructive change	57
3.3 Causes originating from environment	58
3.3.1 Hierarchical atmosphere	59
3.3.2 Postmodernism.....	60
3.3.3 Monological one-way communication	61
3.3.4 Fragmentation of community.....	61
3.4 Conclusion	62
CHAPTER 4	64
THREE THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES FOR SERMONIC LANGUAGE.....	64
4.1 Incarnational approach of sermonic language	64
4.1.1 The incarnational word-event.....	65
4.1.2 Preachers of the incarnate Word.....	67
4.1.3 The incarnational language of sermon	68
4.2 Pneumatological approach of sermonic language	72
4.2.1 The significance of the Holy Spirit in sermonic language.....	72
4.2.2 Pneumatological link between the preacher and the congregation.....	74
4.2.3 Pneumatological language of sermon in prayer	76
4.3 Ecclesiastical approach of sermonic language	79
4.3.1 The Church built by the Word	79
4.3.2 The role of the preacher in ecclesiastical calling	82
4.3.3 The ecclesiastical language of sermon	84
4.4 Conclusion	86
CHAPTER 5	88
PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO RESTORE SERMONIC LANGUAGE.....	88
5.1 Considerable role models in sermonic language	88
5.1.1 The role model of prophets	88
5.1.1.1 Preacher having prophet's role	88

5.1.1.2	Restoring the image of today’s preacher	89
5.1.1.3	The communication ways used by prophets	90
5.1.2	The role model of Jesus Christ	92
5.1.2.1	The life of Jesus Christ as a preacher.....	92
5.1.2.2	The audience-oriented approach of Jesus Christ.....	93
5.1.2.3	The communication ways used by Jesus Christ	94
5.1.3	The role model of Paul.....	94
5.1.3.1	The ethos of the preacher.....	94
5.1.3.2	The consideration of audience’s contexts	96
5.1.3.3	The communicative ways used by Paul	96
5.2	Living language, not dead language.....	97
5.2.1	Vivid language	99
5.2.2	Creative language.....	100
5.2.3	Imaginative language.....	101
5.2.4	Metaphorical language.....	104
5.2.5	Rhetorical language.....	105
5.2.6	The usage of language of the biblical role models	107
5.3	Building up constructive relationship by relevant sermonic language	107
5.3.1	Involving audience	108
5.3.2	Forming dialogical relationship.....	109
5.3.3	Making partnership	111
5.3.4	Participation as collaborative preaching	113
5.3.5	Conversational preaching	114
5.3.6	Establishing community	115
5.3.7	Mutual recognition	116
5.3.8	Servanthood	118
5.4	Conclusion	119
CHAPTER 6	120
CONCLUSION	120
6.1	General summary.....	120
6.2	Conclusion	121
BIBLIOGRAPHY	125

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Classic communication model.....	12
Figure 2 Hermeneutic communication model	14
Figure 3 Classic communication model concerning the factor of noise.....	16
Figure 4 Hierarchical communication model.....	31
Figure 5 Classic communication model activated by feedback.....	39
Figure 6 Hermeneutic communication model concerning interrelationship by feedback	40

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation and background

Preaching is the chief means that God uses to bring together the church and to build up His people (Allmen 1968:189). According to Allmen history has taught us that the church has grown spirituality during times of faithful preaching, but fell into a decline when its sermons were preached without any power of influence (1968:190).

During times of homiletical decline a *communicative gap* has developed between pulpit and pew. Many preachers did not recognize this crisis in preaching. Thielicke (1978:1-2) points out that preaching itself has actually degenerated and deteriorated to the point where it is close to the stage of dying.

Cox (1965:122) has indicated that our preaching today is powerless because it does not confront people with the new reality that has dawned in the gospel and because the sermons are delivered in general, rather than in specific terms.

The Korean church, which once experienced explosive growth in membership and spirituality, has declined in growth, and has concurrently come to several crises. One of these is that today's preaching fails to communicate with its congregations, who live in modern times. The preachers are located in the centre of this problem and have weaknesses, such as a lack of self-understanding, as well as a misunderstanding about their congregations, a disinterest in communicative preaching, irrelevant forms of preaching, and so on.

1.2 Problem

In traditional, reformed homiletics, the sermon is understood as the word of God: preaching of the Word is the Word. However, preaching is also intentional *communication*, that is, the preacher conveys a sermonic message to the listening congregants to achieve a specific goal of informing or persuading (Chartier 1981:18).

If the *congregation* can be transformed by the sermon which the preacher delivers, they are part and parcel of the structure of preaching communication. It seems logical that an attempt to overcome the crisis in the pulpit will be possible only if there is also a renewed encounter with the phenomenon of communication. So what is communication?

Chartier (1981:19) introduces the definition of Gerald Miller, a leading researcher in the field of mass communication: "Communication is those behavioural situations in which a source transmits a message to a receiver(s) with a conscious intent to affect the latter's behaviours."

According to Howe (1962:4), communication can mean life or death to those communicated to. In our understanding, this is in the sense of communication of the gospel - the interaction of preaching can bring life, or death, to congregants.

As the word "communication" comes from the Latin *communis* (common) and *communicare* (to establish a community, to share), it can be defined as sharing information, an experience, an idea, or an attitude (Bluck 1989:1). When we speak of 'communicating the Gospel,' it means communicative preaching - the effort to establish a 'commonness' with someone in regard to the Christian faith (Reid 1967:64).

Perrow (1969:9-10) states that communication is sharing the direction of ideals, concepts and life. All Christian communication is founded on the grounds of God's communication as the process of creation by His Word and the redemptive work by His incarnation and inhabitation.

Hence, when a sermon is preached from the pulpit to the pew, the preacher and the congregation (as participants in the event of the Word) are required to experience and dwell in the same faith, and receive an appeal to build up a living relationship with God.

In the relationship between preaching and communication, the preacher should

consider the answer to the question: Why do you preach this sermon? The purpose of preaching, as it were, is what one expects to happen to the hearer as a result of a sermon being preached (Robinson 1980:108).

Long (1989:86) comments that the sermon must say and do something to, and with, the hearers. It must represent what it desires should happen to the congregation through the preaching. Communicative preaching shapes the listener's faith. At this point, the language of preaching plays a pivotal role in conveying the truth of the Word. The problem to be considered is that 'noise' takes place in the process of communicative preaching.

'Noise' is a term frequently used to mean any disturbance that interferes with the transmission of a message and it can affect communication, the accuracy of which may be affected in almost any aspect of the communication process. The greater the noise, the more difficult it becomes to communicate clearly (Chartier 1981:73).

It is no exaggeration to say that successful communication depends on how effectively the noise occurring in the communication process is controlled or eliminated. It can take place in all its parts and can also be found in the preaching, as preaching also is communication. In spite of the preacher's efforts to deliver a perfect sermon, noise may occur in the communication process at any time. Therefore, to accomplish effective communication, the preacher should find ways to eliminate or reduce distracting noise.

In the last chapter of his book, *Theology of culture*, Tillich (1964) concludes that the Christian message cannot help but be delivered. To put it plainly, it is not the message that fails to be delivered, but rather the way in which deliverance could take place. Noise that obstructs or distorts the communication process is a crucial fault that hampers the effort to establish 'commonness' with another in regard to the Christian faith.

Stott (1982a:10) defines preaching as 'bridge-building.' A true sermon bridges the gulf between the ancient and modern worlds, but must be equally earthed in both.

The preacher naturally becomes a 'bridge-builder,' who, by building a bridge, connects two worlds, especially the biblical and congregational worlds. If one does not consider both the biblical and congregation's context, building a bridge will result in making noise that finally drives communicative preaching to failure. This sort of noise may be described as a problem of the language of preaching.

The congregation's context is easily ignored by a disturbed balance of preaching. Preachers spend much time in listening to God's word and throwing their energy into exegesis, but inadvertently neglect to do an exegesis of the congregants, that is, to listen to their voices. In other words, preachers must not employ only their own language, but also that of their congregations. If a preacher reads and understands their situation and enters into their lives, he/she can arrive at a relevant conclusion of how the biblical and the congregational worlds are linked.

Brooks (1959:xi) defines preaching as the communication of truth that one person conveys to many people, and he/she is a vehicle to transmit it. In this sense, he/she deals with two personal factors: the preacher and the congregation both have much interest in the communication of truth being accomplished between them.

However, in the situation of the Korean church, the image of the preacher is viewed as a person who unilaterally proclaims the Word. The Korean church has allowed sermons to be preached while being influenced by the traditional way of the Confucian background and the preachers' authoritarian nature.

In his book, *The empty pulpit*, Reid (1967:78) describes communicational dysfunctions under which preaching has been a one-way process, and has tended to be a closed system in which the listener is expected to accept uncritically the message of the preacher as presented.

Pennington (1990:12) states that people come to church with their needs and concerns, and the sermon may be the minister's only opportunity to address these personal problems. It is true that the Korean Church has emphasized the text of the Bible more than the congregation's context. Although a small movement for restoring

the communicative character of its preaching has emerged from some churches, most Korean churches are still indifferent to modern communication theories and do not realize their necessity. The pulpit in the Korean church faces the social-cultural blast caused by the collapse of Korean traditional values, and authoritative and hierarchical cultures are rapidly changing under the influence of postmodernism. This forms one of the reasons why Korean preachers need to abandon the authoritative and hierarchical atmosphere based on their Confucian background.

Pennington (1990:23) states that language is the primary means for communication for preachers, thus rhetorical deliverance of the sermon should be very important to them. Today, many Korean preachers are in trouble when it comes to using relevant language. Their perfunctory and platitudinous use of language in preaching is creating noises that sabotage communication. The real hardships that congregants must endure in listening to these sermons are not from their resistance or defiance against the Word, but from the cognitive dissonance that follows from failed communication by preachers of the Word. To quote Howe (1967:61): "Language can be a barrier and a carrier." Language problems are often expressions of relationship problems. If in any preaching dialogue between the preacher and the congregation, the sermon's language is such that they cannot understand each other, meaningful communication is broken down.

Even though the preacher receives the Word from God in order to preach it, the use of irrelevant language will be noise that obstructs the intimate and mysterious communication between God, the preacher and the congregation. It must be recognized that communication requires a partnership between communicators (Howe 1967:19).

Wiersbe (1994) argues for the importance of language in preaching, and states that the result of the preaching depends on what language is employed. Preachers should always pay attention to their own use of language and study how others use language (Robinson 1980:189). Preachers must fulfil these requirements so as to let God's Word be heard. As Paul suggested, the preacher, as well as the congregation, should remember: "faith comes by hearing" (Rom. 10:17).

1.3 Hypothesis

My main hypothesis is that preaching may be a transformative factor in the Korean congregational context if we revisit the basic principles of the science of communication.

As a faith event, preaching itself is the most dominant Christian communication that occurs in the church. Communicative preaching shapes the listener's faith, and the sermonic language as the medium plays a significant role therein. In order to investigate this homiletical presupposition, this thesis will examine the following five theoretical frames: communication, linguistics, Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology.

1. If sermonic language is evaluated within a communicative frame from the outset, then conveying sermonic language will be deeply involved in the process of communication - especially a two-way communication. An understanding between the preacher and the audience can be gained in not only the text-oriented perspective, but also the audience-oriented perspective.
2. If sermonic language is analysed within a linguistic frame, then effective preaching will be based on the fact that language is a part of the design of the sermon, and a kind of art form for faith. The sermonic language, which must be comprehensible, acquires relevance by considering the context of the congregation in order to deliver a sermon to them and, thus, transform their lives.
3. If sermonic language is examined within a Christological frame, especially in its incarnational dimension, then employing sermonic language will be involved in the people's context, entering into their real problems, issues, and struggles. For the Word of God takes on flesh and dwells among us.
4. If sermonic language is also approached within a pneumatological frame,

then communication of the Gospel will ultimately be understood as the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, sermonic language is served by mutual reciprocity between the Holy Spirit, the preacher and the congregation, with the Word positioned in the very centre.

5. If sermonic language is also considered within an ecclesiological frame, then the sermon will be communal action whereby Christians will be formed to rightly use the language in which the preacher preaches the sermon or the congregations hear it. The church can be built as God's community through preaching. When the congregants listen and are faithful, they are the community of God.

1.4 Methodology

In brief, this thesis will use Osmer's (2008) practical theological methodology. His methodology is concerned with four questions: What is happening? Why is it happening? What should be happening? How might we respond? These questions correspond to four tasks: a descriptive-empirical task, an interpretive task, a normative task, and a pragmatic task. This set of tasks constitutes the basic structure of practical theological interpretation and is grounded in a Christian faith language and perspective.

The first *descriptive-empirical task* aims at gathering information that helps to discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts. Osmer further explores some of these reasons and offers an introduction to research projects and approaches. Since he believes that empirical research may help interpretive guides to better understand what is happening in their congregations, he focuses on three of the most important skills of qualitative research: describing, observing, and interviewing. They are disciplined forms of attending with openness, attentiveness, and prayerfulness within God's presence.

The second *interpretive task* draws on theories of the arts and science to better

understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring. Osmer examines this task in greater depth, and offers a model that helps leaders analyse and assess theories that may be helpful in their interpretation of particular episodes, situations, and contexts through cultural, congregational and psychological ways. He asserts that analysis and assessment of theories in the interpretive task enable leaders to decide on the most effective ways for facilitating a congregation's recovery.

The third *normative task* deals with using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from 'good practice.' This task is portrayed as threefold. First, it involves a style of theological reflection in which theological concepts are used to interpret particular episodes, situations, and contexts. Second, it involves the task of finding ethical principles, guidelines, and rules that are relevant to the situation and can guide strategies of action. Third, it involves exploring past and present practices of the Christian tradition that provide normative guidance in shaping the patterns of the Christian life. Osmer also underscores that 'good practice' from the present or past can serve as a normative model offering guidance to contemporary congregations and provide the generative source of new understandings of God, the Christian life, and social values.

The last *pragmatic task* focuses on strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and enters into a reflective conversation with 'talk back' emerging when they are enacted. Especially, Osmer urges that Christ's threefold office as the true priest, king, and prophet, is organically integrated into the servanthood that is fundamental to the mission of the community of disciplines and leadership within the community. He contends that a spirituality of servant leadership willingly takes risks on behalf of the congregation to help it to better embody its mission as a sign and witness of God's self-giving love.

We live in the web of life. In this environment, practical theological interpretation is contextual so that we must think in terms of interconnection, relationships, and

systems. Therefore, Osmer develops a practical theology of leadership in which the four tasks of practical theological interpretation are portrayed as facilitating the congregation's participation in Christ's priestly, royal, and prophetic mediation of salvation.

With this practical theological methodology in mind, the researcher will plan the homiletical study on the theory and noises of communicative preaching - the obstacles of sermonic language - in such a way as to engage the above-mentioned four tasks of study.

Firstly, the theory of communication in a general and theological respect will be described, and the problem of noise occurring in the communication process will be explored. The relationship between preaching and communication must contribute towards an understanding of communicative preaching. Especially language problems in delivering a sermon will be reconsidered in the sense of overcoming the crisis of preaching.

Secondly, the researcher will present the reasons why noise takes place in the communication process. These reasons will categorically be examined from three aspects: the preacher, congregant, and environment.

Thirdly, incarnational, pneumatological, and ecclesiastical approaches will be discussed as theological dimensions of communication.

Lastly, the researcher will suggest alternatives corresponding to the three aspects.

- 1) The models of the prophets, Jesus Christ and Paul as preachers will be briefly introduced.
- 2) The rhetorical approach will be presented for the purpose of investigating the necessity of living (relevant) language to the congregation.

- 3) The question of the traditional, vertical structure in the sermonic environment will be addressed, specifically in the Korean context.

1.5 Purpose

The goal of this thesis is to attempt to outline an alternative method of communication within the Korean context. This study has three purposes:

The first purpose is to examine the *influence of noise* occurring in the communicative setting of the Korean church.

The second purpose is to reconsider the *relationship between the preacher and the congregation* in communicative preaching in order to restore the break-up of the faith community.

The last purpose is to develop effective and relevant use of *preaching language and rhetorical application methods* in the field of communicative preaching.

1.6 Delimitation

In exploring the questions of Christian communication, this thesis will be limited to the consideration of sermonic language. The problem of Christian communication is very complex, rather than being simple. It has resulted from the converging of many other problems. However, it is not within the scope of this study to outline all the problems of Christian communication. Therefore, only the critical crisis of communication, especially sermonic language, will be dealt with.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNICATIVE PREACHING

In this chapter, in order to apprehend communicative preaching we firstly define communication according to two aspects: generally and theologically. Having defined communication in the light of preaching, we will deal with some communication models which influence the language of preaching. In addition, noise as a barrier to communication will be examined in the communication process. When a study of communication is conducted, it is important that it should be considered from the perspective of relationship. We therefore need to address some relationships: between communication and preacher, and between preacher and congregation. Furthermore, we will evaluate the role and the crisis of sermonic language which plays a pivotal part in achieving the effective delivery of a sermon.

2.1 Communication

Preaching, by its very nature, is communication, and yet the pulpit is facing a communication crisis (Horne 1975:55). *The contemporary problem of preaching is largely a communication problem.* The church is very conscious of this crisis. Howe (1967:42) introduces an opinion of Theodore O. Wedel: "Nowhere is the importance of the problem of communication more clearly understood than in the life of the church."

Preaching's urgent practical problems come from misunderstanding communication, especially preaching as communication. Today's environment of communication has changed radically, and the modern world has put our hearers in a new situation. Most observers think that preaching is in a wretched state at present. From this perspective, we need to examine the concepts of communication generally and theologically as a starting point (Drury 1962:3).

2.1.1 The general definition of communication

The human being is the "being that speaks" (Aristotle 1991:20). We are only truly

human if we can communicate with each other verbally and non-verbally. Likewise, community only exists by and through communication (Bluck 1984:61). Communication is therefore a basic individual and social necessity, and a universal human right. Without communication there cannot be any integrity of life, no life in fullness, no community, no human dignity. Communication is not something accidental or supplementary for human beings. We, as a sender or a receiver, communicate because we, from our beginnings, are communicators by nature (Søgaard 1993:29).

The conventional concept of communication refers to the S-M-C-R model (see Figure 1): sender, message, channel and receiver (noise and feedback will be examined later). In a sense it is inappropriate to think separately of a sender and a receiver in the human communication process. Because persons both speak and listen, it is more fitting to the realities of communication to think in terms of sending and receiving, or speaking and listening; people are seldom solely passive listeners. Consequently, the communication process itself is circular in nature rather than linear; it is dynamic rather than static (Chartier 1981:24).



Figure 1 Classic communication model

Communication is the sharing of something experienced by means of commonly understood relationships. Verbal communication is obviously a primary tool for sharing (Fore 1987:47). Words as the representative of verbal communication have no meaning in or of themselves, for meaning is what people attribute to words – meaning lies within the experiences and feelings of people (Chartier 1981:64).

The spoken word carries a unique power which distinguishes it from every other form of communication. Human speech is our most important means of communicating with one another. It may be accompanied and supplemented by other forms: sights, sounds, nonverbal expressions. But basic to everything, conveying the most significant meanings, is the spoken word (Pennington 1990:47). Ong (1967:1) affirms

with clarity and conviction the power of the spoken word: “Man communicates with his whole body, and yet the word is his primary medium.” McLuhan (1966:81) strengthens Ong’s observation: “The spoken word involves all of the senses dramatically.” Dance (1972:47) puts the matter quite simply: “The spoken word is central to man’s communication.” And he goes on to add that the spoken and heard word is the primary form for language, and of far greater importance than the secondary form used in writing [printing] and reading (Dance 1967:270).

Communication in its most universal terms must be understood as a basic constituent of the process of being. But we also need to examine from a Christian perspective the role communication plays as a process which is both used and misused in our experience.

2.1.2 The theological definition of communication

Human beings literally live in a sea of communication (Potter 1976:33). Human communication can be defined as the evoking of a response from the listener through verbal symbols. Such a definition would view the preaching of a sermon as the stimulus for an elicited response to the Word of God from the listeners. From this perspective, preaching is an exercise in social influence, or control, in which the preacher brings or seeks to bring the beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviour of the listeners into conformity with the Word of God (Chartier 1981:12).

The Christian communication we are concerned with here entails the communication of Christian faith (Brooks 1968:12). For Christians, the aim of communication is to help people within their context interpret their existence in the light of what God has done for them as manifest in Jesus Christ (Fore 1987:48).

In understanding Christian communication, it is significant that the triangular relationship between event, interpreter, and viewer is a typical situation of our times. To become a pattern of religious communication, it is only necessary for the interpreter to be one who interprets events theologically (Brooks 1968:62).

Christian communication does not involve indoctrination or manipulation. Instead, Brooks (1968:14) gives it these priorities: Christian communication is a relationship between God and man, a relationship between people, the transmission of ideas, and an exercise in language. Applying this concept to the perspective of the preaching process, we can consider Christian communication hermeneutically according to the following model:

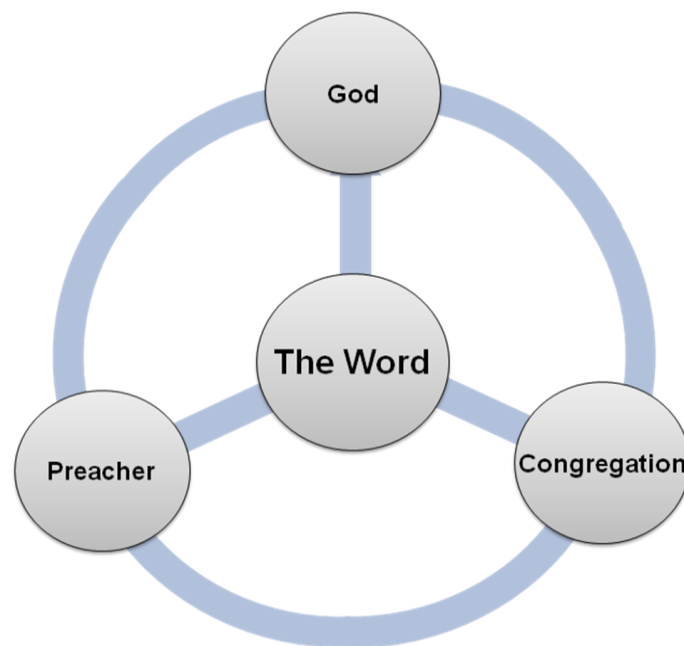


Figure 2 Hermeneutic communication model

In each section of Christian communication which Brooks (1968:14) mentions, he points out the distinctive in Christian communication – it must be rooted in love. “Our words do not have to bridge the gap between heaven and earth. That has been done by the action of the Word and the Spirit of God ... The Church’s task ... is to take the material of everyday experience, and hold it up in such way that God can make it a channel of divine grace” (Brooks 1968:15). Christian communication has three characteristics: it finds people in the context of their own world; it finds them at the deepest levels of their personal existence; and it brings with it a consciousness of wonder, truth, and love which is evidence of the Holy Spirit. To express this, we must recognize that the primary form of Christian faith occurs in daily living, and not only in the theological reflection. Christian communication, then, involves a personal relationship; the communication arises out of love and the very “communication of

truth is an act of communion with God” (Brooks 1968:16).

Nowadays religious communication is heavily influenced by visual and electronic media; there is no longer one dominant scheme of communication. Instead, religious communication operates through a variety of mediums including language, affinity (involving relationships, friendship and spirit), social groups (the poor – the conscience of the church), and aesthetics (Babin 1991:76ff.). In spite of this communication situation, central to the Christian communication process is still the use of words. Verbal communication may be defined as message behaviour in which words are used as symbols to represent objects, events, and ideas (Chartier 1981:17).

2.2 Noise

2.2.1 The definition of noise

All of us would no doubt like to be able to communicate the gospel clearly (Krych 1987:11). But it isn't always an easy task. Communication accuracy is influenced by “noise,” a term frequently used to refer to any disturbance that interferes with the sending of a message (Chartier 1981:72).

The English word *noise* comes from the Latin for “nausea,” which means seasickness. Today too much information buzz, or “noise,” is making people sick (Sweet 2004:159). Noise is a technical term that describes anything that hinders good communication (Søgaard 1993:51).

2.2.2 The influence of noise

Unfortunately, noise affects all aspects of the communication process (see Figure 3). Noise in the sender may give rise to biased programs, and noise in the receptor may change the meaning. Noise in the channel may give poor reception, and noise in the reception context may distract the listener or viewer (Søgaard 1993:51).

