

**THE HOMILETICAL APPROPRIATION OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES IN  
THE LIGHT OF SPEECH ACT THEORY: PREACHING AS A  
PERFORMANCE OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT**

BY

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, D H. KIM, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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## ABSTRACT

This research has suggested an alternative homiletical appropriation of biblical passages by utilizing the Speech Act Theory (SAT). In the light of SAT, the preached text is not to be viewed simply as the basis of timeless principles, meanings, and ideas from Scripture or as emphasizing a human experience in the modern world that serves as a re-narration of the text. Rather, the performance of the movement from text to sermon in SAT has to be considered as the performative action of the text itself. The essence of interpretation in preaching is therefore to recognize the *biblical illocutionary forces (BIF)* in Scripture in order to perform the *perlocutionary homiletical response (PHR)* in the preached text. This forms the centre of the use of preaching as a performance of the biblical text in a broken world.

The study shows that the SAT is in accordance with the Reformed Confessions in their emphasis on the living Triune God, still speaking through the Scripture in the present. The Trinitarian archetype of the SAT stance is that the communicative agent is God (locution level); the communicative action is by the Son (illocution level); and the communicative result is from the Holy Spirit (perlocutionary level). According to this determinative view, the Holy Spirit is the enabler of a revealed and continuous biblical illocutionary force in the text being available on the perlocutionary level in the preached text. The Holy Spirit has continually enabled the Christian community to understand and enact the Scripture in the context of theological discernment and its practical responsibility in the modern world. The movement from text to sermon in the SAT therefore not only relates to the treble movement of the grammatical and literary structure within the text, the movement of a creative hermeneutic, the movement of the performed interpretation of the community, or a combination of all three. The three movements have to merge together in the movement of the text to the sermon, and then to the worship service, before it gets to the congregation, in

the movement towards a meeting with God in modern worlds. The homiletical triad of identity, teleology and responsibility will offer practical guidelines for promoting human dignity and generating theologically responsible in the broken world. That is to say, the homiletical appropriation of biblical passages generate in the SAT an unexpected ethical reality through the totality of the triune God's authoritative speech act in which the Holy Spirit gives the energy to accomplish the alternative reality.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie navorsing stel 'n alternatiewe homiletiese aanwending van Bybelse gedeeltes voor deur gebruik te maak van die taalhandelingssteorie (SAT). In die lig van SAT, word die verkondigde teks (preek) nie bloot as die basis van tydlose beginsels, betekenis en idees uit die Skrif beskou, of as die klem op menslike ervaring van die moderne wêreld wat dien as 'n hervertelling van die teks, benadernie. Die uitvoer van die beweging van teks na preek in SAT word eerder verstaan as die performatiewe aksie van die teks self. Die essensie van interpretasie in prediking is dus die Bybelse illokusionêre kragte (*BIF*) in die Skrif wat die perlokutionêre homiletiese reaksie (*PHR*) in die verkondigde teks tot uitvoering bring. Dit vorm die middelpunt van die gebruik van die prediking as 'n uitvoering van die Bybelse teks in 'n gebroke wêreld.

Die studie dui aan dat SAT in ooreenstemming is met die Gereformeerde Belydenisse in hul klem op die lewende Drie-enige God, wat steeds in die teenswoordige tyd praat deur die Skrif. Die Trinitariese argetipe van die SAT standpunt is dat die kommunikasie-agent God is (spreekwyse vlak); die kommunikatiewe aksie deur die Seun is (illokusie vlak); en die kommunikatiewe uiteindedeur die Heilige Gees bewerk word (perlokutionêre vlak). Volgens hierdie perspektief, is die Heilige Gees die bemagtiger van 'n geopenbaarde en deurlopende Bybelse illokusionêre krag in die teks, wat op die perlokusionêre vlak beskikbaar is, in die verkondigde teks. Die Heilige Gees stel voortdurend die Christelike gemeenskap in staat om die Skrif te verstaan en te implementeer in die konteks van teologiese onderskeiding en praktiese verantwoordelikheid, ook in die moderne wêreld. Die beweging van die teks tot preek in SAT hou dus nie slegs verband met die drievoudige beweging van die grammatikale en literêre struktuur binne die teks, die beweging van 'n kreatiewe hermeneutiek en die

beweging van die uitgevoerde interpretasie van die gemeenskap, of 'n kombinasie van al drie nie. Die drie bewegings moet saamsmelt in die beweging van die teks na die preek, en dan na die erediens, voordat dit die gemeentebereik, in die beweging na 'n ontmoeting met God in die moderne wêreld. Die homiletiese drietal van identiteit, teleologie en verantwoordelikheid bied praktiese riglyne vir die bevordering van menswaardigheid en die generering van teologiese verantwoordelikheid in die gebroke wêreld. Die homiletiese aanwending van Bybelse gedeeltes genereer in SAT 'n etiese werklikheid deurdeur die totaliteit van die Drie-enige God se gesaghebbende gespreksdaad, waarin die Heilige Gees die energie gee om die alternatiewe werklikheid te bereik, honoreer word.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

*BIF*: Biblical illocutionary force.