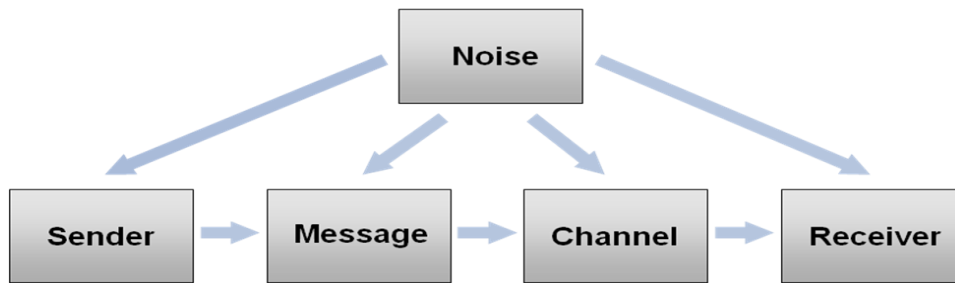


Figure 3 Classic communication model concerning the factor of noise

The resulting barriers to communication may end in discrimination and oppression which the preachers may hardly be conscious of themselves (Timmerman 2005:187). A barrier to communication is something that keeps meanings from meeting. Meaning barriers exist between all people, making communication much more difficult than most people seem to realize (Howe 1962:23).

When a communicator wears loud or very informal clothing in a formal situation, the receptor is likely to be distracted from the main message by an impression of inappropriateness. Well-prepared sermonic language can even cause noise if it is judged to be inappropriate to the interaction. Although a communicator cannot control everything that may be perceived as noise, wise communicators do all they can to control at least the first two aspects of noise. If such controls are ineffective, not infrequently the intended message is hijacked and the receptors come away with something quite different from what the communicator intended (Kraft 1991:192-192).

Incessant noise is a thing that might disturb the message. As mentioned above, noise refers to anything happening in the background that can make the communication less effective or even ineffective. This loss of effectiveness may be due to actual noise or some other distraction, including the environment (physical, social, or psychological), or such things as someone being sick, worried, or absent minded. Moreover, noise from time to time even affects how the receiver hears the message, including culture, language, experience, gender, age, circumstances, predisposition to the information, and so on (Ukaga 2004:101-102).

A sender needs to recognize and deal with the receiver's potential noises. Each

participant's noises can be most easily recognized and overcome when participants are both senders and receivers in a dynamic and engaging process of mutual communication because people in such a circumstance not only construct the message together but also listen together. Such interactive communication enables participants to know and appreciate one another's circumstances, expectations, needs, and challenges in communicating.

2.3 The relationship between communication and preaching

2.3.1 Viewing preaching as communication

Communication is a fundamental tool of the preacher (Chartier 1981:11). Garrison (1954:22) quotes Phillips' recognition of "preaching (as) the communication of truth by man to men." Preaching as a communication event is fundamentally the use of words to convey the Word of God (Read 1981:84). That is, a sermon is an occasion when people come together in the context of corporate worship to engage in the communication and celebration of the gospel. Communication is likely to be most effective when we, the congregation as well as the preacher, understand how communication between people actually takes place (Pennington 1990:34).

Communicative effectiveness does not always result in the acceptance of the communicator's message, for receptors have wills and frequently choose to reject what they understand. When the message is understood, the communicative process is technically complete, though the goal of the communicator may or may not have been accomplished (Kraft 1991:195). That is why preaching must be as direct and realistic as possible (Read 1981:90).

Bifocal preaching (Cleland 1965:33) means a focus upon the accurate proclamation of the Gospel and at the same time an accurate reflection of the "contemporary situation," and Cleland (1965:43) emphasizes that there is no Word of God without both foci. So preaching to be understood, an obvious requirement is the assumption of preaching with understanding (Switzer 1979:51). Abbey (1973:202) introduces Knox's view on preaching as communication: "The essential elements in the

preaching situation on the human side are the preacher and the congregation; the sermon is not a third element, but the action of one of the elements toward the other. A sermon is not a literary essay; it is an act of oral communication. And yet it must be carefully prepared, planned not alone in its general outline but as regards its very language.”

Good preaching is the oral communication of true and worthwhile content, well organized, delivered effectively in clear and appropriate language that achieves desired ends (Adams 1971:6). We all know that language is the chief instrument of communication between men (Kraemer 1957:62).

Preachers should remember that preaching is the primary means by which a minister communicates with the congregation (Pennington 1990:11). From a theoretical perspective, preaching is often characterized as a bridge that links the truth of the biblical text to the experiences and needs of the listening congregation (Hillis 1991:192-193). Preaching today should possess the quality and effect of real conversation. It should be lively and expressive, varied and interesting (Hoefler 1978:99). Preaching is absolutely necessary and completely irreplaceable. There is room for other forms of communication as supplementary aids, but preaching is the essential way in which the Gospel message is made known to men (Drury 1962:4). When we consider sharing and conveying a message, one first axiom is that preaching is not spraying the universe with words, but bringing a message to people (Luccock 1954:76).

2.3.2 Viewing preacher as communicator

The preacher is a communicator who could at least assume that the vocabulary and ideas he used in the pulpit were more or less public property (Read 1981:85). The preacher’s task is, therefore, to use our total energy to make that language intelligible and vital to our contemporaries (Read 1981:96). The preacher’s task is also to communicate the message of the gospel to his congregation by word of mouth. He is interested in language as a vehicle of oral communication, and the right words for a preacher to use are the words which best put his ideas into a

communicative form. This communication is a process of transmission and reception. If a preacher has any concern for what happens his words after they leave his lips he must be concerned with the response they evoke in his congregation. All this will be not only helpful but necessary to the preacher before he shapes the first sentences of his sermon. The quality of his sermon will depend on the quality of his thinking. Its effectiveness will be measured according to his ability to bring that thought within the range of his hearers' thinking by clothing it in a language they will understand (Drury 1962:132).

In other words, as Sweazey (1976:16) writes, "the preacher's task is to close the gap between what the Bible offers and the people's needs." Using a different metaphor, Killinger (1969:60) and Cleland (1965:77) describe the sermon as an ellipse, a geometric figure that has not one focus but two. Like the ellipse, a sermon is neither Bible-centred nor person-centred, but focused on both. Craddock (1985:85) tells preachers that because of this dual focus they have a dual interpretive task. They must both interpret the biblical text and interpret the listener, and then seek to bring the two together.

A sermon is not simply a message prepared by one person and impressed upon the minds of his hearers. First of all, groups of meanings arise in the mind of the preacher. He chooses words which he judges suitable to convey his meanings. These symbols are presented to a congregation. At the same time, each listener is required to translate the speaker's words into meaning. Meaning in the mind of the preacher becomes words which serve as aural and visual stimuli. These are translated into meaning in the mind of the hearer. Finally, all changes must issue from the meeting of the meanings of preacher and hearer (Garrison 1954:46).

According to Fant (1977:82), "communication" has a critical role in the task of uniting past (historic faith) and present (contemporary situation): The preacher must understand that the historic word and the contemporary situation are not mutually exclusive and that preaching unites the two in the act of communication. Though the preacher is the instrument of God, he is still a man speaking to men. His knowledge of the message he preaches, his understanding of the people he preaches to, his

proficiency in the methods and techniques of preaching are still a measure of his effectiveness (Drury 1962:x).

In proclaiming this word, the preacher is a bridge-builder. The great bridge-builder is the messenger who throws a bridge of clear communication across the chasm between the speaker and the hearer, to put it simply, of a communal way of preaching. We referred earlier to many modern poets building a shaky bridge between themselves and their possible audience. The Gospel cannot go over a shaky bridge (Luccock 1954:38). In addition, it is highly probable, in the light of this communal way of communicative preaching, as Long (1989:10-11) argues that the preacher is not an expert who comes from outside the congregation but an inside person who is ordained as representative of the gathered.

2.3.3 Understanding communicative Christian preaching

According to Baumann (1972:13), "Preaching as a form of religious communication is the communication of biblical truth by man to men with the explicit purpose of eliciting behavioural change." Basically and simply, preaching is communication, but with this difference: it is the communication of the communicated, namely, the will and purpose of God as they are incorporated in a Person and are now being worked out in history (Macleod 1987:31). Preaching is the actualization of the Word.

Preaching is a distinct form of theological communication. It is an articulation not only of the meaning to be conveyed, but of the value of that meaning for changing both the preacher and those who might hear the preaching (Farrell 1993:65). The content of preaching is bifocal, concerned both with the needs of God and with the needs of people. Preaching is a unique kind of speaking, of language. It is no other form of communication. It is a dialogue made possible by the work of the Holy Spirit, a dialogue between God and people, in which the preacher remains a hearer while speaking God's word. The preacher is not removed from the congregation; he is part of the listening congregation. The method of preaching is to make visual that which is abstract and obtuse. It does not enlarge the Word of God but enlightens the listeners so that they might hear the Word of God. It strives to eliminate, as far as

possible, the hindrances to clear understanding of the Word of God, so that people might acknowledge their need for God and respond to God with love and trust (Hoefler 1978:6-7). The purpose of preaching is to bring people to the place where they will act as though what God says is true. It is not to convince the listeners of the truth, beyond all doubt, but to bring them to the place where they will act on the truth, despite doubts.

The relation between the Word of God and a listener in the pew in communicative preaching is mediated *inter alia* by the preacher and his or her theological knowledge, personality, and faith (Long 1996:41). Yet it is fully understood that preaching is not merely a matter of our words or our handling of them; it has to do with the Word, otherwise it is not Christian preaching. The Word and ordinary human talk are instruments of communication. But while mere human words can be neutral, God's Word is never separated from the will, purpose, and action of the One who originates it (Macleod 1987:27).

2.4 The role of language in preaching

We live in language. We do within language. We relate within language. We think with language. God created with a Word, and we have faith by hearing (Buttrick 1987:173-175). Consequently words are the most important devices employed in human communication (Garrison 1954:45). Buttrick (1987:23) maintains that preaching is that language which moves from one concept to another concept, and each concept is expressed as a lump of words.

When the preacher creates sermonic language, he is forming communication, not merely shaping information. Sermonic language is a plan for the experience of listening, not just as arrangement of data (Long 1989:96). The preacher strives for freshness that the Word might become alive in the lives of his listeners (Hoefler 1978:10). Preachers must strive for fresh uses of old words. Abstract words in the language are more inclined to be double-barrelled and to be interpreted in different ways (Hoefler 1978:135-137).

In *The Presence of the Word*, Ong (1967:1) maintain that man communicates with his whole body, yet the word is his primary medium. Moreover, the word, either written or spoken, has been not only the primary vehicle of communication, but is has also been the instrument for accuracy, preservation of learning, criticism of other media, and interpretation of other attempts and methods (Macleod 1987:26). This concern for the language in preaching (Kirkland 1987:59-61; Thiselton 1980:78) is a prerequisite for renewing and reforming the sermon. Added to this, it is required when employing sermon language based on the re-understanding about the congregation.

2.4.1 Making relationship

Language is something which exists between people. It is dialogue and therefore plays an indispensable role in communication. Language exists for communication (Kraemer 1957:71). “What matters,” writes Moltmann (1977:206), “is that public preaching and the preacher should not be isolated from the simple, everyday and matter-of-course language of the congregation’s faith, the language used by Christians in the world.”

In preaching, words are the link that binds preacher and hearer together. John Stott explains preaching as ‘bridge-building.’ The real preaching is a work of building a bridge between the ancient world and the modern world (Osborne 1991:212; Stott 1982b:10), and the preacher is a person who links two worlds by the bridge which is the tool of language. So preaching is an important office that makes the meeting possible of people living in the contemporary world and the Word written in a different language, at different times, and for a different culture (Swank 1981:11).

A word is a vehicle of personal communication, or creating a relationship between people (Read 1981:66). In order to preach, one must know the Gospel (not just know about it, but know it), and being aware of the needs of particular persons to whom he or she is preaching, seeking to bring the two together (Switzer 1979:51). Tillich’s principle of correlation must always be operational for us in sermon preparation. This principle insists that the questions to which the gospel is directed must be genuine,

human (existential) issues and that the church's response must be both true to the Gospel and framed in language which is understandable by the people to whom it is addressed (Tillich 1951:59).

The sermon is the centre of the Christian faith's symbolic language. The Bible is the basis of a sign language which even today gives people the opportunity of entering into dialogue with an ultimate reality. Preaching has the task of bringing new life to this sign language in order to make this opportunity something real. Among all the opportunities for preaching, this is the decisive one. Nothing has changed here since preaching began (Theissen 1995:xiii). The sermon is Christian discourse for its hearers in order to strengthen them in their certainty of Christianity and to further their orientation in life. This is made possible by language (Theissen 1995:10). Through language people can communicate abstract notions, allusions, values, and expectations. Language is an essential medium through which successive generations come to know what to believe and how to behave, and as well as not to believe and how not to behave. Language is not just a vehicle for communicating ideas; the very nature of reality is mediated through language (Gittins 2002:36).

2.4.2 Congregational consciousness and experience

Preaching is language aimed at communal consciousness, the consciousness of a congregation (Buttrick 1998:295). In relation to Buttrick's understanding, as S. J. Lee (2002:250) states, this does not encourage turning preaching away from concrete existential people toward an abstract docetic being. It rather embraces the communal language of preaching and the communal consciousness, shaped in the communal use of sermonic language.

To use Ahn's (2007:196) term, preaching communication is regarded as a relationship frame. No doubt its formation is based on how the preacher regards the congregation, and simultaneously the dignity of the sermonic language is decided by it.

The language of preaching is ultimately a language of presence, a language that

expresses, a language of disclosure. Accordingly, the language of preaching is related to fields of consciousness where symbols form and meanings may be brought out (Buttrick 1987:184). By combining phenomenal imagery with imaginative syntax and metaphorical language, sermons can form powerfully in congregational consciousness (Buttrick 1987:192-193).

Language must be “clear,” these authors insist, or language must be “expressive.” The language of preaching is peculiar; though ordinary, its use is extraordinary. For the language of preaching is a concrete language of imagery that can paint a field of consciousness and then bring meaning out of the field of being mysterious: the language of preaching is a language of disclosure. When we preach we are also forming congregational consciousness and not merely trading thoughts (Buttrick 1987:198).

The language of a sermon has to perform on the stage set of its listeners’ life stories. Due to their diversity, the preacher must utilize a common language understood and experienced by them (Pieterse 1987:125). The communication shapes an experience appropriating the grace of God, because its language is interwoven with its reality (Nichols 1980:74-75). Fred Craddock understands that emphasizing the importance and power of language is one of the most crucial factors that determines whether or not a sermon is heard by the listener. Through the use of aesthetic, poetic and imaginative language, the preacher can incite and evoke the experience of the listener. Thor Hall (1971:16) concludes that the spoken word is “a more potent form of religious communication than any other medium I can think of.” The sermon can therefore be a most effective instrument for the communication of religious faith and experience (Cilliers 2004:20).

Language has the power to shape experience. If different kinds of experience need to be expressed through different kinds of language, then it is also true that different languages have the power to shape different experiences. We preachers ought to be interested in that interplay between language and experience, because by speaking different languages in our preaching we are in fact contributing to our people’s correspondingly different experiences of the gospel (Nichols 1980:61).

For effective preaching, the languages of preaching must be appropriately connected to the experience they shape and also consistent with their context. It is necessary to keep in mind that a sermon is not a talk addressed to whoever it may concern but a proclamation for a particular group at one particular time, place, and situation (Kim 1999b:11). If we either disconnect or decontextualize them, we are in trouble. If we keep them straight, we should be well on the way to doing in preaching what we aim to do as prophets and priests. It is a matter of enormous significance to preachers to have extensive interest in how sermons happen in the congregation's consciousness.

2.4.3 Relevance

A sermon is, by definition, a spoken event, and the preacher's preaching must be relevant. He must always know where people stand as well as what the shifting positions of the present moment are. He must know how to communicate the Gospel to them in a way that will grip them, and he must be able to access sources of power that lie beyond him (Long 1989:181).

Today's audience, having the desire for connection to one's own life is strongly concerned with relevance – for them, the point of engaging with the sermonic language is that connections are made with one's own life. Assumed context refers to the relevant presuppositions shared by speaker and hearer that make communication work. Text and context work together in successful communication (Brown 2007:36-37; C.H. Kim 1999a:146).

Preaching speaks ordinary language, the ordinary language of human conversation (Buttrick 1987:187). Preaching calls for carefully crafted language (McDonnell 1989:115). The preacher dare not be careless about how he uses words (Horne 1975:57). It is the speaker's task to study his audience, for an audience cannot be expected to endure unintelligible noises (Garrison 1954:48). To guide the communication effectively, therefore, a communicator needs to study his recipients in their normal life to discover what their felt needs are. Clearly, the burden is upon the speaker. He must be alert to the existence of a communication problem. He must

recognize the inadequacies of words, and do all in his power to minimize the difficulties of those who sit and listen. He must remember that, unlike readers, hearers cannot go back and ponder the meaning of difficult passages.

Fine-tuning word choice is vital. Proper sermonic language is essential to overcoming the stumbling block to the Gospel, our inability to communicate (Resner 1999:72). The preacher has the awesome responsibility of using words to proclaim the Word of God. When the Word of God is filtered through carelessly chosen and inappropriately spoken words, the power of that word is negated and its potential is aborted (Smith 1984:83).

The relevance of the sermonic language is expressed best when Pieterse (2001:17) says the following:

We have noted that preaching is commissioned in the Bible and that its substance is a glad message which also appears in the Bible. But this message needs to be alive, relevant, and directed at the circumstances of the listeners. They should be able to recognize themselves and their situation in the message that is proclaimed.

The prime condition of successful communication is that the content communicated should be understandable – a balance between lucidity or unequivocal clarity and allusive ambiguity, i.e. the capacity to allow overtones and undercurrents which enrich any objective information. The contrary value to unequivocal clarity would be obscurity – a blurred form of discourse to which not only theologians are prone. A contrary value to allusive ambiguity would be trivial simplicity: here everything is arranged in a pedantic or meaningless way (Theissen 1995:106).

Communication is inherently based on the principle of relevance. When people receive God's Word, they will be motivated to understand it and relate it to what they already know (Shaw 2003:216). Relevance is not manufactured but embodied, and one of the surest ways to determine appropriate language is for the speaker to try it out first against his own ear (Meyers 1993:34). The thoughtful composition of our sermons, heedfully selecting the language best suited for this congregation's hearing,

is a way of taking seriously our responsibility to the listeners (Long 1989:183). Language is the intimate, articulate expression of culture (Sanneh 1989:3). Through the message, God speaks a living word that touches, inspires, assures, or encourages the individual listener. God wants people to know what He says and to understand his Word within their particular circumstances. The preservation of God's intended meaning demands both theological and contextual awareness.

2.4.4 God's revelation

The real aim of theology is that people come to know God together. When we consider preaching theologically, a sermon needs to be shared with the congregation even though the preacher conveys the message (Buttrick 1987:192). The language of preaching must be theologically apt. Preaching is doing theology.

The living Word that is sharper than a two-edged sword can cut through any formula or pattern of words. The use of words in preaching is itself a sacramental action, for words are human instruments through which, by grace through faith, the divine Word comes. And the sacraments, like preaching, are a vehicle for the Word, the living contact between God and man in Christ (Read 1981:73).

Preaching must be the confrontation of the living God with living people through the living Word on the grounds that the Word as revelation of God is not just a collection of static, objective truth statements, but is communicative interaction between God and his people (Farris 1998:11; Hoefler 1978:23; Lee 2003:182). We must struggle and fight at this meeting point of world and Word, or pew and pulpit. The sermon is a unique kind of speaking, not only because of its theological dimension as a means of grace for those who listen, but also because of its effect upon the speaker. The sermon is a dialogue between God and the listener in which the preacher remains a listener while he is speaking the Word of God (Hoefler 1978:89).

Form, which is an essential part of sermon's content and which can itself support or undermine the communication of the gospel, shapes the listener's faith (Craddock 1985:173; Long 1989:93). It is the sermon language as the carrier of spiritual

communication that is in the centre of the form's frame. In this respect, the preacher must think of himself as a witness rather than as a reporter. A witness, unlike a reporter, is involved in what he is saying. He is affected by it, modified by it, moved by it, changed by it (Long 1989:101). Bearing witness to the claim of the Gospel upon the lives of the congregation requires discernment about the way, such as the language used in which that claim will be heard and received. Refining the language of a sermon is the process of thinking through how to present that claim in such a way that people can truly hear it and respond to it (Long 1989:116).

2.5 The crisis in preaching language

2.5.1 General view of crisis in preaching

Preaching has entered upon a period of hard times (Garrison 1954:17). The major issue confronting the Church in the modern world is the lack of living contact between pulpit and pew (Read 1981:11). It is true that we are faced today with a very serious breakdown in the lines of communication between the preacher and the congregation (Read 1981:29).

Preaching is a system that God creates in order to plant and grow the spiritual life. If it is achieved well, those benefits are countless, but otherwise those results give rise to much more than evil-doing. There seem to be at least three things that contribute to the communication crisis regarding the pulpit. Firstly, its language often seems strange, abstract, and complex. Secondly, preaching depends on verbal communication at a time when visual communication seems to be in ascendancy in our culture. Thirdly, preaching deals with realities that seem strange to secular, empirical, and scientific man (Horne 1975:21-22).

In his book *The Empty Pulpit*, Reid (1967:25-33) indicates some problems of preaching: 1) sermons use too much theological lore and language; 2) most sermons are boring, dull, and uninteresting; 3) most sermons are not relevant; 4) the sermon today is not courageous; 5) the sermon is not communicated well; 6) the sermon does not lead to change in a person; 7) the sermon has been overemphasized.

Although there is no perfect correspondence of his points, made in 1960s, with current problems in preaching, we need to consider some of them cautiously.

Preachers should have been sensitive to what they say and how they say it and the many ways in which it may be heard. Members of the congregation also should have been equally sensitive to what words mean in different situations and what meaning is appropriate to their own life (Pennington 1990:58). Nevertheless, most Korean preachers have tossed aside that they must pay attention to the use of language which considers people's context and to studying how they use language (Kim 2000b:167). In the Korean church much of the language used in the pulpit has been imprecise, irrelevant, and insignificant.

The technology of our age has brought about many changes, especially in the fields of communication (Thompson 1984:48). People today are not tired of preaching, but of the preacher's kind of preaching (Macleod 1987:11). The decline of church growth, the technology explosion, and collapse of the traditional authority have required a paradigm shift in traditional pulpit proclamation (Howe 1967; Reid 1967). This was a threat to those who supported traditional preaching methods: authoritative preaching as preacher-based preaching. It has been emphasized too much that the preacher should persuade the audience with one-sided communication. In this view, the primary concerns of the preaching are for the preacher rather than for the audience (Hillis 1991:63). Traditional sermon content and form have failed to consider the changing concrete situation of the hearer (Lee 2003:41-42).

2.5.2 Barrier of language

Language is a two-edged sword: it may serve to create and clarify meaning, thereby facilitating communication, but it may also serve – however unwittingly – to confuse meaning and block communication (Nicholas 1987:94). Language and communication are intimately related, so language may unknowingly bring about the breakdown of communication (Kraemer 1957:82). Communication breaks down when language is decontextualized, when it no longer makes sense to the unfolding inner story that the listener uses as a mental stage on which the words that are

heard are actors (Nichols 1980:71).

This is the barrier of language. Language is the process of knowing and being known through the use of words, and it follows that an apt use of language is essential for effective living. The thought from one mind leaps to another mind by means of words. Behind words, however, is the whole life of relationship out of which meanings come and for which identifying words are chosen. Speaking a word is an act that refers to and describes an event that either has occurred or is to occur. Every word, therefore, depends for its existence and meaning on life that has been lived, and every word spoken carries implicitly a responsibility for life that is to be lived. But language is not exact and precise. The same word, for instance, can have a different meaning for different people even though long usage has standardized its meaning. A word means what the speaker intends it to mean, but the personal equivalences for the hearer may differ. This difference is found to arise primarily out of the emotional associations that have gathered around the word as a result of the hearer's particular experiences (Howe 1962:26-27). The communicator, therefore, chooses his words with care, is careful about syntactical construction, but is also able to give deep emotional responses to the words he is using.

What is more, when language is cut loose from experience, it loses specificity and begins to die. Because words are the heartbeat of our life together, community begins to suffer as well. When the oral word is conceived of as a container without its own content, it is bound to be divorced from the vivid, urgent experience that composes our existence (Tostengard 1989:21).

2.5.3 Neglecting the audience

Frequently the audience only fills the role of submissive receiver of the message (Hillis 1991:179-180). Since the listener is merely considered as a passive receiver in the preaching process, people who are hearing the sermon may feel uninvolved in it and all the efforts of the preacher to persuade his hearers may fail. As a result, the preacher with the text stands against or in opposition to the audience. Even when the sermon is constructed with the audience in mind, the audience is primarily

perceived as a receptor of the message and not as a contributor to it. The ideas of the text and of the preacher dominates the sermon, while the audience's role is just to accept those ideas (Lee 2003:87).

Preaching while considering the congregation as the submissive audience neglects them. This does not mean the preacher is not aware of the audience in preaching, but that the audience's needs, intelligence, and experiences are not powerful forces in shaping the sermon (Hillis 1991:170-171). For this reason, the Korean churches have traditionally kept to a vertical and one-way communication model, that is, a hierarchical communication model (see Figure 4).

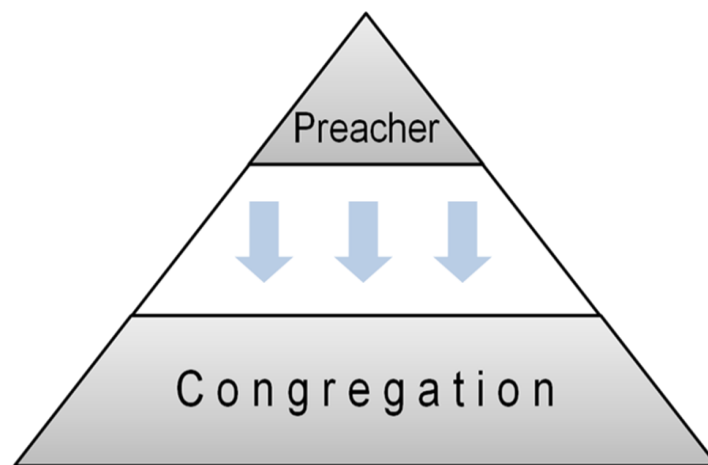


Figure 4 Hierarchical communication model

Lloyd-Jones (1971:130) states this view most explicitly when he writes, “There is no greater fallacy than to think that you need a gospel for special types of people.” While Lloyd-Jones recognizes that the preacher must use contemporary language and be flexible in the method of presentation in order to maintain audience attention, he believes the essence of the message – the Gospel – is paramount and should not be adapted to the audience. Many would agree with Lloyd-Jones that the central message should not be changed. The problem occurs, however, when that message is not applied to the needs of a specific audience and is stated the same way for all audiences, because this assumes characteristics of an audience that it may not have.

Preaching which neglects the audience is, characteristically, not adapted or applied

to the audience. The audience may not be taken into account in the process of biblical interpretation (Hillis 1991:171-172). Craddock (1985:136) distinguishes between “interpreting Scripture” and “interpreting Scripture for someone somewhere.” If the preacher concludes biblical interpretation when the question “What does the text mean?” has been answered, he may only understand its meaning for the original audience for which the text was intended. The question “What does it mean to the audience?” is never asked, and so the gap between the text and the life situation of the listeners is never bridged. The sermon is characterized by explanation in terms of the lives of the audience.

Marquart (1985:32) suggests that language is a barometer of whether a preacher is in touch with the audience’s needs and concerned with the audience’s attention. Coleman (1968:24) complains about the “ethereal character” of many sermons. “By the time I have waded through the biblical language, the side comments, the loss ends, the catch phrases and all the pearls of wisdom, I have found that nothing really has been said.” Both Marquart and Coleman have identified a similar characteristic of sermons that are not constructed with the audience in mind. These sermons are often filled with language that the audience cannot relate to or understand so that ultimately the needs and the concerns of the audience are not addressed in a way that is clear to them (Hillis 1991:175). The hearer’s human situation must therefore be taken very seriously if the gospel is to be communicated effectively (Krych 1987:26).

2.5.4 Irrelevant language

Congregation-uninvolved sermons may demonstrate a neglect of the audience through the use of authoritative, specialized, abstract or preacher-centred language that is not relevant to the audience (Hillis 1991:180).

Congregation-uninvolved sermons use the authoritative language that assumes a submissive audience which will accept and obey the claims of the sermon. The audience is not involved in participating in or thinking through the message, but is expected to accept, believe, respond, obey or do what the sermon calls it to do. With

the audience being neglected, the preacher and text dominate the sermon because they are the source of the message and they control its content. The audience assumes a primarily submissive role as receiver of the sermon's ideas (Hillis 1991:179-180).

Inappropriate sermonic language, as a stumbling block in preaching communication, may be signalled by extensive use of theological language without an explanation of its meaning. Weaver (1953:195) notes that social scientists and other men of learning "are often charged with addiction to polysyllabic vocabulary." The language of the academic world or the technical language of theology may be virtually a foreign language to the man or woman in the pew (Cox 1985:53). Howe (1962:28) also lists specialized language as one of the primary barriers to communicating with the audience in preaching.

Words and concepts such as "creation," "fall," "heaven," "hell," "kingdom," "resurrection," "ascension," "redemption," are meaningless to thousands of people, including life-long church members. And yet this is the language in which ministers have been trained, and they are baffled to discover the ineffectiveness of it for communication.

The preacher should help the listener climb down by setting abstract words firmly in the context of the concrete and the specific (Kooienga 1989:71). Contrasting with this concern, however, is his use of abstract terms. Vines (1986:132) warns that audience attention is hindered by sermons containing too many abstract or long words. Good communication breaks down such barriers by means of clear language that brings God's Word to people. The congregations unfamiliar with the terms are tutored with abstract language. The meeting of meanings between the preacher and the congregations ends in a complete failure because of the former's speaking in a language foreign to the latter's (Hoefler 1978:174).

Employing preacher-centred language in preaching has a habit of creeping into speech. Preacher-centred sermon is too easily swayed by self-expression, instead of revealing God. Self-expression can be the most damaging barrier to good

communication, especially in the pulpit. Preacher-centred terms build dividing walls. For an approach to preaching as a speaking opportunity places the attention on self rather than on the listener (Hoefler 1978:16). Thus the speaker's attitude must convey total interest and complete concern for the listeners.

2.6 The relationship between pulpit and pew

In communicative preaching, the preacher and the congregation are inextricably related to each other. Cilliers says the following in his book *The living voice of the Gospel*: "Preachers need the congregation, they cannot preach without a discourse with the congregation being the living comment on the Word" (Cilliers 2004:139). From this passage, no doubt, it should be noted that we cannot understand what is meant by communication preaching without grasping the concept of the relationship between the preacher and the congregation.

2.6.1 Reciprocal relationship

A basic reality of the relation between the preacher and the congregation is that they are often engaged in "communicatively acceptable patterns of mutual self-destruction" when we take look at their state (Chartier 1981:13; Rose 1997:89). From the perspective of the point of communicative contact between the preacher and the congregation, however, communication occurs whenever there is a meeting of meanings between people since they are not separate but a community of faith (Chartier 1981:13; Rose 1997:89). Thus preaching would occur whenever the preacher's meanings and the congregation's meanings meet. If there is no meeting of the listeners' lives with the Word of life, preaching has not occurred.

The spoken word has the power to create community. Given that the congregation acknowledges the content of the sermon as necessary for or significant in their life, that sermon will easily excite their sympathy (Park 2009:34). In this regard, it would not be an overstatement to say that creating sympathy between pulpit and pew plays a decisive role in opening the mind of the audience. "Preaching" and "congregation" are reciprocal terms. It is true that when we preach to a congregation, the hearers

become a congregation. They are present in the moment of speaking, and their presence exerts a shaping force on the communication. A sermon happens only when we open our mouths and the hearers open their ears. To put it theologically, a sermon is a work of the church and not merely a work of the preacher (Long 1989:181-182).

Preaching and the community of faith are reciprocal realities (Long 1989:47). “The proclamation of the Gospel,” Moltmann (1977:224) maintains, “always belongs within a community, for every language lives in a community or creates one.” More basically, preaching is not merely a deed performed by an individual preacher but rather the faithful action of the whole church. If this concept of reciprocal relationship is not fully understood, the preacher becomes an isolated person speaking a different language and thinking other thoughts, even though the congregations want to listen to him (Read 1981:12).

Preachers must keep in mind that they come from God’s people. The preacher goes to the scripture, but does not go alone. The preacher goes on behalf of the faithful community and, in a sense, on behalf of the world. Their questions and needs are in the preacher’s mind and heart (Long 1989:45). The preacher must go to the biblical text from the congregation and, indeed, with the congregation.

2.6.2 Communicative relationship

2.6.2.1 Active audience, not passive

Receptors are active. They mostly seem passive, yet they are evidently active, even when they seem to be just sitting there (Kraft 1991:97). They are not at all passive in the listening process. It can be said that the hearer is a co-creator of the sermon (Long 1989:131). For successful communicative preaching, it is necessary that this cooperative relationship should be constantly perceived.

Oak (2001:53), who is an emeritus pastor of SaRang Community Church, one of the representative Korean Churches, and who is well-known for successful discipleship

training, emphatically asserts the importance of rediscovering the congregation as the subjects of the church, as can be seen in the following quotation:

The laity cannot be independent of the church. They can no longer be spectators who come to church regularly to briefly be inspired to pious rituals and patrons who contribute to the operation of the church. Neither can they be naive servants blindly obeying every command. Lay members are the subjects of the church, not the objects. They are as much a part of the body of Christ as the clergy.

From this passage, we realize that it is necessary to have a clear conception of the congregation as understood in *theological* terms.

The role of the hearer (the congregation) is as significant as that of the speaker (the preacher) since the hearer becomes an essential factor in sustaining the vitality and movement of the sermon from beginning to end (Garrison 1954:18; Swears 2000:60). As communication scholars have emphasized the role of the audience in communication, so teachers of homiletics have emphasized the role of the audience in the sermon. The audience is no longer just a passive respondent, something to be preached at; God can also speak to the church through the experiences and biblical knowledge of church members (Hillis 1991:126-127). The more we learn about the communication process, the more we become aware of just how crucial the receiver of the communication is to that process (Kraft 1991:89).

The hearer's main act is the activity of interpreting. All communication is bathed in the interpretations of the participants. In communicative interactions receptors interpret everything that is said and done as a part of the message. Interpretation is clearly one of the most important activities engaged in by receptors. A communicator must do her utmost to insure that everything she does in presenting a message will be interpreted by the receptors in a way that enhances her intended meaning (Long 1989:131).

Preaching and the sermon have been thought of as the exclusive work of the clergy, while the laity has been assigned the role of passive consumer rather than active

participant (Howe 1967:41). Fotheringham (1966:12) describes one kind of audience that fits this characterization. According to him, a “passive audience” is one which is “capable of responding to stimulation, but not expected to initiate persuasion or re-energize the process started by the source.” The audience is to receive and respond to the message, to accept its directions, without questioning its validity. Audiences, as Fotheringham suggests, are never truly passive since any audience response, such as accepting the claims of the message, is an action. What he has really described, however, is a submissive audience, one that uncritically assimilates, absorbs, believes, or adapts itself to the message.

2.6.2.2 Preacher listening rather than speaking

Listening is one of our most important communication skills. Effective listening is an active process that demands conscientious effort on the part of the part of the listener (Johnston 2001:169; Samovar 1992:103). Despite of this perspective, the preacher is traditionally understood just as the speaker when his major role primarily has to do with the way of speaking. The first responsibility of the modern preacher is to listen and observe, and have a “listening mind” (Howe 1967:52; Tisdale 1993:88). Listening teaches us a great deal about the proper way of talking to others (Meyers 1993:83). Receiving information from other people is a fundamental part of communication. Indeed, listening is the primary way people acquire information from each other (Chartier 1981:47). Sensitive, careful listening helps us gain fuller insight into ourselves and into our relationship with others (Wakefield 1981:107).

Preaching does not only have a speech-act character, but also a hearing-act character (Cilliers 2004:32). Without considering the hearing-act character (or a way of hearing), the speech-act character (or a way of speaking) cannot be completed effectively. Pieterse (1987:80) also emphasizes this fact: “Speech without listening is empty. Listening is an indispensable part of communication. When the art of listening is lost, the art of communication likewise goes by the board.”

The ultimate goal of learning to listen effectively must be seen as enabling speakers and listeners to embrace a shared meaning (Baldwin 1984:46). Qualitative

relationships are formed by listening closely, attentively, and supportively; unsatisfactory relationships emerge when listening has been superficial, critical, and defensive. Listening is not passive, for the listener actively creates meaning out of the words heard, according to his or her own mental processes, goals, and needs (Chartier 1981:48).

Preachers must “listen to the listeners” to communicate effectively. The listening preacher is open not only to the Word of God but to people; to put it another way, he should listen to voices of the text and voices of the congregation (Jackson 1988:21; Schlafer 1992:34-58). Similarly, the listeners speak to the preacher before the preacher speaks to them; the minister listens before saying anything (Hillis 1991:129). As a first step, these authors suggest, preachers should listen to the ideas and learn from the wisdoms of the congregation before and while developing the sermon. The preacher as listener should be sensitive to the situation and the world of the congregation (Lee 2003:174). Since preaching is completed with the amen of the congregation, “the preacher needs to engage in and work through the preaching process in sermon preparation with the listeners and their situation constantly in mind” (Pieterse 2001:1).

Listening is an extremely elaborate process that includes analysis of simple and complex symbols, plus synthesis of their individual and total meanings. These meanings are not taken over bodily from the mind of the speaker, but are supplied by each hearer. Try as he may, no preacher can gain complete success in producing desired meaning in the minds of all his hearers on even one occasion (Garrison 1954:62-63). If we are to be effective communicators, we must be good listeners, really hearing what our members are saying, knowing what they are feeling and thinking. Failing to listen properly is inevitably a great barrier in the process towards effective communication (Cartledge 1994:28).

2.6.2.3 Two-way communication

Preaching as communication is a two-way process: Speaking and listening are its essential components (Chartier 1981:44). Preaching cannot exist without the listener

as well as the talker. Communication between man and man is a two-way process. The hearer may work as hard as the speaker (Garrison 1954:21).

Some critics of preaching portray it as a one-way attempt at communication, in which the members of the congregation are passive receivers. This is not really true: at least, if preacher and congregation know what preaching is all about, it need not be true. In thoughtful design of a sermon, the congregation has already had significant input. Their needs, their joys and crises have helped shape the sermon (Pennington 1990:55). But it is also true that a congregation can be active throughout the entire experience of worship. The people communicate with the preacher as they participate in the liturgy and receive the sermon. Indeed, they communicate with each other. Without active two-way communication there cannot be a healthy community: without a living community there cannot be efficient communication (Brooks 1968:22).

Feedback is the congregation's response to the sermon. In communication, feedback designates a very important part of the process (Pennington 1990:77). Feedback is an important variable in effective preaching (Jackson 1988:21). The concept of feedback can be easily explained by the following figure:

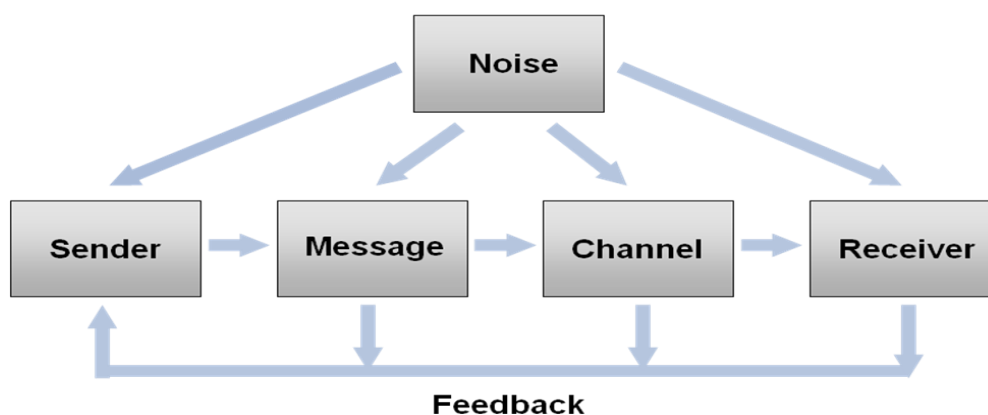


Figure 5 Classic communication model activated by feedback

In the interrelationship among God, preacher and church members (congregation) with the Word as the central figure, they reflect back to the preacher what they have

heard, what they understood the preacher to be saying. This feedback does not come automatically, so preachers must consciously seek feedback in daily interaction and through structured channels. The preacher, then, becomes listener. In the view of preaching process, this is an essential part of effective communication in the church (Pennington 1990:78). This view of feedback can be represented in the following figure:

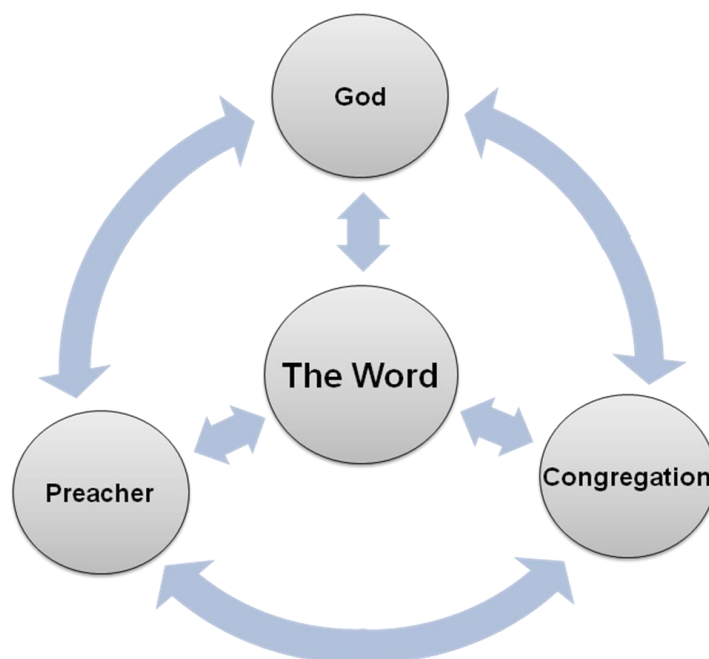


Figure 6 Hermeneutic communication model concerning interrelationship by feedback

The feedback allows the preachers to evaluate the persuasive impact of the message and various factors which affect that impact (simplicity, Biblical basis, relevance, and source credibility), because communication is not only tested by feedback, but also is improved by it (Jackson 1988:29).

2.6.3 Pastoral relationship based on contextual understanding

The nature of Christian communication is that it can only take place when lives are touched by it. Christian faith can only be passed from life to life. The message is therefore itself conditioned by the situation of those whose lives are joined by it (Brooks 1968:18). The preached word must address the audience in such a way that

the individual listeners can identify themselves with the message and the situation to which it speaks, because Christian communication involves a personal relationship that puts the preacher in touch with them through language. They set up a relationship, and the relationship then gives birth to its own communication. At this point the language belongs to the relationship (Schwarz 1985:37).

The preacher as the Christian communicator needs to be aware of all this in the contemporary environment, for his sermonic language will be launched into the same air (Brooks 1968:31). To borrow Lose's (2000:166) view, preaching is not only the matter of exegesis in order to examine what the text means, but it should also reveal the significance of the text for the contemporary community. Kemper (1980:23) believes that preaching includes this arena of social commentary, so that in the sermon the preacher interacts with the needs and questions of the congregation's life. Besides, Pieterse (1987:12) indicates that the preacher should make a sermon faithful to the Bible and directed to the congregation. He goes on to say: "It must be evident to every preacher how great his responsibility is to expound and apply Scripture in the situation of the congregation" (Pieterse 1987:9).

As Ryoo (2008:90) indicates, "The preacher must be well aware that the sermon is not the exegesis to interpret the meaning of the text. The exegesis is an essential step for the sermon, but is not the aim of it. The aim of it is to evoke the holy transformation in the congregation's life by applying the ancient word to the contemporary context." To reiterate, as Osmer (2008) states in his book *Practical theology: An introduction*, "sermons are crafted with an eye to a particular group of people or a specific occasion in a particular congregational context."

It is not easy to keep the role of pastor and preacher in balance. The pastor is a tolerant listener, committed to meeting people "where they are" and serving them by presence and shared experience. The preacher, by contrast, is a talker, a representative of the imperatives of the Gospel and its claim on human life, an advocate for change and self-transcendence. In addition, preachers also struggle with different language systems, psychological and theological, which are still largely separate linguistic worlds. They talk the sometimes highly technical language of the

human experience as pastors but switch to God-talk when they change into their pulpit gowns (Nicholas 1987:2).

The preacher, in intimate personal contact with the members of the congregation, must be aware of the needs and joys of the individual members of the congregation, and the sermon should reflect this pastoral relationship. "Much of the communication of a sermon," Fasol (1983:23) asserts, "takes place before the first word is preached." The preacher-congregation relationship provides the foundation for the message, and out of this relationship comes the message itself. From a very practical perspective, this pastoral relationship of preacher to congregation will have certain predictable effects on the language of the sermon itself. The preacher needs a language which has the smell, the texture, the breath of real, living things (Hillis 1991:132-133). The Word must finally live in the lives of people who, when they leave the church, take it with them into the world for which the Word was intended (Howe 1962:73).

The audience needs to be able to hear God speak in acceptable and meaningful ways using their own language spoken in the context of their culture (Shaw 2003:177). Thus the preacher should make a great effort to be immersed in the lives of people to whom he will speak (Long 1989:12). It is up to the preacher to bring the life of the congregation into the text's presence, to dwell there long and prayerfully, and to discern the reality of this text as it is "with us" (Long 1989:77). Where there is no listener there is no sermon, no matter how beautifully written or structured the script may be. Therefore, people must be written into your manuscripts. They must dominate your thinking and become as much a part of the structure of your sentences as the words you use to express your ideas. People must be in, with, and under each word you write and each idea you develop (Hoefler 1978:125).

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined communicative preaching, in a consideration of the sermonic language and the relation between communication, preacher, and congregation. Preaching must be understood within the perspective of

communication. In the Korean churches, many preachers have not looked upon preaching as communication. It is no small matter that preaching is communication. In the light of this, the preacher should take it to heart that there are noises that hinder his sermon from being preached to the congregation. In the light of the fact that *language* plays a significant part in preaching, these noises show a character of irrelevance by disregarding and not considering the relationship between communication, preacher, and congregation. To establish this envisaged integration, we may raise the following questions: What constitutes irrelevant sermonic language? What type of irrelevances give rise to trouble in the language of the sermon? Why have these problems been left unsolved in the church?

In the next chapter we shall investigate what causes provoke irrelevant sermonic language in terms of three constituents of the preaching process: preacher, congregation, and environment.

CHAPTER 3

CAUSES PROVOKING IRRELEVANT SERMONIC LANGUAGE

This chapter will discuss the reasons why inappropriate sermonic language (acting as noise which impedes the successful delivery of a sermon), is used during the communication process. To this end, we will first investigate the preacher as the person who conveys the language of the sermon from pulpit to pew. Next, we will examine whether the congregation faces any difficulties or experiences any trouble with the preacher's delivery of a sermon or not. Finally we will discuss several points at issue in relation to the environment in which the preacher and the congregation live together.

3.1 Causes originating from preacher

Preaching, wrote Ford (1979:104), is not to be confused with lecturing, nor with diagnosing a situation, nor with providing homiletical advice. The preacher must develop it as communication to provoke change in the hearers. Consequently, the preacher in the pulpit must always be asking, "What is it like to listen to?" This is the starting point for changing the mind of the preacher when considering the hearers. Unfortunately the preacher has been stuck with the idea that to cast the sermon unilaterally is all he can do (Long 1989:31).

The problem with preaching, which Resner names as the failure of preachers to be persuasive and impressive, is not a matter of what is said but how it is said (Resner 1999:76). Contemporary communicators must accept the way understanding is embodied in language (Duffett 1995:79). If they do not, all efforts at communication will be meaningless and ineffective. We must find connections that enable the communication of biblical teaching. When the biblical message is communicated in language and thought forms to the people, it has the highest probability of connecting with listeners (Newbiggin 1986:4-5).

Greindanus (1988:157) reminds communicators that our goal is not to make the Bible connect; it already does that. Rather, it is to determine where and how the

Bible connects with contemporary realities. Communicators, then, seek an analogy between the situation in a text and a contemporary individual, ecclesiastical, cultural, political, or ecological situation (Duffett 1995:82).

Many Korean preachers have adhered to one specific style of sermon rather than tried to accept various styles, even though their options vary on this point. For example, some preachers just hold fast to the style of a “major points” sermon while other preachers only stick to the style of “expository” sermons. They do not even try to take account of any options, not thinking over the characteristics of the text, the contents of the sermon, or the ways in which the congregation, who listens to the sermon, could receive the message. In the history of the Korean church, emphasizing preaching methods has been denounced as being opposed to faith-based attitudes, and a marked tendency to ignore the sermonic methodologies as much as possible has been in evidence. This defiance of various approaches for delivering adequate sermons, forgets that the Bible itself makes use of many styles and genres in order to spread the message of the Gospel.

3.1.1 Recklessly stimulating audience interest

The sermon is ultimately intended to reach people’s ears and to be helpful to the congregation. The preaching should therefore be prevented from being manipulated to merely arouse audience’s interest for the sake of interest only. The danger for the Church lies in the subtle shift of emphasis from the objective truth of the Gospel to its pragmatic value to society. The Christian problem of communication is not be solved merely by discerning what people want and giving it to them (Read 1981:17).