*F(ps)*: In terms of illocutionary acts; a warning “*W(p)*”, blessing “*B(p)*”, promise “*Pr.(p)*”, etc.

*IPE*: Intended perlocutionary effect.

*LFCP*: Linguistic force centred preaching.

*MIF*: Messianic illocutionary force.

*NCP*: Narrative centred preaching.

*PCP*: Propositional centred preaching.

*PHR*: Perlocutionary homiletical response.

*SAT*: Speech act theory.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background and Motivation of the Thesis

The Reformed tradition stresses that biblical texts are the foundation of the life and the identity of the Church. It can be argued that not only linguistic texts, but the Word of God at work in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is the foundation stone of a sermon. From this confession, the preacher views Scripture as the living voice of God through which we encounter the saving acts of the living triune God. This homiletical encounter serves as the basis for homiletical motivation as well as its foundation. The premise is that God himself speaks in and through the biblical text. Thus, the preacher needs to utilize a valid and dynamic approach to interpret or analyze the biblical message contained in Scripture. Such an approach will assist preachers to hear about God's saving acts in Scripture – in accordance with HIS purpose for the church. In this sense, biblical texts are carriers, not only of understanding but of faith.

For this reason, the understanding of the impact of biblical texts in preaching has been developing according to a hermeneutical approach that is dynamic and multi-dimensional (literary, historical, linguistic and theological). This integration of exegetic and hermeneutic methods could provide new directions for biblical centred preaching.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, over the past twenty years, a number of significant hermeneutic and homiletic studies have attempted to find and explore various perspectives in theory and practice as resources for biblical preaching. Preachers have tried to present certain biblical themes and biblical

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<sup>1</sup> On normative and valuable analyses of biblical preaching, see Keck (1978: 106); Brueggemann (1997a:30); Cilliers (2004:97-98); Long (2005b: 52).

structures by using several interpretive and preaching styles such as “deductive preaching, inductive preaching, story preaching, dialogue sermons, and homiletical plot” in the context of biblical preaching. However, in a very real sense, these contemporary homiletical appropriations of Scripture are not so much concerned with the role of the linguistic nature in the biblical text. The latter is the so-called “preaching of the Word of God as the words of God” by which the preacher confesses the Bible as the Word of God.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporary preaching theories have tended to focus primarily on sermon form, rather than on theological content and biblical language. These theories have only led to various types of homiletical appropriation of Scripture— retelling biblical stories in narrative preaching (inductive sermon) or repeating biblical topics in propositional preaching (deductive sermon)— and so called textual preaching. In fact, these stereotype trends have failed to account for the dynamic nature of the biblical language in Scripture. The biblical word should be viewed neither simply as containing a general truth, nor as creating an existential individual experience for us. Rather, the biblical word is an invitation that gives access to different worlds of available meaning in the Christian community (Brueggemann 1997a:34). In other words, the biblical text is not a mere container of everlasting, binding biblical truths or of dogmatic principles, rather it is “an acted text of tradition,” which is found in “the community’s performative language and practice” (Campbell 1997: 79). This performative dimension of the biblical language in Scripture does not merely stress an everlasting knowledge of the text, but is a testimony of what the text is about, of what God is already doing for us in Jesus Christ. Simply, the linguistic nature in Scripture refers to things in order to do things.

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<sup>2</sup> The second Helvetic Confession, see Heinrich Bullinger (1562).

Within this homiletical understanding of the performative dimension of biblical language, God does not merely provide supernatural information concerning Himself, expressed in flat statements of facts. He “addresses” man in an “event” or “deed” or “context” which commits Him to man and which expresses His inner “self-involving activity” (Evans 1963: 14). Homiletically speaking, this performative dimension of biblical language in Scripture as a divine action is not only to reconstruct meanings of the coming kingdom in the form of a propositional theme, but rather to reconstruct the Christian life in the modern world eschatologically, i.e., in terms of the coming kingdom. Since Christians do not merely assert certain facts about God, they address God in the act of worship, committing themselves to God and expressing their minds to God. In order to respond to this nature of biblical language with its homiletic foundation, the preacher therefore does not simply grasp the text’s central theme or shape a re-narration of the text in a sermon. Rather, he/she continually maintains a process of performing Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As regards the homiletical implications of the performative aspect of biblical language, it will be supported by the dynamic interface of hermeneutic and homiletic studies. This hybrid aspect of interpretation has called attention to the fact that the performative aspect of language in Scripture has a certain sovereign subject, which is nourished by its performance (cf. Craddock 1979: 33; Lash 1986: 37-46; Long 2005b: 106; Thiselton 1999: 146). This is to say that this performative element in the language of the text will instruct how one might perform Scripture in preaching, providing both the constraints and guidance for the use of Scripture. Thus, the biblical interpretation in preaching “cannot be limited to the way a preacher gleans meaning from the text or seeks to translate the text in the modern world” (Campbell 1997: 211). Rather, it is the goal of Scripture performance (Fowl and Jones 1991: 62). Only then biblical preaching becomes an interpretive performance of Scripture.