Many communicators believe that the solution to boredom is entertainment. The preacher who is sensitive to the public pulse at any given moment is always given to the temptation of responding to a popular demand rather than expecting a biblical response. In other words, he is, probably unconsciously, eliciting his message from interests of those to whom he speaks, rather than witnessing to the truth of the entrusted message (Read 1981:18).

The preacher's task is to create actively whatever he is preaching about beyond the staid formulas within the listener (Bailey 1993:355; Linn 1966:15-16). The preacher is not an entertainer to indulge people's interests. The preacher will be tempted to form every sermon according to a well-received pattern (Long 1989:101). The audience is even considered as an individual to be entertained or spectator (Lischer 1996:173-176). As a result, the congregation will unconsciously forget the true requirement of the Word whereas the language of the sermon will be irresistibly changed to fit the pattern they prefer. Ultimately the victim will be the congregation. The preacher must be careful in using the skill of capturing the audience's attention in order to satisfy the congregation's demand to be entertained.

3.1.2 Lack of audience analysis

By definition a rhetorical stance that emphasizes the preacher and the text will diminish the influence of the audience. It may neglect the audience by never addressing its needs and concerns. The language may be irrelevant to the audience situation, may work its way out of the congregational context, or may be meaningful only to the preacher (Hillis 1991:163).

The task of the preacher is to devise speech that understands the deepest yearnings of those listening (Brueggemann 1989:43). The preacher should eagerly want something good to happen to and for the hearers as a result of the sermon. Wallace says the preaching is an office for feeding God's people by His calling. He goes on to add that the Word of God must provide them with nourishment to help their spiritual growth and quench their deepest thirst of faith (1989:31).

The Christian communicator must listen to the word of God for others as well as himself, and he must do it not by imposing his own patterns on their lives, but by placing himself at their point on the map (Brooks 1968:58). Pieterse (1987:80) emphasizes this fact: "Speech without listening is empty. Listening is an indispensable part of communication. When the art of listening is lost, the art of communication likewise goes by the board."

The contemporary communicator's role is to interpret both Scripture and culture by affirming their unique perspective and relevance for the community (Duffett 1995:76). Further, listeners look to communicators to connect the Bible to their situation (Mitchell 1991:68). Connecting is the communicator's responsibility.

In spite of this perspective, one of the weakest areas in the Korean churches is that some preachers uncritically assume that the Holy Spirit will make their messages transparent to others. "It is my task to preach; it's the Holy Spirit's task to make it understandable," they seem to be saying. They think that the message will automatically make a connection (Chartier 1981:61).

Today's preachers must exuviate the outdated attitude that to proclaim the message is to convey it, no matter whether it is heard or not. According to Barth (1963:74), the preacher should make every effort to ensure that his sermon is not simply a monologue, magnificent perhaps, but not necessarily helpful to the congregation. Those to whom he is going to speak must constantly be present in the mind of the preacher while he is preparing his sermon. What he knows about them will suggest unexpected ideas and associations which will be with him as he studies his text and will provide the element of actuality, the application of his text to the contemporary situation.

To be a preacher is to be a midwife (Long 1989:20). The midwife carefully listens to her parturient woman and her baby's heart beating. Preachers cannot, and should not, presume to know how all these people would respond and should therefore always be reading, studying, and listening to voices of people unlike themselves. They are to go the text on behalf of the congregation. Their task is to think of the text, as J. Randall Nichols (1980:128) suggests, "as someone's attempt to reflect on the answer to some important question," and then try to discern what that question could be.

3.1.3 Elitism separated from audience

In fact, it comes close to the truth to say that the monological preacher believes that

he has the Word and that God speaks only through him (Howe 1967:34). Thus the message may take the audience into account only as submissive receivers who are called on to believe and obey a message. The sermon may use authoritative language that demands subordination of individual opinions to the conclusion offered in the sermon. Preacher-text sermons lack adaptation and application to the audience. They use language that anticipates a submissive acceptance by the audience of the message (Hillis 1991:163-164).

This “sovereign” preaching of the sermon which the preacher preaches in a higher position than the congregations places the congregation under the relationship of subordination, and forces them inevitably to obey the messages which he proclaims. So the preacher, in this mode, is placed in an authoritative stance, whereas the audiences are placed in a position of secondary concerns or submission (McClure 1995:32). As a result, this stance will be displayed by way of an arrogant tone, judgmental attitude, or monologic presentation of the sermon (Hillis 1991:63). In the Korean churches, it has played a decisive part in making the image of preachers marred and their authority undermined.

The preacher must remain far away from separatism for he is a very important medium in the relationship between pulpit and pew (Chartier 1981:16). Marshall McLuhan (1966), in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, has emphasized the importance of the medium in the reception and interpretation of a message. In Christian preaching, the preacher is the medium for the message of God’s Word.

In addition, the preachers must remember that they are servants at work, who proceed from the midst of the community of faith, at work (Long 1989:10). The preachers are members of the body of Christ, commissioned to preach by the very people to whom we are about to speak (Long 1989:11). The obligation of ordinary church membership is not only to attend worship and support the Church’s work, but actually to communicate the Gospel. In the same way we are in constant danger of forgetting that the preacher is not simply a man called to proclaim the Gospel and to lead in worship – but to be himself a worshipper (Read 1981:78).

In his lectures on preaching, Bonhoeffer declared, “If humility is the proper attitude for the speaker with reference to God and his Word, then genuineness, in its truest sense, is the proper attitude of the speaker with reference to the congregation.” Genuineness is important for the pulpit ministry, since an important means for the expression of genuineness and naturalness is through self-disclosing communication (Chartier 1981:29). The preacher must look at himself and can speak with living authority (Horne 1975:11).

3.1.4 Mistaken sermonic approaches

No matter how effective the method, if it offends your audience its effectiveness is nullified (Davis 1991:94). Those who favour “beat up” messages seem to believe that connection comes only through angry, guilt-inducing tones. Leander Keck refers to such messages as “moralizing.” He defines moralizing as drawing moral inferences about things to be done, virtues to be developed, or beliefs to be held (1979:101). Certainly the Bible speaks about correct beliefs, virtues, and behaviours. But Keck argues that moralizing, “beating people up” messages actually contradict biblical teaching (Duffett 1995:80). Elizabeth Achtemeier (1981:46) adds that “beating people up” messages fail for two reasons. Firstly, they assume that both communicators and listeners have the power to “get their act together.” On the contrary, Scripture assumes that the human race cannot “get its act together.” Secondly, God’s actions of grace are shunted to the side. Contemporary communicators must, for the sake of the Gospel, world evangelization, and cultural relevance, stop “beating people up” in their messages.

Preachers are not to preach theoretical and abstract truths. They are to do more than tell of events far removed in time, although their Gospel is grounded in history. They are to speak of truth that is specific and concrete, of reality that has been enlivened by our own experience. According to Grözinger (2006:2), “Experiences are connected with certain places and certain events. Therefore, preaching as shaping experience, which depends on an appropriate language, has to look for the places which people live in, and for the events by which are people touched. To find this language of shaping experience is continuous homiletical process.” While preaching

is about events from the past, sermons must transpose them into the living present. In short, they are to consult the thoughts and experience of the congregation prior to preaching, and preach the Gospel they have experienced (Horne 1975:34; McClure 1995:39).

If the language of the sermon is not active, dynamic, or vivid, too many sermons simply reach a dead end and give no guidance for commitment and action (Howe 1967:32). Many preachers have attempted to use in their own sermons the preaching methods of some of the famous preachers. Too many preaching opportunities (and thus lack of time for preparation) cause them to be frustrated imitators, instead of being creative in their own way (Howe 1967:22-23). In the situation of Korean church, the preacher is thought of as a performer who produces a masterpiece of communication – in spite of almost unbearable work schedules.

Since missionaries first came from the West at the beginning of their mission to Korea, Korean preachers have immersed themselves in a style of sermon that uses three points and a poem. In terms of the form of preaching, they have generally retained a method of deductive preaching, and come to anchor themselves in the propositional and argumentative approach. It is no exaggeration to say that the Korean churches have not only followed in these footsteps, but looked on them as the master key.

3.1.5 Accentuated image of the herald

One of Long's criticisms of the herald image is that, from a phenomenological perspective, the character of the preacher is an important factor for those who hear preaching. Long (1989:30, cf. also Resner 1999:88) echoes Aristotle's insight, which Augustine functionally canonized for homiletical theory: "Whether or not the congregation believes and trusts the preacher, whether or not the preacher is perceived to have integrity, undeniably affects to some degree the receptivity of the hearers."

When preaching is thought of as the interplay between God's behaviour and human

action, the image of the herald not only emphasizes the divine role but makes light of the human role (Long 1989:25). The herald image fails to take adequate account of the context of preaching because it keeps to traditional preaching such as “sovereign preaching,” (McClure 1995:30-31) “rhetoric of authority,” (Loscalzo 1992:17) and “preacher-based preaching” (Hillis 1991:62-64).

In the Korean churches, in spite of the fact that preachers’ authority resides in their having no authority (Cilliers 2004:222), most preachers have misunderstood the authority of the preacher in an authoritarian manner. This has played a decisive role in forming a distorted image of the herald in the Korean churches.

Preaching does not occur in thin air but always happens on a specific occasion and with particular people within a given cultural setting. These circumstances necessarily affect both the content and the style of preaching, and if we think of preaching as announcing some rarefied biblical message untouched by the situation at hand, we risk preaching in ways that simply cannot be heard. In addition, the personal character of the preacher and the quality of the relationship between the preacher and the hearers are easily ignored (Long 1989:29).

According to Long (1989:29-30), the herald image could one-sidedly take account of the one-way flow from God to the congregation. It depends on the concept that the herald only delivers the message of the Bible, not taking cognizance of the fact that the language of the sermon should always be directed to those who have their concrete existence in specific situations.

3.1.6 Untrustworthy character

We all agree that one’s language comes out of one’s personal character, that is, the language of the preacher reflects his character since the ethos of the preacher corresponds with his true character, faith, and life.

Brooks (1989:25) maintains that a sermon is the truth to be carried to people by a man’s character. Put briefly, the personal character of the preacher may exercise

much more influence upon those who hear his sermon than his message. It cannot be simply overlooked that the person of the preacher is never separated from his sermon for he ought to live a life reflecting the message by which he intends to transform people in their journey of faith.

The critical problem is often the preacher's personal character which is not integrated with his spirituality as a preacher (Thielicke 1978:18). For this reason, many Christian churches have been in a deep morass. Actually it is poignantly required of preachers in preaching, not to utilize any skills, abilities, and methodologies for preachers' rhetoric before attending to their character and personhood. As Jesus is the Word of God itself, the true language of the preacher is his life, which means his character and personhood.

It is also necessary to notice that contemporary people have more interest in the veracity of the preacher than in the content of his message, though his message cannot be ignored without any reason. Robinson (1980:25) asserts that the main idea discovered from the text must be applied to the preacher himself, before preaching can take place.

The consistency of the preacher's character is easily endangered when the house for life and the house for doctrine exist independently of each other (Baumann 1978). The preacher's moral character may inadvertently influence those who experience preaching (Chartier 1981:18). To be a preacher is to be entrusted with the task of speaking the one word humanity most urgently and desperately needs to hear: the glad tidings of God's redemption through Jesus Christ - but as one who has experienced it himself (Long 1989:20).

3.2 Causes originating from congregation

Regarding communication, the congregation has great responsibility in terms of the challenges of the sermonic language. For communication begins with the reciprocal existence of sender and receiver and is effectively accomplished in a communal effort. Regarding the question of who is responsible for preaching, Thompson

(1966:40) states that the preacher bears the responsibility of bringing the source of the Word to attention, and the hearer is responsible for bringing the source needed for listening to attention.

In fact, no doubt should exist about the hearers' responsibility. Although they attend church every Sunday, they often have not taken responsibility for listening to the sermon but still remain outside of it.

As was said above, the amicable interaction and relationship between the preacher and the congregation often fail, and the irrelevant preaching ministry continues. As a result, the sermon does not generate the true meaning contained in its message in the mind of the congregation; they do not prepare their ears to hear, and this heightens the crisis of preaching. The congregation that has been reduced to the state of an audience at a performance tends to become critical, passive, or irresponsible (Howe 1967:23).

3.2.1 Audience encased by the electronic media

As Babin (1991:18-33) indicates in his book, *The New Era in Religious Communication*, the need for entertainment has been radically increased by the characteristic of the age of electronic media. The electronic media are characterized by objective, analytical, formal, logical communication. They view the audience, who are visually and electronically stimulated by the media explosion, as private spectators to the events seen (Bailey 1993:351; Johnston 2001:164; Lee 2003:116-117).

Contemporary people have an attitude to entertainment that avoids boredom by choosing endless programs and enjoying them by way of non-logical and non-linguistic communication. Boredom, which is the bane of the age of electronic media and should be avoided at all costs, works against communication by provoking contrary thoughts or lulling to sleep or draping the whole occasion in a pall of indifference and unimportance (Craddock 1978:13; McCullough 1991:30-32; Webster 1992:75). Preaching faces increasing pressure to accommodate the Gospel

to an audience shaped by television (Lee 2003:115).

It has been observed that television is being used to distract, delude, amuse, and insulate us. Neil Postman (1995) concluded that television has conditioned a whole generation to value amusement more than substance and distraction more than analysis and discussion of serious or complex issues. Another firm conclusion may be drawn. The impact of television watching on the listener demands that some explicit connection be made by communicators. Television has changed audiences by robbing them of their critical capacities. Today there is virtually no chance of communicating with most people under fifty without making many relevant and meaningful connections (Duffett 1995:78).

3.2.2 Nondisclosing behaviour from closed mind

Preachers have always assumed that it is the responsibility of the congregation to pay attention to sermons. What they do not realize is that listening does not happen automatically. Indeed, oral communication can be a very inefficient process; it requires hard work from both speaker and listeners. Effective preaching requires clarity on the part of the preacher and attentive listening on the part of the congregation (Chartier 1981:46).

Often people's nondisclosing behaviour is a purposeful flight from self-knowledge. They are afraid that if they disclose the worst about themselves, others will consider only that information; if they should disclose some weakness in their personal lives, others may assume that the weakness applies to their professional lives as well (Chartier 1981:38-39).

The empathic listener seeks to accomplish a maximum understanding of what is being said by listening from the other person's perspective. This listener keeps all communication channels open. The goal of effective communication, then, is mutual understanding. Listening, as an effective communication process, may be defined as the quest for meaning and understanding. More than the physical process of hearing, listening is an intellectual and emotional process in which someone integrates

physical, emotional, and intellectual abilities, in an active, empathic search for meaning (Chartier 1981:51).

A listener's first obligation is to give full attention to the speaker. The ethical listener creates a listening atmosphere that will encourage speakers to do their best job (Samovar 1992:19). It is said that the contemporary congregation feels hunger without appetite (Schlafer 1992). The congregation is surfeited with the sermon, does not feel the appetite of God's words, and even loses hope of hearing a good sermon, where there is no expectation.

The more honest preachers are with themselves about their own lives, the more they find themselves on common ground with those who will hear the sermon. Eventually they will be the preacher of the sermon, but they must not forget that they will also be one of its hearers. When they go to the scripture seeking not what the people ought to hear but hungering for a Gospel word, they will hear a word for themselves too. It is not enough, though, to go to the Bible only having their own lives in mind. They must self-consciously embody the needs and situations of others, especially those who are different from themselves (Long 1989:55-56).

3.2.3 Rebellion against authority

Power has been defined as the ability to have one's own values and aims accepted by others; the ability to influence others; the ability to limit another person's alternatives of behaviour. Authority is commonly understood as the legitimate use of such power. According to Augustine, there are two ways to acquire knowledge: by authority and by reason. While the use of reason is better adapted for the educated, he says, for the common man the authority of upright men is safer. Thus for those who are unlearned and seek to be learned, "authority alone opens the door" (Weaver 1953:185).

We live in a time of crisis in authority. First of all, people are flooded with a multiplicity of contradictory statements and opinions. The second reason lies in the conflict between the avowed aims of society and the realities of life. The third reason for a

crisis in authority is a renewed appreciation of the individuality and liberty of every person. Undoubtedly, this attitude towards authority has also had an influence on the authority of the Bible (Wijngaards 1979:42-44).

Rebellion against authority runs the full extent of our cultural spectrum. There is obvious rebellion against authority in all our institutions – government, the home, the school, and the church. This is one of the signs of our times. Since the church is not being spared, the pulpit cannot be spared either. But the pulpit is particularly sensitive to rebellion against authority, and that for a very obvious reason: it has always been very authority conscious. No centre of life has laid claim to a more ultimate authority than the pulpit (Horne 1975:19).

Craddock (1971:14) asserts that, owing to a change of social structure, “no longer can the preacher presuppose the general recognition of his authority as a clergyman, or the authority of his institution, or the authority of Scripture.” Traditionally, the authority of preaching and preachers has been sustained firmly in the Christian churches (Lee 2003:41). Yet the traditional mode of sermon has failed to reach the contemporary listeners who are constantly visually and electronically stimulated. To them, the traditional discursive sermon and authoritative language is no longer effective (Lee 2003:112).

3.2.4 Passive participation

The congregation has a role in discernment of the Word to be preached. The Word of God should be discerned by the community rather than by individuals. All members of the community have an interpretive and proclamatory vocation. They must actually participate in the discernment of the preached Word, and, furthermore, participate actively in the whole sermon process. The Word of God, therefore, is a communal Word when it is discerned, not from the centre of the community by professional preachers, but from the margins of the community by the collaboration of everyday preachers who are developing as maturing Christian disciples (McClure 1995:21-23).

In spite of this constructive perspective, it is difficult to evoke the expectation and participation of the congregation in reality. Many congregations have been passive as participants not to be empowered in the event of preaching for a long time. More specifically, they cannot help but be passive because they have been indoctrinated within a tradition of accepting the sermon uncritically. In my opinion, the chronic tameness of distorted passive participation must be restored as soon as possible.

In Korea, *politeness* is one of the most important virtues; however, it plays a role in blocking active participation of the congregation. Since Korean culture has emphasized polite speech and responses corresponding to it, Koreans develop various ways in which they politely communicate to their conversational partners (Kang 2004:131). Koreans attempt to observe etiquette when they encounter their communication partners. One of the most important social virtues in Korea is to respect older (or superior/more powerful) people, to deal with younger (or inferior/less powerful) people gently, and to be humble towards others (Kang 2004:132).

Social status is one of the most important factors which influence the use of *politeness strategies* in Korea. Social status refers to hierarchical position which an individual takes socially. The effect of social status on the choice of politeness strategies is inferred from the fact that social courtesy varies across an individual's social status in our society. Specifically, Koreans are expected to be more polite to people with high social status than people of low social status, since it is a social moral to show respect to persons with high social status (Kang 2004:139). For this reason, in the Korean churches, it is hard to expect active participation of the congregation as a good partner to the preacher when preaching, as the preacher is seen as of a "higher status."

3.2.5 Avoiding constructive change

Communicators are helped immeasurably by understanding the genres or types of biblical literature. Understanding literary genres is indispensable to biblical interpretation and therefore to a clear understanding of major biblical themes.

Understanding biblical literature and themes accomplishes part of the crisscross interpretive method. We now move from the biblical world to our world to discover how Christian communicators “connect” biblical teaching (themes) to contemporary concerns (Duffett 1995:71).

In the Korean churches, efforts to develop the styles of the sermon fitting the biblical literature have been neglected, though the Bible has various genres of biblical literature and stylistic features and patterns of construction.

The preacher examines the text to determine both its literary character and its function. Each of these types of literature has its own stylistic features and pattern of construction (Long 1989:73). Accordingly, the sermon could employ relevant language based on these biblical literature types.

It is true that most Korean preachers have preached in a fixed and monotonous form without considering the literature style of the text. As a result, the language of the sermon has come to be patternized, stereotyped, and changed into being static. For example, many Korean preachers have preferred the three-point sermon to any other kind of sermon, whereby they preached a poem, an item of prose, a fable, a metaphor, or an allegory.

There is actually a bigger problem than this resistance to the literary style of the sermon: a dislike of change of the existing frame. The Korean congregations mostly avoid experiencing change by virtue of their conservative cultural atmosphere. Though something in the church has been wrong, they have already accustomed themselves to the traditional sermonic language in the course of time. The audience might be shocked to see anything changed from the comfortable norm (Davis 1991:94).

3.3 Causes originating from environment

In contemporary society we tend to forget that society is a variable element that constantly changes. Cultures and societies change from one period of time to

another. The tendency is to assume that activities, forms, and methods that were relevant in a past era are equally relevant everywhere and for all times (Søgaard 1996:34).

The position of preaching is becoming cloudy and the sermon is becoming submerged in this crisis. The Bible speaks to particular people in the concrete circumstances of their lives. It speaks a word on target, illumining a situation from within. But those circumstances have changed and is even challenged both inside and outside of the present-day church (Long 1989:55). These changeable circumstances must be understood when the intention is to communicate to people living in a different time than those peoples of the bible.

3.3.1 Hierarchical atmosphere

The more authoritarian the church's structure, the more it is criticized; governance and leadership are such important parts of church life. Preachers belong to the hierarchy of the church (Lee 2003:115).

In Korea's society, Confucianism affects the practice of religion while not being a religion itself. It is more than a religion, for it controls and legitimates the very fabric of personal, social, and political behaviours. It has been a way of life for the Korean people (Lee 1997:93). Characteristic of many Asian cultures, especially those that are influenced by Confucian traditions, is the great reverence and respect given to elders and to those perceived to be in positions of authority. Often the spiritual director will be placed unconsciously in an authority position (Rakoczy 1992:80). Within this social climate, Korean preachers have held fast to one-way preaching in accordance with the absolute imperative tone in Confucian culture.

Confucianism has penetrated deeply among the Korean people through moral education from primary school to institutions of higher learning (Chung 1982:616). Today Confucian beliefs and values still persist as an important part of Korean culture and society: these include "a tenacious memory of the past (customs, habits, and thought patterns); paternal authority; familistic collectivism; reverence for the

aged; learning and personal cultivation; legalistic conservatism; a hierarchical society; rigidity of thought; and rigid social behaviour” (Chung 1982:618). Yoo (1987:14) correctly says that more than any other “religion” Confucianism has shaped the social and political forms of Korean culture.

Preachers in the Korean pulpit seem to preach normative and ethical sermons under the influence of teachings of Confucius. This type of authoritative, argumentative, and propositional sermons grounded in Confucian culture is prevalent in the Korean churches. Therefore this tendency plays an impeditive role in sustaining the hierarchical atmosphere of the Korean churches.

3.3.2 Postmodernism

Social theories and philosophers tell us that we have left behind the structures of modernity and crossed the threshold into a new era that they prosaically termed “post-modern” (Chia 2006:133). For some, “post-modern” refers to the rejection of the meta-narratives of modernity and the privileging of particulars over universals. “Post-modernism though,” writes Steiner Kvale, “is characterized by a loss of belief in an objective world and an incredulity towards meta-narratives of legitimation” (1995:19). Postmodernism rejects objective truth and the reliability of knowledge because of its opposition to Enlightenment rationality. If preaching is fundamentally concerned with making truth claims, then the lack of epistemological confidence in postmodernity calls into question the validity of such a discourse (Kvale 1995:133).

Postmodernism emphasizes personal experience, cultural pluralism, and non-rational discourse (Lee 2003:117). Through this influence, contemporary preaching is seriously threatened by postmodernism which denies the existing authority and tradition, since it is not an esoteric phenomenon influencing specific groups, but a trend of thought affecting all people and the spirit of the times shared by them. Postmodernism frightens many Christians because we connect it to the absence of values and truth in society today (Mathews 2003:91).

3.3.3 Monological one-way communication

Preaching in a one-way communication model would tend to be monological; preaching in a two-way communication model would tend to be dialogical. The content dimension is communicated through the manipulation of symbols and consequently tends to be the verbal part of a message. This dimension conveys the “data” of the communication, whereas the relationship dimension tells how the communication is to be accepted (Chartier 1981:25). The Korean churches have focused on the content dimension too much in terms of monological approach to date. Most Korean churches have not understood dialogical preaching as happening between two people but have persisted in their opinion that preaching is a one-sided proclamation (Joo 2006:409).

Communication may refer to a single message or to a series of messages. Such an understanding sees communication as a single, static event (Chartier 1981:15; Kirkland 1987:122; Pieterse 1987:6). Conventional preaching is largely “one way” or monological in its concept of communication. It has become locked up in a stereotype that stifles the potential creativity of every preacher (Howe 1967:34).

Without accepting the feedback, unilateral sermonic language naturally occurs in preaching. Preachers are afraid of honest evaluation and inclined to receive criticism not as source of learning but as a source of personal rejection. Lack of feedback removes the preacher from many of the possibilities of correction and renewal. The preacher is fond of saying that God speaks to the church through the world, but he should think about how the Word of God is going to be made available to the preachers if they do not listen to anybody through whom God might speak. If they do not listen to the laity, they cannot learn much about the meeting of these meanings (Howe 1967:37).

3.3.4 Fragmentation of community

To be revelatory, communication must take place within community. Communication cannot be validated unless it is affirmed in and through the life of people in

community. For this reason, the disintegration and rearrangements of community today pose a major challenge to effective Christian communication.

Bellah (1996), in *Habits of the Heart*, has documented this fragmentation of community. He points out that in colonial times individual independence and social cooperation went hand in hand, but that this tradition grew out of two incompatible models that promised care and concern for others in exchange for divine care and concern. The contract model joined people together only to maximize their self-interest. During the past two centuries, individual fulfilment has gradually eroded the sense of community until today the individual tends to be the reference point for all values. This kind of secular freedom undermines human commitment since it treats everything as a dispensable commodity – marriage, friends, jobs, churches, religions, God – as everything has value only insofar as it has utility for the individual.

This analysis underscores the urgency of redefining and rebuilding community. From a Christian's point of view, it is only through the resurgence of community that the individual can reconnect with God, who is manifest in the process of participation and whose essence is relatedness, wholeness, and harmony (Fore 1987:51).

In order to recover fragmented faith community, it is no exaggeration that the preacher both arises from the congregation and now stands to preach before the community. This means that the preacher is no longer simply one among the many. Something has changed, and the preacher is in some new relationship to the others in the community (Long 1989:22-23).

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter investigated three causes provoking irrelevant sermonic language: preacher, congregation and environment. These factors must be considered not separately but relationally. They are closely involved in communicative preaching, so many of their causes must be understood as being an overall problem faced by the language of the contemporary sermon.

For this reason, we can conclude that the preaching of a sermon must be contained within an interrelationship between the preacher and the congregation. In other words, it is essential to consider the preacher, the congregation, and their situation together for they produce a profound effect regarding how the sermonic language is conveyed.

We will discuss these three theological approaches for building up the hermeneutic foundation of sermonic language in more detail in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

THREE THEOLOGICAL APPROACHES FOR SERMONIC LANGUAGE

Christianity is a revealed religion (Swank 1981:25). We can only explore sermonic language by theological approaches to the extent that God reveals it to us. The essential secret depends upon mastering certain techniques based on being mastered by certain convictions, after which methodology and theology need to be considered interactively. In other words, we will first explore theological concepts that are relevant to the (methodology of) restoration of sermonic language. Subsequently, we will consider, in the next chapter, concretely applicable methods that will influence the sermonic language which is in a critical state. If our theology is accurate, according to Stott (1982b:92), then we have all the basic insights we need into what we ought to be doing, and all the incentives we need to induce us to do it faithfully. This chapter will be investigating Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology.

4.1 Incarnational approach of sermonic language

We will first consider Christology, particularly the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, in relation to sermonic language. This is based on the assertion that Christian preaching should adhere to the ascriptive logic of the gospels and dare to preach Jesus in all His particularity by rendering Him as the subject of His own predicates (Campbell 1997:193).

In addition, there is another clear reason for taking account of Christology: it is essential to render Jesus' identity for contemporary hearers. We need to remind ourselves that the language of the sermon should reflect their context. Accordingly, not only is the preacher's message shaped by the story of Jesus, but the very act (language) of preaching itself is a performance of Scripture, an embodiment of God's reign after the pattern of Jesus in contemporary hearers (Campbell 1997:216). In the practice of preaching by way of sermonic language, the preacher enacts the way of Jesus in the world.

4.1.1 The incarnational word-event

Effective communication is strongly rooted in the concept of incarnation, which means that the Word, as the divine side of the incarnation equation, became flesh, as the human side of the incarnation (Loscalzo 1992:103; Shaw 2003:161). Basic to our understanding of Christian communication is the fact that God is a communicator who makes Himself known to us, and seeks a relationship with us that will result in our response to Him through praise and worship and by involvement in His mission (Søgaard 1993:25).

God identifies personally with His receptors, as a person who interacts with and becomes vulnerable to His receptors, and Himself becomes His message. Incarnation – personal participation in the lives of His receptors – is His constant method. And as in all life-changing communication, the person (whether God Himself in Christ or another person as God’s representative) is Himself the major component of the message He conveys (Kraft 1991:26). The incarnation was the supreme revelation of God because it was God’s ultimate means of communication. The incarnation, therefore, is the truest theological model for preaching because it is God’s ultimate act of communication and God’s Word is incarnated into the mind and life of the congregation (Craddock 1985:26; Fant 1977:29).

The final and complete communication of God to humanity was in the form of a human body: the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Similarly, the Christian communicator needs to learn how to communicate as a human being (Kraft 1991). Fant (1977:71) calls the Incarnation “the truest theological model for preaching because it was God’s ultimate act of communication.” Because Jesus Christ Himself took on flesh that was appropriate for a particular situation, preaching cannot do otherwise.

Communicative preaching through incarnation is becoming involved in a context, entering into the real problems, issues, and struggles of the people. Jesus did not just speak to the Jews, but he became a Jew and identified himself with all aspects of Jewish life. He identified with the social outcasts and participated in the social

relationships of the Jewish culture. He became a true human being, even working as a carpenter. He spoke to their particular needs, rather than presenting a message of universal abstracts (Søgaard 1996:29).

We can rightly say that, through all His work and actions, God revealed what He is like, or in other words, that He revealed His own personality. Through the incarnation God revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus became to us the visible image of the Father, the personal expression of what God is, the exact likeness of God's own being. And in His human life, He expressed more convincingly and powerfully than could have been done in any other way: the ideal of human sanctity (Wijngaards 1979:138).

According to Ebeling (1963:186), the power of words as communication is by no means restricted to information and the increase of knowledge. The power of words as an event is that they can touch and change our very life. For they represent the speaker to us, they communicate the other as a person to us as people.

Christianity is a religion of incarnation because God's communication is incarnation. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us ..." (John 1:14, RSV). God in Jesus Christ took upon Himself our life, with all its pain and weakness. The incarnate son of God became the suffering servant. He washed the dirty feet of men like us and He suffered with and for us men. Therefore the preacher must incarnate an accepting and healing love which enables him to identify with men in their weakness and suffering. The identification will not be as full and complete as was the identification effected by Jesus Christ but it must be real (Horne 1975:44-45).

The Gospel must be addressed to people where they are now. If you are not aware of their current interest, you may miss them, and, therefore, not have the opportunity to speak to their more permanent needs. Ritschl (1960:141) introduces Phillips Brooks' view of how untimely a sermon is if it deals only with the abstractions of eternity and has no word to help men who are dizzied with the whirl and blinded with the darkness of today. Thieliicke (1978:97) has stressed the importance of making the sermon contemporary, saying: "The sermon must be contemporary. It must

correspond with the time in which it is preached.” David James Randolph (1969:44-45) has emphasized the same truth. “A sermon,” he writes, “is an address to a particular people at a particular time in a particular place ... It is a turning point in preaching when the preacher begins to preach to faces, to particular persons and problems, seen against the landscape of modernity.” The preacher must be aware of at least two things in addressing the Gospel to where people are now:

First, he must preach the redemptive action of God in terms of the experience and language of his people. God’s spokesmen in the Bible did this. They didn’t appeal to abstract and ethereal experience. They spoke to people where they stood historically with their political, social, economic and spiritual involvements. And they eschewed an esoteric and technical language. There was the ring of life and vitality in their words. When God spoke His final word through His Son, He did the same thing. Jesus Christ spoke our language, set His feet in all our dusty ways, underwent our pain and temptation, and suffered our death. The setting of His life was historical and concrete... Second, the preacher must give universal truth a particular application. The Bible appeals to truth and reality that men experience everywhere and at all times. It is universal. The Bible speaks of day and night, light and darkness, earth and sky; sleeping and waking, work and rest, withdrawal from and return to the busy world, strength and weakness, sickness and health, life and death; laughter and weeping, hope and despair, love and hate; right and wrong, friendship and enmity, alienation and reconciliation; the common place and mystery, faith and doubt, man and God (Horne 1975:49-50).

4.1.2 Preachers of the incarnate Word

As preachers of the incarnate Word, we must involve ourselves in incarnational preaching. We must be committed to the historical word and the contemporary world. To borrow Fant’s (1977:55) phrase: “Without the Word, we have no message. Without the world, we have no ministry. This clearly shows that the proclamation of the Gospel needs an incarnational act of witness that is called self-disclosure represented by the person in the pulpit.”

A preacher is a person who lives the gospel like Jesus Christ did. The Gospel must

be incarnate in the preacher (Horne 1975:36-37; Swears 2000:44-45). He must give hands and feet, lips and voice, breath and life to the gospel he is called to preach. He must embody the gospel. He must relate to people in the way Jesus did. He must love them, accept them, serve them, give them dignity, and share their pain. Unless the Gospel becomes incarnate in him, his preaching will be robbed of much of its power and effectiveness.

When we look at God's incarnation, we are looking at the centre of communication and the essence of communication theory. By this action God was bending down (Kraft 1980:210) to disclose Himself through ordinary situations of human life, thus becoming completely relevant to the context of human beings. He did it at a particular time in history and through one particular culture. By studying this incarnational communication of God, we will not refuse human communication but discover the key that can redeem or restore the human communication process (Søgaard 1993:14-15).

The Christian sermon can be explained in the features of openness and intersubjectivity (Moore 1991:138-139). Here, openness means that God's hidden world is revealed and his self-disclosure is embodied by the sermon. Intersubjectivity means that those who have different experiences in different places go through inner or mutual interchange through the sermon. In other words, the sermon enables people to experience connection with God and between the preacher and the congregation. The features of openness and intersubjectivity can be achieved in terms of the course that the preacher does not preach the sermon by a mere human element but by the divine Word which is sublimated inside Him through incarnational relationship (Fant 1977:28-35).

4.1.3 The incarnational language of sermon

In considering the relationship of our preaching words to the events in which God became embodied in human flesh, we cannot miss the decisive significance of the language (Buttrick 1994a:74). In becoming flesh, the eternal Word of God enters our world, a world of time and space, and therefore also enters our language. The

coming of God in the incarnate Word is a lingual event. In the incarnation, God by His grace and in His own prior action establishes a locus of truth, a place of meaningful correspondence, which can be encountered *ex post facto* within the context of human language (Chia 2006:139).

The Incarnation was the supreme self-disclosure of God because it was his primary mode of communication about his nature. It can be characterized as twofold: having a personal aspect and a contextual aspect.

For the personal aspect, Christian communication must be person-centred, and of this Jesus is the outstanding example. The Word became a human being who lived among us. Sermonic language must therefore be evaluated on the basis of its capacity to communicate personalness (Søgaard 1993:105). As far as God's self-disclosure is concerned, we should notice that communication belongs to the very essence of revelation (Kraemer 1957:26). Self-disclosing communication enriches one's relationships with others. The degree of intimacy and trust in the relationship depends upon the amount and depth of self-disclosure, as well as upon the degree of honesty used in its conveyance (Wheless 1978:155). Self-disclosure conveys trustworthiness and draws forth interpersonal commitment from others. Thus the key to the effective use of sermonic language would seem to lie in self-disclosure. A central figure for developing such a community of lived-out faith is the preacher, who is in a position to model self-disclosure and its power, as he or she interprets the Word of God for life today (Chartier 1981:36).

The self-disclosure of God in Jesus Christ becomes the paradigm for incarnational preaching. Preachers are the instruments of the Word, and the Word of God is expressed through personality. The preacher's task is to make God visible through the transparency of his or her own person. The truth of the Incarnation is that God has been revealed in humanity. To the extent that the preacher can be authentically human by revealing self, he or she is in a position to be an instrument of the revelation of God. In presenting the Christian story in a sermon, the preacher needs to find his or her own point of identification with that story (Chartier 1981:33).

In accordance with McLuhan's assertion that the medium is the message, the sermonic language employed by the preacher himself has great influence in the message as the medium conveying the sermon. In the Bible, we can see that many people, including Jesus' disciples, followed and obeyed Him because He showed them the incarnational model that His words corresponded to his life.

For the contextual aspect, preaching should mediate the contemporary appearance of Christ's spirit in human relationships. The action of the preacher is rooted in the whole context of his life with man and God. It is not enough that he should be the composer of the form of the message, standing outside of it. Instead, his chosen word must become his committed action. His word must become flesh that meets the embodied word of his hearers. The preacher must learn to live up to this daring concept: I am the message (Howe 1967:101).

Preaching must not be separated from the contemporary situation. Because there is a human factor in the preaching equation, the sermon must confront the problems which people face. The sermon must involve itself with an analysis of the human situation, with the illustration of the principles of the Gospel in terms of contemporary life, and with the application of the Word of God to the specific situations (Fant 1977:104).

God's approach is receptor-oriented communication. Such an approach demands of the preacher a high respect for the receptors, a trust in them as people created in the image of God, and even making ourselves vulnerable in our communication. It also means entering totally into the context of the audience, using their language and frame of reference (Søgaard 1996:31).

The biblical word is never a word in abstraction. It is always a specific word for a specific situation. This message needs to be alive, relevant, and directed at the circumstances of the listeners. In His incarnation, Jesus showed us the perfect example of such an approach. He became human, entered into human history and culture, and used human language (Fant 1977:105-106). In the incarnational model, the Word, as the divine side of the incarnation equation, became flesh, as the human

side of the incarnation equation (Loscalzo 1992:103). Jesus also used concrete language from His contemporary situation to incarnate His ultimate revelation. However it is done, “applying to life” is essential to proclamation. If preaching is to be true incarnation, then the preacher must be involved with human life; and to the degree that he is involved, his sermon will be also. His preaching must be specific enough to incarnate the Word in the contemporary situation. What is more, Jesus was not just a case of monologue preaching, but incarnation and life involvement among the people with whom he communicated. Such an approach demands commitment to the people and to their cultural environment and at the same time forces us to work for dialogue instead of monologue (Søgaard 1993:16). In addition, Jesus might have been more impressive if He had spoken in Hebrew, or even in Greek, but He used Aramaic, the common language of the people, so that they might understand (Søgaard 1996:27).

Macleod (1987:25) presents Bernard Manning’s opinion that preaching is the manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the Spoken Word. Christian preaching can be defined as a particular and incarnational word-event. As such, the preacher must give equally serious attention to the interpretation of the congregation and their socio-cultural contexts: preaching which not only aims toward greater “faithfulness” to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but which also aims towards “fittingness” (in content, form and style) for a particular congregational gathering of hearers” (Tisdale 1997:32-33). The Word should be incarnated or reincarnated within changing situations.

Many Christians believe that preaching is God’s ordained means of communicating the Gospel to others. Furthermore, they often believe that the sermon is an effective method of bringing about a change in people’s lives (Søgaard 1993:16). On the contrary, one of the charges made against the pulpit is that it is irrelevant. They especially see this as a part of the pulpit crisis of our time. They say frequently that the preacher answers questions they do not ask, preaches about abstract truths while they wrestle with concrete problems, talks about spiritual reality that seems far removed from the earthy and mundane settings of their lives, and uses language that is difficult to understand. In the Incarnation, God came to where people were. The

preacher must seek nothing less than this for his sermon. He must preach where people are, as Jesus Christ did (Horne 1975:47).

4.2 Pneumatological approach of sermonic language

We have argued the hermeneutic relationship between the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the sermonic language in the earlier part of this chapter. The next significant theological step by which the language of the sermon is recovered and revitalized is Pneumatology. The desirable language of the sermon is required by means of the participation of the Holy Spirit as well as the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ.

The Word has become flesh in a unique, unrepeatable historical event. The pouring out of the Holy Spirit over all flesh was an event that happened once, but one that also continually occurs in an unending history. When the time was ripe, God became a human being. Now, God is coming as a Spirit, bringing Jesus Christ to our consciousness and even more to our unconscious, to the heart (Long 1996:66).

4.2.1 The significance of the Holy Spirit in sermonic language

God is by His nature a communicator. God makes Himself known. God wants to be understood. On the basis of these points, it is said that communication is deeply rooted in God's nature, and it is this nature He imparted to humanity when He created us in his own image (Kraft 1991:15). Communication is therefore not something accidental or supplementary for human beings, but it is the only way to be fully human (Søgaard 1996:25-26).

Traditional theological dogmatics says that the Holy Spirit of God is ultimately responsible for the effect of preaching (Jung 1995:7; Theissen 1995:121). Bohren (1971:80, Korean translation) proposes that Christian homiletics should begin with pneumatology. In the process of preaching, the Holy Spirit witnesses to the human spirit that the proclaimed words are, in fact, the words of the Lord (Lee 2003:205). Added to this, the Holy Spirit points to Christ, and in response people recognize that

they become children of God through faith in Jesus (John 1:12). It is the power of the Holy Spirit in which John Calvin (1960:74-81) stressed this pneumatological foundation. An encounter between God and human beings happens through the work of the Holy Spirit (Pieterse 1987:75; Pieterse 2001:16).

Ultimately, all Christian communication, especially preaching, is the word of the Holy Spirit. It is a sacramental miracle in which the communicator and those communicated with are joint communicants (Brooks 1968:83). The Holy Spirit is receptor-oriented, seeking to reach his receptors by entering their frame of reference, by participating in their life, in order to be maximally intelligible to them. He therefore employs the most basic principle of effective communication, receptor-orientation, a principle that we must learn to imitate (Kraft 1991:25). Unfortunately, much Christian communication has ignored this principle in the Korean churches.

It must be appreciated that various expressions of the appropriate sermonic language in preaching can be empowered by the intercession of the Holy Spirit. According to Shaw (2003:42), the Holy Spirit may be working to help a preacher establish what metaphors, symbols, and communicative styles are the best to use. The Holy Spirit touches the souls of the receptors in order to allow those images to lead them to a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ. When the Holy Spirit represents God in active communication, those diverse options to achieve the aim of preaching in conveying the relevant sermonic language is practiced. A sermon using biblical sign language is above all an opportunity for the congregation to enter into dialogue with God (Theissen 1995:92).

Language is among the highest endowments of man. God's revelation would not be adapted to the dignity of man as a person and an intelligent being if it did not find expression in language. When we reflect on the role of language in establishing spiritual contact with men at the personal level, we see that the reality of God's self-gift must be offered through the medium of language if it is to bring man as a person into communion with God (Drury 1962:5).

A preacher's words are communicated via the Holy Spirit (Chartier 1981:61). The

words are rendered actual before a particular congregation by preaching. Hence preaching cannot be a merely human activity. It is a sacred action that goes beyond the level of ordinary human discourse. The power of the Spirit in the language of the sermon is present (Drury 1962:10-11). The Holy Spirit wants God's words to be understood correctly so that the appropriate response in the congregation can be elicited through the sermonic language which is inspired by the Holy Spirit (Søgaard 1993:13). The Word as it is written in the Scriptures, as it is spoken in the sermon, is accomplished by the Holy Spirit as the Spirit-empowered word. The preacher's word is not an impotent word; it has great power because inseparably connected with it is the Holy Spirit. The word is a means of grace through which the Holy Spirit works his regenerating power (Thompson 1984:23).

The preacher has to compose the sermon and thereby construct the sign that manifests grace. When a preacher faithfully preaches the message of Christ, to the extent that he does, the essential power of his words comes not from human eloquence but from the Holy Spirit. Preaching is a divinely established cause of grace (Drury 1962:15).

To borrow Pieterse's phrase: "God does not give his Spirit without the Word. When the Word is proclaimed, the Spirit accompanies the Word. The Spirit does not work apart from the Word, but in close conjunction with the Word" (Pieterse 1987:15).

As Runia (2001:37) says, "No human being can ever have control of the Spirit. Human work always remains work in the service of the Spirit and it also remains dependent on the sovereign activity of the Spirit." In this light a dependence on the Holy Spirit is a constant factor that permeates all Christian communication. As we submit our lives and ministries to the guidance of the Spirit, we become his "extensions" or ambassadors (Søgaard 1993:105).

4.2.2 Pneumatological link between the preacher and the congregation

God wants a relationship. He wants the broken relationship to be restored. The fall of humanity can be seen primarily as a breakdown in communication. In the recovery of

that damaged communication, he does not seem to be happy with a passive response but seeks an interactive relationship (Søgaard 1996:28). In this sense, the Holy Spirit is working in us, both the preacher and the congregation, to renew and restore the human value that has been undercut by the debilitating effects of sin. The Spirit's empowering makes these new creatures fully human, fully alive, in Christ (Chartier 1981:107).

The Holy Spirit does not merely apply His truth to the preacher's personality and experience but also to the congregation (Joo 2003:11). If the sermon has nothing to do with their real lives, it will not succeed. Consequently, the preacher should speak to the contemporary people, not the ancient people. The modern homiletics has emphasized the exegesis of the congregation by the intercession of the Holy Spirit as well as the exegesis of the text. Even though the sermon is meaningful, it cannot be a relevant one if it is not delivered under the illumination of the Holy Spirit which makes God's eternal words enter into connection with today's congregational situation.

For the preacher, it is easy unknowingly to become headstrong and arrogant in the pulpit (Stott 1982b:320). During the preaching process, this could be a fatal hazard. A preacher's humility comes out of the power of the Holy Spirit. Every preacher desires to be effective. He hopes the congregation will listen to his sermons, understand them and respond to them in faith and with obedience (Stott 1982b:328). According to Stott (1982b:330), in order to be filled with the Spirit, the preachers have first to acknowledge their own emptiness. In order to receive power, they have to admit, and then even to revel in, their own weakness. Ultimately, their task is to determine what the Holy Spirit wants this passage to do for his congregation (Adams 1971:11). Jung (1995:189) says "The Holy Spirit and the preacher are clearly correlated in their preaching ministry. But the relationship is never one of equality in the sense of the respective partners depending equally upon one another to co-operate in performing each one's separate function." Rather, the nature of the relationship between the two is aptly expressed by "spirit-empowering co-relationship" in the sense that "By this empowering of the Holy Spirit, the human instrument is elevated into God's hand. Thus the limited human instrument is used as an instrument of God Almighty and

becomes God's fellow worker (2 Cor. 6:1)" (Jung 1995:190).

For the congregation, the Holy Spirit enables them to hear the life-changing Word (Mathews 2003:92). In each context, while God is fundamentally the same, the Holy Spirit reveals something new about himself and his relationship with people because each human context is different (Shaw 2003:13). Only the Holy Spirit leads the congregation to be a true partner of preaching by the collaborative relation between the Holy Spirit and humanity (Lee 2003:206). Cilliers (2004:28) states that the Holy Spirit has a pivotal role in the pneumatological approach to collaborative preaching because the Holy Spirit links the voices of the preacher, the text and of the congregation to become God's voice. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit's work is to accomplish the aim of preaching, which seeks to be discourse and offers an opportunity to enter into dialogue with God, is to make God present in the inner dialogue of human beings (Theissen 1995:72).

As Kellerman (1997:29) states this fact: "The Holy Spirit established ties between the preacher and the congregation so that they are mutually collaborated in the word of God." What this passage makes clear is that effective sermonic language places importance on pneumatological connection between the preacher and the congregation.

4.2.3 Pneumatological language of sermon in prayer

Communicating God's Word is a deeply spiritual event involving the Holy Spirit. Gospel presentation is a missionary act. Preachers are intimately and personally involved as participants in this process. And the best preachers do this using extremely deep prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit. There is something mysterious about the infinite communicability of the Bible (Shaw 2003:32).

Prayer remains the most basic structure of all hopeful preaching (Cilliers 2004:20). All preachers should pray for the Holy Spirit at work during the whole process of preaching. For the preacher cannot create this miracle of the movement of the Word becoming Scripture through the living Word (Pieterse 1987:15). That is the reason

why he should commit to sincere prayer. According to Abbey (1973:209-210), prayer as the spiritual preparation of the preacher is vital to the relationship between the sermon and the language. The preacher therefore needs preparation in prayer. Preaching is more than intellect; it is spirit also. As such, it needs spiritual reality in its preparation. The preacher does not speak in his own right; he is sanctioned to be a spokesman of his Lord, the living Word. The sermon is not secular oratory; it is a part of worship. The object of preaching is to meet some urgent need of the people, and the preacher will preach with greatest fidelity to that objective which comes in the hour of delivery fresh from intercession for the people and their needs. The preacher can do his best work, not in self-consciousness of the people; which means he will do his best when he comes to the pulpit from prayer that has freed him from anxiety by putting him and the total need of the hour fully in the hands of God.

According to Lee (2003:203), preaching is “theonomous” in the sense that the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the human agent is initiated and sustained by God. As Ruina (2001:37) says, “The Holy Spirit works through human beings. Human beings do their work in the service of the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit does not only work in us, but also with us. He involves us with his actions. He activates us through his own activity. The effects of our communication will in the final analysis depend on the work of the Holy Spirit that works on the will of a person, calling, challenging, and urging a response, and that same Spirit is capable of guiding us in planning and applying principles of communication for the proclamation of the Gospel. In prayer we seek the will of God and plan the ministry. Then, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we go forth communicating through word and deed in accordance with His will (Søgaard 1993:95).

God, in his sovereign will and through the power of the Holy Spirit actualizes Christian preaching, making it true proclamation of the Word. By the power of the Spirit, preaching takes on the character of an event in which the words of men are taken up and exalted and become the medium in and through which God speaks about Himself (Chia 2006:147). So, in prayer, we seek the mind of the Lord, depending on His Spirit for guidance. Then in his power we go forth (Søgaard 1993:24). Only Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, can open blind eyes and

deaf ears, make the lame walk and the dumb speak, prick the conscience, enlighten the mind, fire the heart, move the will, give to the dead and rescue slaves from Satanic bondage (Stott 1982b:329).

It is necessary to keep in mind that 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 preacher is a witness and a channel, not the power. It is the Spirit who truly controls the whole process of Gospel communication (Søgaard 1993:22-23).

The true sermon is the work of the Holy Spirit from beginning to end (Knox 1957:89). The constant power source is the Holy Spirit. The “communication link” is prayer (Eph. 6:18-20). Kellerman (1997:29) properly indicates the significance of prayer in the preaching process:

In his communion with the Word, the preacher must search for guidance of the Holy Spirit in faith and through prayer. The listener, in his turn, must come to the worship service in the expectation that God will help to direct his life story through his word and Spirit and through the mediation of the sermon according to the divine purpose for his life.

The implication for the Christian communicator is to commit himself or herself through prayer to the guidance of the Spirit and then anticipate the mighty work of the Spirit in conviction and healing and in the creation of true wholeness (Søgaard 1993:22-23).

Dwight D.E. Stevenson (1967:67) says, “No man can preach movingly on any text as long as he is using that text solely as a channel of revelation to other men. He cannot speak on behalf of God to another until he himself has listened to God.” By prayer and listening to God, the preacher can recognize himself as the servant used in the work of the Holy Spirit and the instrument of God. By the same token, it is

important that the preacher, on the one hand, expects the proof of the Holy Spirit's intercession in his sermon, and on the other hand he has a firm belief that the Holy Spirit has already been with himself and his audiences during the preaching process (Jung 2002:11).

According to Cilliers (2004:187), prayer modulates the preaching voice of the preacher. Consequently, in creating relevant sermonic language, the preachers should fall back on the spiritual conviction that the Holy Spirit is at work. The Work of the Holy Spirit is quite beyond their capability. As a consequence, all they can do is to confess and pray that they believe that the Holy Spirit is at work in preaching.

4.3 Ecclesiastical approach of sermonic language

The last theological perspective that we will examine in order to reform the language of the sermon is ecclesiology. The communication of the Word must be supported by Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The same point can be made with regard to the church. In other words, the Word is incarnated in Jesus Christ, is energized by the Holy Spirit, and then becomes abundant within the church.

It goes without saying that the Word builds up the faithful community of God's people. This is the clear reason which demands our serious consideration of sermonic language. As Campbell (1997:217) has aptly observed, in building up the church, preaching helps to form the church's life after the pattern of Jesus' identity; it seeks to "build up" the church to enact publicly the way of peace in and for the world. The Holy Spirit, he goes on to say, works in all of the communal practices that "build up" the congregation within which the sermon is preached and heard (Campbell 1997:247). Seen from this point of view, the function of preaching is not that of locating individual human needs and then offering God as an answer or solution to them. Rather, the sermon moves from the identity of Jesus Christ via the intercession of the Holy Spirit to the "upbuilding" of the church.

4.3.1 The Church built by the Word

The sermon is a community affair (Quayle 1979:172). It is an essential part of the communication of the Word by the church because the power that gathers the people of God and the centre that continues to sustain and shape the community of faith is the Word. As the body of Christ, the human church has form, it acts and it speaks (Fant 1977:47; Rose 1997:93). Howe (1967:68-70) has observed that the sermon delivered on any given occasion really consists of many sermons: the sermon which was spoken aloud by the preacher; the sermon which was heard by each individual hearer; and the combined effect of all of these. Together, all of these constitute the church's sermon for that occasion. In short, *preaching is a congregational function*.

The sermon should move from the identity of Jesus Christ to the "upbuilding" of the church (Campbell 1997:222). Speaking only becomes a sermon when it takes place in relation to congregation; preaching results when members of the Church assemble together. It is not unrealistic to say that the Church creates that which, in turn, creates the Church. Preaching has to do with the whole church rather than just an elite part of it. Thielicke (1978:25) asserts that the Church creates the sermon not only in grand theory but in practical reality:

Time and again it has been my personal experience that hardly ever do we arrive at such vital, searching, and yet thematically broad discussions as when we talk over with others a text which is to be the basis of a sermon. Even common engagement in the task of interpretation is a stimulating thing, and the question of how the message is to be expressed leads us through far-flung and very exciting landscapes of human life.

The Church is the creation of God by his Word. Moreover, God's new creation (the Church) is as dependent upon His Word as His old creation (the universe). Not only has He brought it into being by His Word, but He maintains and sustains it, directs and sanctifies it, reforms and renews it through the same Word. The Word of God is the scepter by which Christ rules the Church and the food with which He nourishes it (Stott 1982b:109). Christian communication belongs to the specific Christian churches as institutions (Emmanuel 1999:55). The Church itself is to be seen as a

communication – a message for all from one who is present to all, but which speaks in the life of a community because that is the natural medium of communication for what she has to say. It is special, not because of what is in it, but because of what passes through it (Brooks 1968:79-80).

Community is where our human existence takes place. Community is established and maintained by the relationships created by our communications. We establish our relative individuality within this community. The more we participate in community, the more we become true individuals, and the more we become individuals, the more richly we participate in community (Fore 1987:41). Community, the fulfilment of effective human communication, is essential to our becoming human. An important point to emphasize is the fact that preaching as a liturgical act and communicative event helps members of the Christian community to interpret their experiences through the symbols and images, narratives and metaphors of the Bible. It helps the community to make sense of reality on the basis of the truth of the Gospel (Chia 2006:149).

Preaching is the primary act of the self-constituting process that Christians identify as “church.” The community called church is actually formed by the word preached in its midst. It is brought overtly into being every time that word is preached. The community actually enters into its own formation by its willingness to let the word transform it. The word is God’s Word. But the word is also human. As a form of theological communication, preaching mediates through several types of transposition. The preacher mediates between the Word of God and the congregation by transposing theological understanding back into the language of common struggle. These transpositions modulate theological distinctions into the power that effects change (Farrell 1993:62).

Fore (1987:52) introduces Avery Dulles’ view that the Church exists in order to bring men into communion with God and thereby to open them up to communication with each other. David Buttrick says that the community was commissioned to continue Christ’s preaching. In summary he says:

The function of preaching, then, is to continue the work of Christ who gathered a people to Himself and ... set them free for a new life in the world ... Note that the rationale for preaching is not institutional. We do not preach so the church may survive ... we preach so Christ may use our words in a salvific work. The purpose of preaching is the purpose of God in Christ, namely the reconciliation of the world. Preaching evokes response: The response to preaching is a response to Christ, and is properly faith and repentance. Preaching is the 'Word of God' in that it participates in God's purpose, is initiated by Christ, and is supported by the Spirit with community in the world (Buttrick 1987:450-459).

Preaching brings people together as a faith community in the context of their culture as well as in the broader interaction with Christians everywhere. According to Hills (1991:61-62), it is a function of the Church through the preacher, and the Gospel must be addressed to the Church and the world beyond the church. The preacher must help the Church to keep its integrity, identity, and sense of unique mission, and at the same time to be vitally in touch with the world where its life is situated.

4.3.2 The role of the preacher in ecclesiastical calling

In establishing relevant sermonic language, it is crucial to apprehend the preacher as a community person who builds a faith-world in congregational consciousness (Buttrick 1993:206; Willimon 1981:51-63). If he is faithful, he might be able to participate in the shaping of a faith-world that will not simply baptize the dominant culture, but "once more name God in the world, form faith, address human situations, construct powerful eschatological vision, and indeed, announce God's New Order, what Jesus called 'the kingdom of God'" (Buttrick 1994b:104).

Considering the previous understandings, homiletical scholars like T. Long, W. Willimon, R. Lischer and B. Muller have already emphasized the significance of communal preaching where the preacher comes from the midst of the congregation of faith (Williamson 1994:42). The task of the preacher, who speaks for and with the congregation as well as to the congregation, is to keep alive in the hearers a faith that gives coherence to life, that restores their brokenness, that draws them closer to their only source of spiritual strength (Schlafer 1992:22; Willimon 1981:61). His task

is also to foster a faith that defines the hearer's moral response to their family, neighbours, nation, and the world community, a faith that gives such direction, purpose, and meaning to life (Proctor 1992:20-21).

Emmanuel (1999:89) observes, in his book *Challenges of Christian communication and broadcasting: monologue or dialogue?*, that Killinger proceeds from his basic assumption that community is, after all, what preaching is about, and says:

Preaching, at its best, is not a solo task. It is done by an individual, but it is the sum of many things – of the community of faith, the Bible the community holds at its centre, the tradition of proclamation it has nurtured, and the gifts, experiences, and artifices of the preacher.

Killinger is convinced of, and overwhelmed by, the aim of preaching as community building. He continues, “We are a part of a great community. We are building a great community. We do not on our own platform when we preach, but on the community's. We do not invite people to join ourselves, but the community ...”

The real purpose of preacher is to build a community of people through interpersonal relationships in dialogue, where each one is considered an equal, and where all enjoy a sense of justice, peace and equality (Emmanuel 1999:96-97). Chartier (1981:45) introduces Buford Dickinson's view that the function of preaching belongs to the entire Church and not to one person. From a dialogical perspective, both the preacher and the congregation engage in the preaching process.

The preacher is a saint or sinner like each member of the community and is in need of the group as much as anyone. The preacher is not above or free from group commitment or responsibility, but rather is blessed with a unique calling in the midst of a uniquely called people, the community of believers. Preaching, then, is an important tool used in the midst of the Christian community to equip the fellowship as they serve and grow in the Lord (Thompson 1984:36-37).

The preacher should realize that preaching, even during a pulpit crisis, is the most

viable thing the church does. Preaching, far from being obsolete, is the most persistent of all church activities. For this reason his pulpit can be a place of integrity and power where the preachers fulfil his responsibility to his people and to his Lord (Horne 1975:71).

4.3.3 The ecclesiastical language of sermon

Christians believe and confess that the Church is called forth and sustained by the Word of God (Tostengard 1989:13). In the light of this, according to Bohren (1965), preaching must be more than just individual ministry but must be communal ministry. When it comes to the Word of God in his Church, the reason why the preacher must employ sermonic language related to the congregation's context is that he speaks about faith in community. According to Immink (2005:119), faith takes shape in the daily lives of people. It is part of the ideas and values we cherish; it shapes our attitudes toward people and the world around us; it finds expression in our affectations; and it becomes concrete in our actions and behaviour. We have seen that faith, because of its impact on the daily life of the subject, is a dynamic event.

Inter-human communication is an important factor in the praxis of our faith, because the faith community owes its existence to the communication of faith. Through communication we maintain our life of faith and share it with others. There is no communal praxis of faith without inter-human discourse. The relationship between inter-human discourse and the mediation of faith plays a pivotal role in practical theological reflection.

The Church is the living voice through which God continues to speak to the world (Søgaard 1993:12). Barr (1976:56) has explored the power of the spoken word. In *The Well Church Book* he calls the Church "an oral institution" and "a speech event." Although the Church has many symbols and forms of communication available to it, it is primarily the spoken word interchanged between people that gives life and substance to the congregation of believers. Barr maintains that this is because "human speech may possess greater power than other forms of language to search out and reveal the interior of life, soul to soul, person to person, human and divine"

(Barr 1976:58).

God's Word created the Church. For the people of God may be said to have come into existence when his Word came to Abraham, calling him and making a covenant with him. Similarly, it was through the apostolic preaching of God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost that the people of God became the Spirit-filled Body of Christ (Stott 1982b:110). The Church holds that it is through the medium of Scripture that God, in His providence and grace, has chosen to reveal Himself by the inspiration of the Spirit. Scripture is therefore the source of the Church's theological knowledge, and its language regulates the language of the Church concerning God and the world (Chia 2006:142).

Preaching is a communicative event that takes place in the context of the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. The language of preaching is founded upon the Bible and the dogmas of the Church. Preaching is biblical when it is faithful to the witness of the Bible regarding God and his relationship with the world as revealed in Jesus Christ. The language of preaching cannot "escape into generalities about God and the world." They must be "attentive to the particularities of the texts because God's universal truth is inscribed in them as a truth that through the Spirit is meant to become alive again in our particular circumstances" (Schwobel 2001:8-9).

Preaching is purposed to help members of the community of faith to view reality from the point of view of the Gospel. Preaching urges a cognitive restructuring which shapes and guides the inner dialogue of men and women of that community with themselves, their lives and the world in which they live. Simply put, preaching is to help the Church to be "monolingual." Here language is used in its broadcast sense. Preaching is aimed at helping the Church to "indwell" the language of Scripture and tradition and experience the world from the orientation and framework they provide (Chia 2006:148).

The Church has always lived on the edge of a language crisis; but in our time there is a particular situation in the world, a particular characteristic of culture which makes the normal problem of faith and language much worse (Tostengard 1989:18). A

relevant sermon's language binds us into a community of faith and meaning. It establishes a connectedness, through common usage and understanding, with other periods and other people, as well as knitting us more closely together with our contemporaries in both our affirmations of faith and our life journeys. People who talk the same way are in some very important senses the same; they are members of a community. The more intimate and momentous the talk, the more closely integrated is the community (Nicholas 1987:53).

Preaching means contact with the Word, and contact with the world, in the context of the Church. This last phrase is no mere religious conversion. At all times preaching has been a function of the Church and not just of an individual. Men are set apart for it – they have even set themselves apart for it – but essentially it arises out of the common life of the Church (Read 1981:93). If the language of the sermon is recovered, the preacher should understand the congregation and develop the healthy life of Church because both the preacher and the congregation are in the Church.

The Church must establish its own identity through shared faith language of the sermon. When it is proclaimed and obeyed under the authority of God, it enables the faith community to be built up and advance its on-going story. The Church is God's people, doing 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. The people of God are a servant people, obeying God, and because of this they can serve the world without being in bondage to it (Horne 1975:72-74).

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter we have addressed the dominant theological aspects of incarnational, pneumatological, and ecclesiastical foundations. Our finding is that the sermon is the ultimate expression of these foundations, and the pursuit of theology is headed for the sermon. If a sermon is supported by these theological convictions, it might be well on the road to theological (i.e. Christian) communication.

We need to bear in mind Pieterse's summary of the aim of preaching: "the action of preaching takes place to evoke and to strengthen faith in the triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit. The preacher cannot bring about this faith" (1987:11). Preaching is done, then, in the belief that God Himself will awaken faith through His son Jesus Christ as this Word which became flesh, His Spirit, and His Church. For this reason, the language of the sermon must be prepared and delivered with this belief in order to evoke faith, refresh and strengthen the application of faith for the congregation's whole life.

In the next chapter, concrete methods for effective application in energizing the often quiescent language of the sermon will be addressed. The first has to do with considering role models in sermonic language – the prophets, Jesus Christ, and Paul – the second with employing various styles of sermonic language within congregation's contexts, and the last with building up constructive relationships through relevant sermonic language.

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO RESTORE SERMONIC LANGUAGE

The main argument of this chapter concerns practical ways which could help to explore and develop the revival of sermonic language. The aim of the sermon, which is focused on the relationship and interaction between the involvement of the text and the real situation of the congregation, is not achieved by theory alone, but by the practiced theory.

The Bible is dynamic and came into being as an event. It presents a good sample of the prominent usage of language since it is written in human language. We will examine the applicable images of the preacher after considering the model of two prophets, Jesus Christ and Paul. We also need to pay attention to growing attempts nowadays to use linguistic analyses in order to understand and develop communication through the language and rhetoric of the sermon. In addition, the study of sermonic language is given considerable weight in building up and strengthening fragmented relationship between the preacher and the congregation.

5.1 Considerable role models in sermonic language

The Bible provides people with many examples of the faithful obeying God's will so that the preacher frequently meets not only the words of God but also people proclaiming them. God has made Himself known in the preaching of the prophets and apostles, and, above all, in the preaching of Jesus Christ (Drury 1962:92). Therefore, if we want to know how God has personally disclosed Himself to mankind, we turn to the witness of prophet and apostle. We have, in addition, no other access to the facts concerning Jesus than this testimony of those who heard, who saw with their eyes, and whose hands handled the Word of life (Abbey 1973:74).

5.1.1 The role model of prophets

5.1.1.1 Preacher having prophet's role

The preacher of today is a modern prophet. A prophet is one called by God to speak on God's behalf at a particular time in history, to a select group of people regarding their relationship with their God (Thompson 1984:30). The preachers are also people who are commissioned by God to speak on his behalf, addressing the particular needs of the people (Thompson 1984:51-52). For this reason, the present day preacher is to be considered God's prophet, one who is to speak for God on the basis of the revealed word of God. The preacher as prophet, then, endeavours to apply the divine revelation to the inquiries, needs, anxieties, doubts, fears, and joys of those who hear him (Thompson 1984:52).

The preacher's responsibility is to stand as interpreter between the biblical text and the contemporary situation. One of the hallmarks of the prophets was that they reappropriated the prophetic tradition afresh in each new time and place, and took the risk of proclaiming a new word of God (Ward 1995:36).

It is necessary here to deal with the role of a prophet. A prophet was a spokesperson for God who declared God's will to the people. He or she spoke for God to the community about the community, nearby nations, and the larger world. Prophets declared God's will – past, present, and future – to the people (Duffett 1995:66-67).

The preaching must be directed toward the needs of those who hear it. The preacher's task is that of the prophet: apply God's word to the Christian's current status (Thompson 1984:51-52). The preacher must also be the prophet in the pulpit. He must often speak God's word of judgment over the pride, prejudice, and false values in his people and their society as well as his own life (Horne 1975:77-78). The preacher as the prophet witnesses to the presence of the living God in the midst of human life. The true prophet, in the biblical tradition, acts as the conscience of the religious community. The prophet is not an outsider, but an insider who embodies the community's experience and vocation in his or her own life (Ward 1995:12).

5.1.1.2 Restoring the image of today's preacher

If preachers play a pivotal role in their office commissioned by God, they, like

prophets, should stand behind what they convey. The prophets lived a life of radical God-centredness consistent with the God-centredness of their message, and their life of faithful devotion lent authenticity to their message. The prophets were not isolated individuals but participated fully in the religious and social life of Israel. In doing this the prophets addressed the crucial social and religious questions of their time. They did so with courage and candour (Ward 1995:14).

Preachers must engage the biblical text and the contemporary situation in a way that is authentic for them in creating their own sermons. They must communicate authority in what they say (Ward 1995:16). Perry describes the preacher as a prophet who bears a message from God and speaks with divine authority (Fant 1977:39).

The sermon is accepted and believed not because it is based upon the authority of commission or position, but because it is based upon the earned authority of a personal relationship between pastor and congregation (Hillis 1991:132). The authority of the Bible as God's word and of the preacher as God's spokesperson are integrated to produce a message from God to the congregation (Hillis 1991:215-216).

5.1.1.3 The communication ways used by prophets

When we explore prophets in the Bible, it is remarkable that they communicate with God's people in terms of disclosing their lives. According to the preacher J. C. Kim (1996:360), the craftsman of the language should have a sincere attitude of life like prophets, who struggle in tension between the secular world and the divine world in order to proclaim the creative words to make God's people discern His will against their sin.

The prophets had a method of delivering their message which was deliberately designed to startle their hearers. To the great prophets, only the finest language was sufficient for the finest thought. They loved words and used them lovingly like artists (Barclay 1978:22).

God spoke to people through the prophets. Prophetic communication called people back to communion with God. Through the prophets people were challenged to establish structures of social living which would reflect their communication with God and express their sense of community. Prophetic communication made use of the images and symbols, the hopes and fears of a common and shared culture (Bluck 1984:71). "Prophetic" means preaching about God's being and activity, directing our attention to the mission of Christian faith and action in a desperate world, and calling on the Church as organic entity to find itself and respond (Nicholas 1987:59).

Prophetic preaching is crucial for the life of the faith community, because it reminds us that a living faith is manifest in works of love and justice. It is crucial for the worship of the people of God, because the community is called into being and sustained by the proclamation of the gift and demand of God's grace. Prophetic preaching speaks the word of the living God to the people of God in a particular time and place in the community's historic journey (Ward 1995:11).

A significant factor affecting our effort to appropriate the message of the prophets is the difference in language. They always lived in tension between biblical language and contemporary language (Ward 1995:13). The prophets clothed their message in magnificent words, and were prepared to use any method to make men listen (Barclay 1978:26). Their vivid metaphors and poetic cadences, for example, invited emulation. Gerhard von Rad has called the prophets' conception of language "dynamistic." For the prophets, language did not convey an idea from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer; rather, the word was almost material, concrete, an event itself. Just as all language conveys the actual person of the speaker, so also the word of the prophet was the real presence of the person of God. Accordingly, when God spoke through the prophet, that word did not express the sentiment or opinion of God; that word was God acting within history (Tostengard 1989:63-64).

The prophets did not arrive at any theory of language primarily by observing other prophets' ways, but they were in faithful communion with God and sensed the wonder of all language in God's words. The witness of the prophets remains immensely relevant to the life and faith of the covenant community today (Tostengard

1989:64).

5.1.2 The role model of Jesus Christ

5.1.2.1 The life of Jesus Christ as a preacher

Preaching is truth through personality. Preaching is not simply the delivery of the word, and becomes effective and powerful when the preacher's personality is blended into God's word (Kim 1999c:169). According to Stott (1982a:265), the practice of preaching cannot be divorced from the person of the preacher. Or, in the words of Robinson (1980:24), "the audience does not hear a sermon, they hear a man." Therefore, the preacher's character is important and his or her total life and actions become a part of the message. So it would appear that the human factor in preaching cannot be removed and that the preacher plays a central role in the sermon (Hillis 1991:35-36).

Good communicators might study how Jesus communicated when He was on earth. Jesus Christ is God's unique act of communication. Jesus spoke with an authority which no other can claim, for His message and his identity were inextricably joined (Bluck 1984:71). The fact of Christ was the Word of God in its fullest expression, declared once and for all time. Christ did not merely announce the Word; it was incorporated in His person (Macleod 1987:30). Like Jesus Christ, the preacher's duty is to give himself. Preaching is a method, one method, of the preacher giving himself; and the sermon becomes not an exploit, but an evidence and certificate of what breed of soul the preacher is (Quayle 1979:26). Preaching is the outrushing of the soul in speech. Therefore, the elemental business in preaching is not with the preaching, but with the preacher. It is no trouble to preach, but a vast trouble to construct a preacher (Quayle 1979:27).

Jesus became both a member of the group he sought to teach and the primary message of God to that group (Kraft 1991:62). When it comes to the incarnation of Jesus, in total identification with human situation, He becomes the perfect communicator, who gave his message not only in words but in the whole manner of

his life (Emmanuel 1999:65): “Christ communicated to us his life-giving Spirit, who brings all people together in unity.” Through his incarnation, he utterly identified himself with those who were to receive His communication and he gave his message not only in words (Emmanuel 1999:66).

5.1.2.2 The audience-oriented approach of Jesus Christ

If we study the gospels we find that Jesus Christ did not have one single, uniform way of communicating the Word (Wijngaards 1979:67). Jesus is the prime example of receptor-oriented communication (Søgaard 1993:97). Jesus begins the process of thought with the needs of the people (Wijngaards 1979:69). But what does it mean to say that the community speaks to the preacher, or that the preacher must first be a listener? If we go back to the New Testament we see that communication is nearly always in the context of a dialogue. Jesus shows an acute interest in what people are saying and what they think (Mark 8:27-30). What Jesus said was less in the form of a lecture than of a conversation, and a conversation in which Jesus listens or observes before he speaks (Holdsworth 2003:15).

Preaching can be defined as pastoral care according to Jesus’ preaching ministry (Nicholas 1987:15). One of its major purposes is to help people deal realistically with their lives, even (or perhaps especially) those baffling, conflicted, elusive, and painful parts of living for which unrealistic ways out are always tempting (Nicholas 1987:28).

Jesus was very sensitive to people. Jesus was a master at choosing and controlling the contexts in which He communicated. He took control of contextual factors as well as of all other parts of the communicational process. He regularly matched physical, social, linguistic, and other contextual factors to the message He sought to convey. He lived among them. Jesus was not a one-way communicator pontificating in “take it or leave it” style. Jesus continuously varied His message (Kraft 1991:192-193). He contemporizes the message because the congregation wants to know what God is saying and doing now in the midst of their lives (Horne 1975:58-59).

5.1.2.3 The communication ways used by Jesus Christ

Jesus accepted his cultural heritage. He worked within his culture, and he spoke the language of His people (Bluck 1984:71-73). Jesus was obviously very sensitive to the diverse cultural and social backgrounds of His audience. His language was appropriate, and He quickly led them on to discover the truth (Søgaard 1993:97). He spoke the words of the ordinary people He wanted to reach (Read 1981:69); He did not use classical Greek but Koiné Greek (Kraft 1991:21).

The communicative practices of Jesus were dialogical in order to communicate effectively, to be understood (Emmanuel 1999:79). He could not use high-flown literary or philosophical jargon. He used simple language (Emmanuel 1999:80), and he was faithful in his use of the word, always in tune with the needs of those who came to hear (Thompson 1984:33).

Jesus used metaphors powerfully when He explained His self-identity. What is more, Jesus conveyed the heavenly message by using analogy, simile, enigma, emphasis and so on. He made use of ordinary things in delivering the message (Chartier 1981:70). He spoke to people's eyes, not their ears (Wiersbe 1994:160).

The gospels are full of various kinds of communicative actions of Jesus. He entered into direct communication with a wide range of people. His communicative actions were fundamentally dialogical. Jesus treated these outcasts or social 'others' as equal partners in dialogue. Jesus through his communicative actions attempted to restore these 'others' to full personhood (Emmanuel 1999:77).

5.1.3 The role model of Paul

5.1.3.1 The ethos of the preacher

A preacher is a person who delivers a whole person. The relationship between people becomes persuasive as a whole person presents the message (Abbey 1973:205). The message of the personal medium is much more powerful than the

message of the words conveyed (Kraft 1991:163). The power of the spoken word lies in its capacity to reveal what is within a person. Words emerge from within one person and are addressed to the inner being of another person (Pennington 1990:48).

Our credibility, trustworthiness, and other personal characteristics in relation to our receptors are crucial to the message we send (Kraft 1991:62). Why are they crucial? Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence which the listeners have in the intent of the speakers to communicate valid assertions. Credibility is highly important in communication: the listener's acceptance of the message of a high credibility communicator will be greater than that of a low credibility communicator (Fant 1977:68).

Preaching cannot be dynamic unless the Gospel has become personal in the life of the preacher (Horne 1975:31). Plato defined good public speaking as a matter of "a good man speaking well." Character, Aristotle's ethos, is a prerequisite for faithful preaching (Simmons 1996:164-165).

It is worth noting here that Paul's 'reverse' or 'ironic' ethos is an ethos shaped by the preaching of Christ crucified and risen (Resner 1999:3). Paul uses what may be called a reverse-ethos (Resner 1999:4). Reverse-ethos, then, is a theologically-informed rhetorical category which describes the preacher's person in the rhetorical situation of Christian proclamation (Resner 1999:176).

St. Augustine said, "If a man's life be lightning his words are thunder." It means that the thunder and the lightning go together. Words and life are part of the same process and are therefore inseparable (Smith 1984:98). That is, the practice of preaching cannot be divorced from the person of the preacher (Stott 1982b:264-265). The sincerity of a preacher has two aspects: he means what he says when in the pulpit, and he practices what he preaches when out of it (Stott 1982b:262). The following argument of Pieterse's makes great sense:

The development of the message of the sermon text in the language and situation

of the congregation present is then done in such a way that the Word of God speaks in the text and is heard and believed by the congregation. Various factors involved are the text (the sermon's faithfulness to Scripture), the congregation in its situation (the sermon's directedness to the congregation), the person of the preacher and the members of the congregation as persons. Interpretation also plays a part. Preaching is determined, therefore, not only by the text, but also by the congregation and by the personality of the preacher ... What is also very important, however, is the person of the preacher in this process. He or she must also be cleared by the theory of preaching. Preaching involves not only the "what" of its content and the "how" of the form of communication, but also the "who" of the preacher. He or she is not a blank sheet, nor is she or he a mechanical vehicle. He or she is a personality with his or her own opinions, problems, theological view, spiritual state, attitudes, etc. (Pieterse 1987:12).

5.1.3.2 The consideration of audience's contexts

The preacher must first listen to, be interested in, but also understand and notice, the culture of the context (Wijngaards 1979:15). The wise preacher begins where his audience is and with what they know in order to lead them on to where he wants them to be and what he wants them to learn. So, as Paul was a Jew to the Jews, to the Greeks he became a Greek (Barclay 1978:30).

The sermon which goes over a congregation's heads is not a good sermon; it is a bad sermon. It is simply the sign of a marksman who cannot hit the target. Be it noted that the preacher does not wish to leave his people where they are – far from that. But he begins from where they are to lead them to where he would wish them to be (Barclay 1978:32).

The apostle Paul seemed to master this skill of understanding specific audiences, their needs and dominant concerns, as well as their cultural distinctives. He became all things to all people (Søgaard 1993:97).

5.1.3.3 The communicative ways used by Paul

When the message came in their own language and not in an unfamiliar tongue, people heard (Luccock 1954:33). Early preaching was not a monologue but a dialogue. It was not a question of one man telling a crowd of men; it was a case of a group of people talking it over together. We shall always need the monologue, but the rediscovery of the dialogue within the Church is long overdue. It was precisely that dialogue which gave the apostolic preachers their supreme opportunity. This could still be so today (Barclay 1978:35).

Paul's preaching based on the image of a pastoral minister has a dialogical nature where pastor and congregation engage together in the entire preaching process. Paul's concern is the construction of the corporate community (Lee 2003:172; Thompson 2001:79-82). In addition, Thompson says, "Paul brought to his culture a dimension of persuasion that transformed and subverted the oratorical tradition that he had inherited" (Thompson 2001:75).

Paul spoke about God and the spiritual life in categories taken from the life around him and in language understood by the ordinary person. Justification, redemption, reconciliation, and adoption are now technical theological terms. But they were not when Paul used them. They were terms lifted from the common life around him. Justification came from the courts, redemption from slavery, reconciliation from the common experiences of estrangement in life, and adoption from the family and court (Horne 1975:58).

5.2 Living language, not dead language

Appropriate style is a key to effective speaking. We live in a time of electronic communication, when the importance of the spoken word is growing. Style is not mere ornamentation; it is essential for effective communication (Kooienga 1989:18).

Communication is the transfer of meaning through the use of symbols (Hesselgrave 1991:38). The sermonic language, as one of symbols which primarily constitute a description is peculiarly suited to the modern media, and to the modern mind (Brooks 1968:61). It is clear that the expression can never perfectly correspond to the

thought, so the creative spirit must wrestle continually with the problem of incarnation in sounds, colours, and words (Read 1981:12-13). For underneath the web of words and symbols in which we seem to be entangled, God's truth and man's need communicate today as in the past (Read 1981:96). Today it is frequently said that the day of the orator in the pulpit is over, and that nowadays the style of preaching must be colloquial and conversational. It is now almost the exception for a preacher to write his sermons (Barclay 1978:22).

Learning how to hear a message and learning how to make it hearable may be as important today as it ever was in the history of Christianity (Pennington 1990:41). To broach the problem of communication in our day is inevitably to deal with language and linguistic usage in some one of many possible forms (Eversole 1962:63). A boring sermon has a short lifespan. No matter how good the content may be, no matter how faithful to the Scriptures the message is, if it fails to interest, it doesn't reach the listener's heart. Interest is the antidote to boredom. When we build interest into a flat sermon, the listener's attention level rises. Sometimes the content itself is interesting enough to carry people along. The style, however, adds to or detracts from the level of interest (Kooienga 1989:73).

According to Elizabeth Achtemeier, the preacher must translate the biblical message into one that awakens all the senses, into words that cause a congregation in addition to hearing also to see and feel and smell and taste (quoted in Barry 1984:21). Effective preaching is rooted and focused in the physical and sensory. Abstract, proposition-centred preaching affects few people and tends not to reach people at their spiritual and psychological depths (Wilson-Kastner 1989:13).

Every preacher knows how important good images and word pictures are to engage their congregation with the sermon whereby the preacher stimulates or evokes the affective experience of the listeners through which they become involved in the Gospel message (Lee 2003:89). Today's preacher lives in a world that is steadily moving in its appraisal of human nature toward a balance of the intellectual and the emotional, the rational and the intuitive (Wilson-Kastner 1989:17). As Swears (2000:18) says, "it is when both the head and the heart are addressed that the

volition of the hearer can be engaged and a meaningful response is addressed.”

Shoemaker supports this fact: the aim of preaching is to keep the image and world of the text vivid and accessible to the congregation, who are captured by various images. For him, the duty of preaching is to keep the impact of imagination in a text alive in present congregations (quoted in Lee 2003:198).

5.2.1 Vivid language

People raised in the video age are open to sensory language (Kooienga 1989:89). Mindful of this, the preacher is to consider what sermonic language he delivers to them. The role and function of theological language is more interpretative than it is descriptive. However, when we use language descriptively, we are using it to refer to something in order to reproduce for a hearer or reader a more or less accurate picture of what we are talking about (Nicholas 1987:50).

Language is necessary to human beings in community. Language shapes images and hence affects our actual sensibility and our modes of perception. Preachers who want to emphasize a thought or image ask how they can help people not only see it, but also hear it, feel it, taste it, and smell it (Fore 1987:41).

Preachers cannot avoid emotion. Their language always prods people to respond with some kind of feeling (Kooienga 1989:107). Emotional language is more highly coloured, emotionally charged, and strongly connotative than didactic language (Adams 1971:89). Evocative language, however, brings thought to life and gives it a visible and tangible quality. It does that by appealing to the listener’s memory of experiences. When speakers communicate a new idea in a manner that connects it to what a person already perceives, they foster understanding. Language may do that by painting a word picture (Kooienga 1989:81). Descriptive language stimulates the inner eye as well as the other senses; it creates scenes within the mind of the listener (Kooienga 1989:82). Pictorial language is discourse with open referents. Images are not only designations for something that is known but challenges seeking something unknown in the known. Pictorial language is further characterized by a

fusion of being and meaning. It includes both a semantic reference to a referent and a call to us to perceive a meaning and a value in it (Theissen 1995:73).

Preachers use language that is not simply literal, but also figurative. The function of language, Langer says, is twofold: to convey information and to stimulate feelings and attitudes in a listener (quoted in Schmit 2002:14). The language of preaching is a connotative language used with theological precision (Buttrick 1987:184).

According to H. G. Davis (1991:20), “no sermon can be good without particulars,” because “the function of particulars is to present concrete details of that phase of reality in such a way as to cause our hearer to experience that reality for himself.” The use of concrete language is a rhetorical strategy that helps draw the attention of the audience to the text by making the text come alive for the audience, thus facilitating identification of the audience with the text (Hillis 1991:196-198).

5.2.2 Creative language

Preaching is a creative event. That is, the work of communication is basically a creative task. A sermon must be treated like a work of art – modest, perhaps, but nonetheless art. The preacher must bring to the task of preaching the same creative skills that are exercised in any comparable art. The congregation must use the same gifts of imagination and receptivity that they bring to the appreciation of any comparable art (Pennington 1990:34).

What seems to be lacking in renewing the sermonic language is creativity. As Pieterse points out: “On the whole the sermons were not particularly innovative. There was too little creativity in the concretization of the message ... Our preaching could be more theocentric – none of the preaching styles were very theocentric” (Pieterse 1987:73). Whoever preaches must preach God’s message, since his or her words should be like words of God, even his or her sermonic language (Cilliers 2004:20).

Creativity will mean the enrichment of every step in the preaching process. It will

mean the recovery of a sense of craftsmanship (Barry 1984:23). Preachers must create pictures in the minds of the listeners. Within the context of his or her own imagination and experience the listener will create the scene and “see” the action (Søgaard 1993:39).

Preaching must be art in its creative aspect (Lee 1997:64). The preacher must be a poet, a “maker”, an “artist.” Preaching must be – like art itself – “the revealing experience” (Jabusch 1990:71). According to Bluck, Homiletics is “the science of which preaching is the art,” which is “literally built into the furniture of the Church; it stubbornly refuses accountability to questions of how power is shared, where else the Gospel is being proclaimed, and who is listening anyway” (Emmanuel 1999:92). Preaching’s aesthetic process also occurs in the act of preaching. Preaching is the creation of symbols that give expression to the ineffable world that is vitally felt and experienced by the preacher. Because it is also the proclamation of promise, preaching has a theological component that other forms of art do not necessarily have (Schmit 2002:84-85).

Creative words are not found in specialized language that excludes an outsider. The unique words of a discipline do not make for vivid speech. Words can also sparkle and show vitality. It is possible to express powerful ideas in bland language totally unimpressive to the listener (Kooienga 1989:97-98).

The preacher must avoid simply explaining something and recommending it. Using the power of descriptive rather than conceptual language, the sermon has to achieve what Martin Heidegger calls the primary function of language: letting be what is created through evocative use. Attention must be paid to what kind of imagery language produces, what kind of response, and how the associative functions of the mind work (Meyers 1993:76-77).

5.2.3 Imaginative language

A sermon must be designed to communicate effectively. How is this done? It is done by the arrangement of imagery and development of the content of the message, by

the thoughtful use of words to convey the meaning (Pennington 1990:105). Image takes place on a deep level of feeling and awareness (Horne 1975:55). Imagery supports emotional language especially when coupled with repetition, when images pile up, forming layer upon layer (Kooienga 1989:110).

The mind is a gallery hung with images, not a giant filing cabinet full of carefully reasoned concepts. When the preacher leads a tour of these universal images, he does it by sharing his own ideas, not by explaining everyone else's. It can be argued that attitudes and values are more intimately connected with these images than with any detached concept relating to them (Meyers 1993:77).

Recognizing and prizing imagination is preaching, no matter how experimental the message forms that are used (Nichols 1980:159). Imagination, whose function is very important in preaching, must be valued by the preacher (Jabusch 1990:114; Markquart 1985:143-152). He does need to appreciate it sufficiently well to understand its language, and he does need sufficient imagination to see that language as a natural one in which to state his special insights (Brooks 1968:57).

Image is shared experiences, perspectives, or stories that illumine the text. They help clarify abstractions. Image is particularly important to contemporary communications in light of the general lack of Bible knowledge. To communicate biblical content effectively today, more rather than fewer stories and illustrations are needed (Duffett 1995:87).

Preaching requires a specific homiletical imagery, and the model of preaching should be changed from idea-oriented style to image-oriented style because only discourse which employs images can fuse being and meaning (Theissen 1995:72; Troeger 1990:28-30). Many sermons suffer from having no imagery and no narrative structure, no inner tension and no element of address. But all these together would not achieve anything if they did not derive from the very essence of the sermon, making present an ultimate unity of being and meaning in the dialogue of human beings with themselves and others. Only in this way does preaching reactivate biblical sign language for the present time (Theissen 1995:80).

As in our own verbal communication, so Jesus too had mainly to rely on words when trying to evoke mental images in the minds of his audience (Wijngaards 1979:146). Words that carry weight across the bridge of communication wear the clothes of matter and sense. Preachers can learn from their Lord. Jesus had the eye of a poet for imagery. He used image upon image, not to embroider the truth, but to reveal God's Word plainly (Kooienga 1989:86).

Real communication is costly. Even when it is scripted, rehearsed, and read, it can never be a mere delivering of preached words. The meaning behind the words must always be recovered and carried in imagination right into the living situation of those who hear them (Brooks 1968:59).

The work of the homiletical imagination is rooted and intertwined with the imagination of the community. According to Wallace (1995:19), "The preacher can make a contribution to the faith life of the community by offering images that seed the community's imagination." Understood from this perspective, imagination is more than the act of "forming a mental concept of what is not actually present to the senses." Imagination is the visionary work of a culture that creates a universe of stories, images, and rituals to sustain its life by giving hope and meaning to people (Simmons 1996:136).

Tisdale (1997:47) says preaching is "an appeal to the imagination of the hearers through the images of Scripture" and "the preacher's primary task is to employ his or her own imagination in the task of mediating and facilitating the link between Scripture and congregation." More specifically, Brueggeman (1989:4) seeks to define preaching as "a poetic construal of an alternative world." The poetic speech is the most effective way of evoking the imagination in the mind of the hearers (Greidanus 1988:186; Lee 2003:208).

Images in the sermon should be concrete and particular because we do not respond to motherhood in general, but to the plight of a mother in particular. But they must also be limited and incomplete, otherwise the listener is left without work to do

(Meyers 1993:80). Imagery should not only impress a biblical message on the listener, but also portray a real-life situation. It is important that images lie within the world of experience of those addressed. It is also necessary to understand how biblical images may differ from our own experience (Kooienga 1989:88).

The function of imagination deserves careful attention. For imagination plays a crucial role in referring to an immediate, sensory orientation as opposed to a rational, conceptual, propositional orientation. By imagination the listeners encounter the feelings, sights, and sounds of biblical text. By imagination the listeners “take their place in the pew as hearers of the Word; recognizing the colloquial sounds, seeing the controlling symbols, and sensing the reigning ethos of the preaching locale, they reclothe Scripture for their hearers” (Wardlaw 1988:80). With regard to stimulating the imagination, preachers must assert the dynamic and creative functions of language, for the Gospel must “come by means of language, spread through them, and must also be maintained through them.” The sermon’s words continue to be “the locus for an encounter or an event.” In other words, language shapes human consciousness and creates new images. Preaching to both head and heart should be balanced in Christian preaching, but unfortunately traditional deductive preaching has lost the aspect of “both-and,” emphasizing preaching to the head at the expense of preaching to heart (Lee 2003:89).

Summing up, as Cilliers (2004:211) addresses in his book *The living voice of the Gospel*, the task of preaching in using imaginative language is to regain these vital and life-changing images, and to translate or, rather, to portray them as images for the people of our times.

5.2.4 Metaphorical language

We live by metaphors. We have found that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature (Troeger 1990:120).

Metaphors redescribe ordinary reality in order to disclose a new, an extraordinary possibility for our lives (Kennedy 1993:75). A metaphor creates a comparison between two essentially unlike things in order to suggest a likeness between the two. Usually one of the points of comparison is well known to the audience. The link between the like and unlike produced an “Aha!” or “Now I get it!” to the first readers (Duffett 1995:60).

Preaching by its very nature is metaphorical (Kennedy 1993:59). The purpose of preaching with metaphor is to redescribe reality or create a new reality for a particular faith community (Kennedy 1993:80). In our world it is essential to use contemporary issues to convey God’s intent in communicating with human beings. We may be able to use a people’s mythology or body of metaphors to convey truth about God. The task of the preacher is to identify major biblical metaphors and expand them rhetorically to create new possibilities, and perhaps a new world (Shaw 2003:40).

According to Kennedy (1993:64), there are some features in metaphorical homiletics: (1) it recognizes that metaphor is not deviant use of language, but a different use of language; (2) it presumes that metaphor requires intentional activity because to describe metaphor as a mere device of style is to fall back into our phallogocentric prejudice; (3) it recognizes the role of metaphor in all human thought and disciplines; (4) it makes clear that metaphor involves ethical power in the sense of ethos as well as logos and pathos; (5) it assumes that metaphor is indispensable to the preacher and irreducible to a literal paraphrase; and (6) it insists that we preach by metaphors that create Christian community as a way of being-in-the-world.

The power of metaphor lies in its tension and limitation. The point and importance of metaphor is clearly demonstrated in the above example. The tension and limitation of metaphor invites probing, reflecting on, and engaging in its meaning. The result is a better understanding both of God and the biblical text (Lundstrom 2000:61).

5.2.5 Rhetorical language

We are constantly being shaped and reshaped by rhetoric (Long 1996:13). Rhetoric is the style or artistic component in the communication of a message. There is artistry in telling folk tales as well as in teaching or providing new information. Persuasion, too, will have its style. The good communicator is not understood solely in the transmission of information from a sender to a receiver but in the utilization of aesthetic components that influence the reception of the message (Litteral 1988:76).

Preaching is a rhetorical act, and the style of the sermon is a rhetorical issue. In the past, rhetoric is thought of as pagan art. For this reason, we have seen a long history of warnings against the use of rhetoric. The result has been a negative assessment of rhetoric, leading to a divorce between rhetoric and homiletics that still exist. Yet the wise preacher turns aside the prejudice against rhetoric and employs its principles in service to the sermon (Kooienga 1989:19).

Bluck contends that the subsequent history of the Church can be told in terms of changing rhetorical forms as when new generations of preachers and missionaries seek to forge a new contract with the surrounding culture in order to be heard and accepted (Emmanuel 1999:91).

Thomas G. Long asserts that the “either/or” cannot stand: “Preachers cannot avoid rhetorical concerns. There is a scandalous fleshiness to preaching, and while sermons may be ‘pure’ theology all the way through Saturday night, on Sunday morning they are inescapably embodied and, thus, rhetorical” (quoted in Resner 1999:70).

Preachers, therefore, must make an effort in bridging the gap between the text and the human situation through the use of rhetorical strategies that gain and maintain the attention of the audience and cause it to focus on the text (Hillis 1991:195-196). In addition, preachers must construct a sermon that bridges the audience-text gap by explicitly clarifying the relationship between the world of the text and the world of the audience or by relying on various rhetorical strategies for gaining audience attention such as using concrete language or the familiar (Hillis 1991:216).

5.2.6 The usage of language of the biblical role models

The preacher needs to know how to touch audience's eyes through their ears. The Bible is filled with examples of living language, not of a dead one. In the Bible, prophets, Jesus Christ, and apostles preach to their people, and now to us, through a living language.

The books of the prophets are full of word pictures. For example, "My people ... have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water" (Jer. 2:13) (Kooienga 1989:74).

Jesus used imagery in a way that grabbed the heart before the head could reject the message: "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13). Are people salt? Do they have a crystalline structure? Of course not. The point of comparison between the way salt works and the influence of Christ's followers leads to a descriptive use of this taste to expand understanding. The saliva glands may actually function for a moment in response to the image, it is that vivid. Christ also said, "A city on a hill cannot be hidden" (Matt. 5:14). This image ignites your mind. "I am the bread of life," Jesus declared dramatically after feeding hungry thousands with five barely cakes (John 6:35) (Kooienga 1989:74).

Paul uses a military metaphor when he writes of the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10-17). He also portrays runners in the stadium (1 Cor. 9:24-27). He mentions the body (Eph. 1:22-23) and ligaments (Col. 2:19). He alludes to the sea (Eph 4:14) and to the market (2 Cor. 5:5). There may even be a suggestion of the theatre in 1 Corinthians 4:9 (Kooienga 1989:74).

5.3 Building up constructive relationship by relevant sermonic language

The preacher listens to the biblical text, which is a long-standing conversation. The preacher listens to the life of the people, which is always an ongoing conversation, even if often reduced. The triangle relationships starts from this aspect (Brueggemann 1989:76). In every sermon, preacher and congregation enter into a

relationship with each other (Theissen 1995:105). Preaching, therefore, is the process by which preacher and people, whose relationship needs to be one of unity, together bring into being the Church's sermon as distinct from the preacher's sermon (Craddock 1985:156-157; Howe 1967:102).

God does not act through the preacher alone, but through the hearers as well. The whole act of preaching, therefore, must include both what the preacher does and what the hearers do. Without the action of either side there is no preaching, and no living sermon will come into being (Howe 1967:101). We must communicate with each other; it is part of our being human. Our relationships with one another depend on this capacity. One of the most painful phrases in our vocabulary is "the failure to communicate" or "a breakdown in communication." Tension and conflict are often attributed to such failure. Sometimes we cannot get through to each other, and our relationships are damaged. On the other hand, our joys and successes are dependent upon the effectiveness of our communication with one another (Pennington 1990:37).

The effective preacher must take every opportunity to know the people of a congregation, not only in general, but also in specific detail. The preacher's special task is helping his or her fellow members to deepen their communication with God (Switzer 1979:76).

5.3.1 Involving audience

Preachers are to involve their audience from the beginning of their preparation all the way through the delivery of their talk. They are the focus of the communication. Preachers should also involve their audience both in thinking and in action. To involve their audience in thinking is to provide them with the relevant language of their sermon (Davis 1991:95-96). Instead of treating your talks like performances, the audience will become a part of your message, involving them in action. It is not easy to involve the audience. It requires careful, creative preparation, commitment to preach truth rather than merely opinion, and caution not to let the technique diffuse the focus of the message. In the long run, though, increased interest, retention, and

understanding makes it worth the effort (Davis 1991:102).

The first step that we need to take as communicators is to try to understand our receptors and take actions to involve them. On the basis of such understanding we are able to take the second step, which is that of empathizing with our receptors. In addition, beyond understanding and empathy, we should attempt to identify with our receptors. Proceeding from understanding, empathy, and identification is actual participation in the life of our receptors (Kraft 1991:208).

The audience-oriented preaching rediscovers the significance of the listener and offers the best way to keep the hearer listening to what the preacher is saying. It is also able to produce sermons designed to engage the listeners (Lee 2003:87).

5.3.2 Forming dialogical relationship

The format of Christian preaching has traditionally been monological, and the assumption here is that this will continue to be true in the majority of instances. Preaching will usually be done by a single individual who speaks while others listen (Swank 1981:22). Howe's point of view is that preaching is commonly a one-way event, and that this characteristic is in opposition to any hope that communication may occur through the sermon event. Communication is intended to bring together meanings from both sides, but monologue is really only interested in imposing meaning from one side (Swank 1981:24).

If we want to avoid talking in monologues, we have to promote methods by which our audience can speak to us. If we want to escape from the one-sided model of 'preaching,' we have to learn how to identify ourselves with the persons we address. Feedback from the audience is essential for any healthy form of communication and it also applies to communication of God's Word (Wijngaards 1979:74). For this reason, dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring relationship into being, and it can once again bring into being a relationship that has died (Howe 1962:3). At the same time, Pieterse (1987:7) supports the concept of dialogical preaching in which the preacher and the

congregation exist in interactive relationship. After pointing out the meaning of dialogical preaching, he goes on to say: "Dialogical preaching aims to create a dialogue between the text and the congregation, in which the congregation experiences that God himself speaks to them and their situation" (Pieterse 1987:8).

Preaching, to be effective in our world, must break with the tradition of the 'solo performer' and be constantly related to the Christian community in action (Read 1981:95). The preacher can create a dialogue within the sermon, permitting the congregation to listen in on, for example, an imaginary counselling session (Kooienga 1989:92).

Preaching is a dialogue not only between the Word of God and the word of man, but also between the relationship with God and the relationship with man (Howe 1967:54). Preaching calls for a homiletical dialogue; if the ultimate unity of being and meaning only results from self-disclosure, then one can only address this unity: one has to use an appellative towards it (Theissen 1995:72-73).

Howe and Reid initiated much of the work on preaching communication. They both stressed the need for dialogue rather than monologue as a model of preaching. Dialogue emphasizes the transactional, two-way flow of information, whereas monologue flows one way from source to receiver. Feedback was the focal point which distinguished dialogue from monologue (Jackson 1988:20).

Through dialogical preaching the sermon can become a shared event in which both the preacher and the people bring their meanings to contribute to the preaching (Swank 1981:73). Preaching enters into a dialogue with the Bible; however, even in a dialogue it is all-important to understand one's conversation partner precisely; otherwise the dialogue becomes a monologue (Theissen 1995:32).

Here, it is notable that Pieterse makes mention of a dialogical relationship between the preacher and the congregation:

The preacher is involved in a dialogical (relationship) with the congregation ... he or

she must ascertain what the congregation's level of knowledge and understanding is, as well as their thinking patterns, with regard to the sermon text. If the preacher has established, in dialogue with the congregation (with the help of preaching work-groups), what their situations, their level of knowledge, their needs, prejudices and tastes are, he then needs to establish a dialogue between the *text* and the situation of the *congregation* ... It is at this point in the preparation of the sermon that the preacher's specialized theological knowledge is needed to distil a message from the text for the congregation's situation, formulated in a contemporary idiom. This is what relevant preaching means (Pieterse 1987:36).

Thompson (1984:68) presents some advantages of dialogue preaching. It produces a higher interest level on the part of the congregation. Dialogue preaching gets people involved in the communication of ideas. A third advantage of dialogue preaching over the monological style is the opportunity it affords for sharpening issues. Still another advantage of dialogue preaching is that it frequently forces listeners to consider ideas which they might otherwise have blocked out of their minds. Allied with this reason for performing dialogue preaching is the tendency of the method to deal with the real question and tensions that people have. The final advantage to be considered lies in the broadening effect of dialogue on both preacher and people.

Communicative preaching is and always has been dialogical. It is characterized by the preacher's concern for the attitudes, experiences, and needs of his people. In every aspect of his ministry he must listen to them and respond appropriately to their needs and feelings (Johnston 2001:150; Thompson 1984:9).

5.3.3 Making partnership

The preacher need to re-evaluate the audience as a partner in a sermon (Lee 2003:89). Preaching regards the listener as the dominant partner in the persuasion process (Meyers 1993:29). The people can be included in the preaching, so that they are full and active partners in the process though they speak not a word at this time (Swank 1981:7).

Since the public proclamation of the Gospel necessarily involves hearers as well as a speaker, a partnership exists that is fundamental to preaching (Swank 1981:43). Listeners are no longer observers but active co-participants of the preaching. Based on the fact that listeners are co-participants, it must be clear that preaching expresses a face-to-face relationship. It goes without saying, furthermore, that a sermon should get the attention of the hearer from beginning to end (Lee 2003:88).

In considering the preacher's delivery of his sermon, we must remember that the purpose of his sermon is to activate a partnership with the hearer that will produce the Church's sermon which, in turn, will become an orbiting message in the world. If the preacher believes that he is preaching with his people, he is more apt to address them directly. In a direct address one looks at people and is guided by their response. Verbal response from the congregation is not possible or desirable during the sermon, even though there have been some experiments in overt dialogue between preacher and congregation. In my opinion these have occasional value but are not likely to become normative. Anyone who is at all observant, however, is aware of how many are interiorly free to do so. There are always certain people in the congregation upon whom a preacher depends because, in various nonverbal ways, they indicate that they are hearing and responding to him. So real is their help that when they are not present, he misses them (Howe 1967:86). There will have to be a recognition that communication requires partnership between communicators (Howe 1967:19).

Here, in order to highlight the significance of creating a partnership between the preacher and the congregation, it is essential that meaningful attention is given to E. J. Kim's (1999b:13) explanation about it in an incarnational image:

Likewise, the congregation makes the preached Word of God become flesh and dwell in the world. Its members are a bridge connecting the Word of God proclaimed in a liturgical context to the large context of society. Therefore, the goal of preaching is accomplished not by the preacher at the preaching moment but by the congregation after the moment of preaching.

According to Lee (2003:192), discussing the above facts, only when the preacher and the congregation become partners in both the communication and practice of God's Word, preaching becomes "not primarily informational, telling us things about God and ourselves, but formational, shaping us into our true being" (Peterson 2000:7).

5.3.4 Participation as collaborative preaching

Communication inherently needs participation. Messages are communicated best among active listeners who are no longer observers but active co-participants of the preaching (Abbey 1973:141; Buttrick 1993:189; Long 1993:186). Where there is no participation there is no communication, because collaborative preaching stems from the sense that preaching empowers when the preacher and the congregation are bound up together in both the discernment and communication of God's living Word (Fant 1977:44; McClure 1995:34). Participation means the listener overcomes the distance, not because the speaker 'applied' everything, but because the listener identified with experiences and thoughts related in the message that were analogous to his own (Craddock 1978:123). Willimon (1981:54) maintains that preaching in relation to participation can be maximized when both the preacher, who comes out of community, and the congregation, as God's people, become equal participants in the preaching or word.

The congregation should be a part of the formation of the conversational-collaborative preaching (McClure 1995:48-58) so that they may be strengthened as a community of faith. E. J. Kim (1999b:11-13) explains how the congregation is related to the entire sermonic process as an active partnership. Kim divides it into three stages: before the sermon, during the sermon, and after the sermon (Lee 2003:190-191). During the preaching proclamation, the congregation of faith engages in the spoken event as an ongoing conversational partner (Pieterse 1987:126).

Why should laymen be involved in the Church's preaching? Howe (1967:43), who wrote *Partners in preaching : clergy and laity in dialogue*, points out the following:

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: communication between congregation and preacher; and 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.

Allowing people to participate in communication may indeed take some hard work – to help them be free from rigid patterns, to support them in expressing difficult or tabooed thoughts and feelings, or to encourage their searching for new and different ways of expression. But the tide is running with communication, not against it (Nichols 1980:161). Sermons should function as important parts of the participation of pastor and people in their joint struggle toward Christian maturity. Thus, it is important to keep in mind that the sermon is to be a cooperative enterprise between the preacher and the congregation, and that to be a collaborative approach both of them work together to hear the voice of the text (Kraft 1991:46; McClure 1995:48).

5.3.5 Conversational preaching

The risk of preaching is to open and sustain a conversation without which we cannot live; a conversation perceived among us as subversive. For some, the conversation is an ongoing reality (Hogan 1999; Rose 1997). In our culture, however, many have their life so reduced that the conversation has ended, either in an anxious silence or in a grim monologue. The sermon must be a modeling of a conversation in which all partners speak (Brueggemann 1989:75).

Within the community, believers have taught each other from the Word by way of conversation, to catch the meaning of the message for their own context (Pieterse

1987:8). Conversational preaching talks with its audience, not to them or at them. It does so by including them in the thought process. The preacher is not talking to the congregation about his subject; he is talking with them about a mutual interest. Preaching is not telling someone what to do; it is a mutual hearing of the word of God, as both speaker and listener stand beneath its truth (Fant 1977:174).

Bartow argues that the appropriate style for preaching is conversational, not declamatory. The declamatory style “assumes that those doing the talking are somehow in possession of truth that their listeners do not possess” (quoted in Hillis 1991:133). Declaimers proclaim, announce, and talk to the audience. They assume they are understood and, therefore, do little to personalize the word of God. In the conversational style of preaching, the preacher seeks to stand with (not over) the listener. There is, as Bartow suggests, “no assumption of ‘aesthetic distance’ between speakers and listeners” (quoted in Hillis 1991:133).

Transactions between God and human beings depend on speech. Words heard and spoken are the mode of our most characteristic way of communion. Our task in life is to share in that conversation. We are all in some way creatures of a word. When the words stop, when the conversation ceases, we shall no longer be in communion. Consequently, we shall no longer exist. We live only as we engage in serious conversation (Jackson 1968:50). Analogously, Pieterse (1987:20) believes that effective conversational preaching is “relevant preaching, in which the preacher succeeds in bringing the sermon text and his own context together hermeneutically, so that the message of the sermon text can be described in the situation, language, and conceptual framework of the congregation.”

5.3.6 Establishing community

Communication is the process in which relationships are established, maintained, modified, or terminated through the increase or reduction of meaning (Fore 1987:39). The word communication is derived from the Latin word *communis*, and it includes the concept of relationships. So-called one-way communication can therefore not really be defined as communication. This goes for both the local church pastor and

for the media speaker. The audience must be drawn into the communication process (Søgaard 1993:51).

The preacher is a person who speaks not to, but for and with, the community of God. He is charged with speaking the word that permits new communion. He is invited to speak in ways that open a world of communion. For he is the first man who knows that Christianity and community belong together, and that they are not separable (Henderson 1998:107; Howe 1967:79). To quote Pieterse (1987:9), “preaching in a congregation presupposes a congruency between preachers and their listeners, that they share in the fellowship of faith.”

The crucial agenda of the preacher, as Thompson (2001:90) indicates in his book *Preaching like Paul: Homiletical wisdom for today*, is the continued formation of a community. The preaching task is also intended to guide people out of the alienated silence of exaggerated self, and out of the silence of denial and rage of an exaggerated God, into a serious, dangerous, subversive, covenantal conversation, a conversation that is the root form of communion (Chartier 1981:49).

Messages create communities (Nicholas 1987:103). Through proclaiming the message, we are invited to share in the fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit (Brueggemann 1989:44). The preacher’s sermon is something which he has to share with someone either through spoken word or through action (Howe 1967:102). The sharing process is how the preacher learns what his people’s concerns and needs are, provided that they are open and honest in their reactions (Thompson 1984:29).

5.3.7 Mutual recognition

Preaching is a mutual endeavour, engaged in by both preacher and congregation; and both share the responsibility for the creation of meaning in the total preaching process (Chartier 1981:48). The preacher as a listener should work through the preaching process in sermon preparation with the listeners and their situation constantly in mind (Lee 2003:174; Pieterse 2001:1).

Howe believes that a “crisis of preaching” exists because of a general use of the monological style. Lack of intercommunication between pulpit and pew means that neither can accurately understand the other, so that the Word of preaching fails to touch the hearers at the point of their need (Swank 1981:25).

Inter-human discourse plays a pivotal role in our faith praxis. Speakers and listeners meet in the communication process (Immink 2005:127-128). The communication of faith may, however, also be understood in terms of a purely inter-human discourse – as a dimension of the praxis of our faith. This refers to the interaction between people, for example, and the sermon as an address, or to a pastoral visit (home visitation) as a dialogue between who people. These dimensions of the communication of faith must be judged on their own merits. And we must note that there are related scientific disciplines, such as rhetoric, communication theories, and psychological counselling that focus on inter-human discourse. Practical theology uses the insights of those disciplines (Immink 2005:123).

For effective preaching, which is a mutual process between the preacher and the congregation, two things are needed: an experiential-intellectual understanding of the Word and an awareness of and an ability to provide those conditions which are necessary ingredients of all interpersonal helping processes (Craddock 1985:95; Loscalzo 1992:28; Switzer 1979:53). This kind of interdependence is mutuality, openness, common ownership of what matters to us, and shared responsibility for what each day brings (Nicholas 1987:33-34).

It is no exaggeration to say that the interactive relationship between the preacher and the congregation is very essential in the sermonic process of communication. The minister is not a herald delivering God’s truth to a passively receptive audience, but a pastor seeking to know and serve the congregation. Sermons that grow out of this pastor-congregation relationship exhibit a number of characteristics. First, the theme and language of the sermon will show a clear awareness of the needs and concerns of the audience and will address those needs honestly and realistically. Second, the language which the preacher uses will have no tone of superiority or

separation. Third, the audience will be allowed and encouraged to be a part of the process of reflection and decision. All of these are characteristics of a silent dialogue preaching that seeks audience interaction – at least mentally – in the sermon. Even more explicitly, preacher-audience in mode are those sermons that are either mutually developed by the preacher and members of the congregation prior to delivery, or those that call for actual audience participation and response during the time of the sermon. In either case, the sermon is not a message from a preacher to an audience, but from both preacher and audience reflectively to themselves or to God as a statement of faith (Hillis 1991:155).

5.3.8 Servanthood

The preacher is a “Servant of the Word” who is responsible to people (Macleod 1987:26). God gave the minister to the Church to be God’s servant. As Charles Duthie pointed out, “He [the minister] does not derive his authority from the Church, but from God; the Church, however, is the sphere of his service, so that under Christ he is the servant of the Church (quoted in Macleod 1987:21).

The first has to do with the role of the servant which we may relate back to the “servant” passages in the prophecy of Isaiah. Here the servant is not just “the man for others” (which need not be anything more than a welfare worker or YMCA promoter), but is a person with God’s Word for others. The Old Testament servant is not merely an avid humanitarian, but is both guardian and proclaimer of certain truths without which a person or community cannot be made whole. Incidentally, Paul had the servant idea of the preacher in mind in 2 Cor. 4:5: “What we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake” (cf. Macleod 1987:32).

Most Korean preachers have been products of hierarchical society, and it has been taken for granted that God’s servants should be the heads of their faith communities. However, it is a mistake to deny that they are also the servants of people (Lee 1997:96). As servant of the Word the preacher is more effectively involved with the congregation (Macleod 1987:38). What is more, the preacher’s preaching must

become an actualization of the Word. The congregation must be pointed toward action (Macleod 1987:39-40).

The preacher should have servant leadership in his preaching ministry, as the preacher of a church is responsible for guiding and nurturing his people towards Christian maturity. The preacher must have a clear understanding of Christian maturity. People reach Christian maturity when they can freely love God and their fellows. H. Richard Niebuhr saw this as the most basic task of the Church. He defined the goal of the Church as “the increase among men of the love of God and neighbour” (Horne 1975:74-75).

In the perspective of servanthood, one of the great responsibilities of the preacher is to help the gospel be heard and lived beyond the institutional Church. That may be his greatest task. The preacher must help the Church to see itself as a servant. The Church must learn that, if it is to be like its Lord, it must be a servant. Jesus Christ was a servant. Servanthood was unmistakably His basic role and Paul spoke of himself as being a slave of Jesus Christ (Horne 1975:81). Actually, the call is comprehensive, embracing both laity and clergy. All are called to be the servants of God, so the layman is just as much a minister as the clergyman (Horne 1975:81).

5.4 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to suggest how sermonic language can be re-evaluated practically for the purpose of overcoming irrelevant language. This pragmatic alternative is fundamental to the task of the preacher who seeks to restore sermonic language.

This chapter firstly investigated three role models in sermonic language. Secondly, various styles of sermonic language have been examined, concentrating on the challenge of touching and approaching the congregation’s context through preaching that serves as a medium which delivers the Word. Lastly, the preacher and the congregation both are challenged to make the effort to build up constructive relationships through the construction and usage of sermonic language.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 General summary

As we have seen, the main purpose of this thesis has been to explore how to use the language of the sermon appropriately in terms of effective communication in Korean preaching. In general terms, this study has attempted to establish a homiletical assessment and to suggest alternatives, which were acquired from Osmer's (2008) practical theological methodology, regarding the relevant language of the sermon.

In Chapter 2 this thesis introduced comprehensive concepts of communicative preaching for understanding preaching as a communicative event. We recognized the influence of noise which could occur between the preacher and the congregation in the process of communication. In particular, it was pointed out that when sermonic language receives a blow from various "noises," it becomes exposed and ineffective. On account of this, we reviewed the role of language in preaching and the desirable relationship between the preacher and the congregation. This chapter functioned as a guide map for the direction and assessment of subsequent chapters.

In Chapter 3 the causes provoking irrelevant sermonic language were outlined in the light of three components of preaching: the preacher, the congregation, and the environment. Based on these three components of preaching, we discovered some factors which enhance irrelevant sermonic language, as well as the estranged and insular status of the congregation, and the conventionalized and broken-down environment which had been confirmed according to a misguided communicative custom. We also observed that each cause brought about unique problems in finding the appropriate language for preaching in Korea.

Chapter 4 was primarily concerned with the practical ways which were particularly necessary for the appropriate language of the sermon. This chapter mainly focused on reconsidered methods of applying sermonic language: the attitude and lives of biblical role models who employed the contextual language of the sermon, the living

language which considered the listeners' contexts in order to help them hear the sermon, and the restoration of relationships. For desirable communicative preaching, the preacher and the congregation working alongside each other was an important aspect in shaping the relevant language of the sermon.

The prominent theological foundations for communication were explored in Chapter 5. Here our concern was to find the incarnational, pneumatological and ecclesiastical frames of the sermonic language. It is our contention that these three theological approaches can contribute towards overcoming the crisis of the sermonic language in Korea.

6.2 Conclusion

My hypothesis began with the notion of preaching as a decisive factor in the Korean congregational context by exploring the basic principles of scientific communication such as communicology, linguistics, Christology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology.

Now I shall provide some conclusions which can be drawn from this study of Christian communication in Korea from the perspective of homiletical assessment, and on the basis of five theoretical frames as we have discussed so far.

The Word of the Gospel is conveyed by means of human language. The communication of the Gospel is also understood within the concept that the mechanism of the language is the core of communication. Therefore consideration must be given to how the contemporary congregation listens to the sermon, and whether the preacher has a deep interest in how to communicate the Word of God. In the light of this, the importance that the sermon is focused on listening cannot be overemphasized.

Sermonic language is a significant element in preaching to be considered in the communication of the Word. The concern of implementing sermonic language has much to do with the restoration of the power of preaching. In preaching, one of the important concerns is how to make the congregants hear, that is, to help them hear.

In order to achieve the aim of preaching in a changing era, it is necessary to make an effort to recover the inherent power of preaching. We, the preachers and the congregation, should be able to utilize the transformative power of preaching. This is the ongoing task of the preacher. He should preach the Word of God within the context of human's life (Buttrick 1994b:193). For in the Bible, the Word of God is already and always spoken in the context of real human experience (Read 1981:68).

The preacher ultimately forms his sermonic language not by representing simple biblical knowledge and information but by communicating through the Word of God. If the congregants have a homiletical journey in seeking it according to the living language of the sermon accompanied by the preacher, this in itself is part of their answer. They will be interested in the message because the sermon begins and progresses with the contents related to their context. This is the valuable influence of sermonic language.

What must not be forgotten is that the preacher comes from God's people, the congregation, as Long (1989:12) said. He bore in mind that their expectation and participation can be increased by what form of sermonic language is being employed. It is inevitable that the ways of using sermonic language are duly connected with their lifestyles. This point is worth deliberation, from preparing the sermon to delivering it. In addition, the sermon is on-the-spot language.

The preacher innately makes the most of the language. He shapes the world of new faith in people's consciousness and transforms their identity through it. In view of this fact, sermonic language is employed as the significant link with rhetorical strategies. To borrow David Buttrick's (1987:184) phrase, "The language of preaching is a connotative language used with theological precision." It is therefore important to consider what language is utilized, and this is the decisive element good in preaching. In the light of this, the language of preaching must be deliberately organized and elaborately prepared.

In preaching, the preacher has to take time when preparing to use appropriate language. Thinking of the sermonic language, he must know people, the world in

which they live, and the specificity of the language which they use. Preaching is not both the mere delivery of logic and word-play. It has the goal of transforming them. Hence it is clear that the preacher must have concern for one of the main aspects of preaching: the styles of the sermonic language. He needs to be a craftsman, as it were, to weave the thread of language into the cloth of the sermon.

Contemporary sermonic language must be understood in terms of mutual interaction between the preacher and the congregation. The preacher must help the congregation to participate in the sermon process. For, according to Campbell (1997:236), he needs to be a person who preeminently knows the language of faith being used in the faith community and is able to go on with it. This effort enables sermonic language to be relevant in communicative preaching.

According to Luccock (1944:112), the purpose of preaching is not to let the listener acknowledge the reasonableness of preaching but to see the vision through it. This remark is very interesting, because this vision can become true when the sermonic language finds its right status in terms of the theological aspects of incarnational, pneumatological, and ecclesiastical foundations. To quote Buttrick (1987:193), "The language of preaching must be theologically apt. Preaching is doing theology." The preacher has to deal with sermonic language forms of incarnational, pneumatological, and ecclesiastical interaction, for the Word, Jesus Christ, becomes flesh, sends us the Holy Spirit, and is the head of the Church.

To put it more concretely, in the incarnational approach, communication through incarnation is being involved in a context, entering into the real problems, issues, and struggles of the people (Søgaard 1993:14-15). Clyde Fant (1977:29) declares, "The incarnation ... is the truest theological model for preaching because it was God's ultimate act of communication. Jesus, who was the Christ, most perfectly said God to us because the eternal Word took on human flesh in a contemporary situation. Preaching cannot do otherwise."

In the pneumatological approach, the communication of the Gospel is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through God's people and they do their work in

terms of the intercession of the Holy Spirit (Runia 2001:37). Preaching comes from the Holy Spirit, is practiced by the Holy Spirit, and is performed for the Holy Spirit. Because of this theonomic reciprocity, preaching has the characteristics of a miracle by the Holy Spirit (Bohren 1971:92, Korean translation).

In the ecclesiastical approach, the Church has to engage in communication, especially preaching, because its basic model is the communicative body of Christ. The ecclesiastical approach in preaching is expressed best when Hauerwas (1987:60) says the following: "Preaching requires a people capable of hearing the Word rightly, and the communal practices of the Church contribute to the upbuilding of that people."

In the history of preaching, the great times for the Church have always been times of great preaching, but the reverse is also true (Horne 1975:71). Duffett (1995:31) asserts that we live in the age of speaking when no one is listening. As time goes on, it is out of season to proclaim the Word of God. In spite of this crisis of preaching, we must bear it in mind that preaching is a concentrated form of Christian hope (Cilliers 2004:19), and, at the same time, recall the verse: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season ..." (2 Timothy 4:2, NIV). In the times when no one is listening, the preachers ordained by a call from God should at least observe and have a deep concern for the change of the times, and pursue the paradigm of a sermonic language fitted to these times.

Nowadays the sermons in the Korean Church have come under serious challenge from rapid socio-cultural change. Facing this change, the Korean Church should acquire new paradigm shifts in preaching communication, particularly sermonic language (Kim 2000a:176-177). The renewal of sermonic language is the main urgent challenge to the contemporary preachers who want to be capable of fulfilling the preaching ministry (Kim 2006:74). Hopefully, when these efforts are made, the pulpit of the Korean Church will be restored by the grace of God.

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