Particularly, Campbell (1997:212) emphasizes the significance of the possibility of biblical interpretation in preaching highlighting the performance of Scripture. He remarks:

Biblical interpretation also includes the ways in which the church's practice of preaching itself is an interpretive *performance* of Scripture ... From this perspective, new interpretive questions arise for the preacher ... how does the performance of Scripture in preaching help to form the church's life after the pattern of Jesus' story [*his emphasis*]?

One of the outstanding features accentuated in the above quotation is the aspect of "an interpretive performance of Scripture," also highlighting the performative dimension of biblical texts. On this point, Campbell seems to focus on biblical interpretation for preaching as living through performance (action) and not just knowledge of the Scripture. More specifically, he expounds an interpretive performance of Scripture as not meaning that the preacher is only retelling Jesus' story but that the preacher is required to react to the pattern of Jesus' story (Campbell 1997:210). Thus, the biblical text is not only a source for what we preach, but also for why we preach ensuring that preaching is rooted in the pattern of Jesus' action in Scripture.

On this issue, Nicholas Lash (1986: 37-46) claims that a Christian interpretation of Scripture begins to deliver its full meaning only when it is performed in and through Christian communities. Lash (1986: 42) states the point as follows:

Christian practice, as interpretative action, consists in the *performance* of texts which are construed as 'rendering', bearing witness to, one whose words and deeds, discourse and suffering, 'rendered' the truth of God in human history. The performance of the New Testament enacts the conviction that these texts are most appropriately read as the story of Jesus, the story of everyone else, and the story of God [*his emphasis*].

According to Lash, the practice of interpreting biblical texts points to the importance of not simply reading the Scriptures, but of actually performing them. Thus, biblical texts will independently instruct how one might realistically perform Scripture. In fact, the biblical texts will invite the preacher to join in contemplating it, evaluating it, and responding to it (Pratt 1977: 136). Scripture can entertain and engender preacher involvement. In this case, the texts does not only provide sermonic material but has also a particular force (see, Lanser 1981: 293) when used as a guideline to preach the Bible, biblically.<sup>3</sup> As a result of this force, the texts will lead the preacher to be a disciple, in whom the pattern of Jesus' utterance in the texts identity is followed (Campbell 1997:212). Therefore, the concept of biblical texts could create the possibility of the actualization of power with regard of the use of Scripture in preaching. This linguistic force of the texts would provide considerable insight with regard to rethinking the theological assessment and appropriation of a biblical passage: What the text is doing (performative action), and not only what it means (objective of the topic). To put it differently, texts have a certain momentum that would prompt the question, what does the language of this text do (Craddock 1985: 123; Long 2005b: 92-98; Wilson 1995: 130-31)? It might indicate that the use of the linguistic elements in the text has to do with the performance of an action (see, Austin 1962; Searle 1969).

To a certain extent, Buttrick (1981: 54) pays attention to the role of biblical language, particularly its performative effect in a contemporary communal consciousness. He remarks:

In the ancient world spoken language was employed in more sophisticated ways than in our crumbling linear culture. *First century folk grasped language like a tool*, choosing form and style and structure to shape purpose. Thus *biblical language is language designed to function* in consciousness [*my emphasis*].

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<sup>3</sup> In the section on methodology, the researcher will explain this force of the story as an illocutionary act.

Especially interesting in the above quotation is the fact that Buttrick compares language to “a tool.” Homiletically, the preacher sees the biblical language as a tool and does not only focus on whether the biblical language was true or false.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the preacher focuses on how the biblical language produces meanings. The point is that written texts are a kind of *doing*; many biblical languages are “performative,”<sup>5</sup> and one could regard the language of the biblical text as a performative action of the text itself.<sup>6</sup> This notion of “performative act” urges the preacher to question every passage: what the text is doing (performative action), and not only what it means the so called objective topic. It allows the act of the biblical text to determine the act of the sermon (Cilliers 2004: 107). This radically means that the preacher will get a sermon motif from a certain performative dimension of the text, rather than convey a single idea or create individual experience. More specifically, the preacher insists that true biblical preaching will be the execution of a meaningful action of its passage. The assessment of intentional actions considered as biblical text therefore becomes a crucial starting point for true biblical preaching as well as the beginning of homiletical obedience.

As a result, Campbell, Lash and Buttrick focus on the interpretive performance of the biblical

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<sup>4</sup> Traditionally, philosophers focused on whether language was true or false, but Austin suggests that many sentences that may look like statements do not really work as statements at all. Austin compares language to a toolbox; indeed, he entitled his most important book, “*How to Do Things with Words*” (1975).

<sup>5</sup> For more information on this issue, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), pp. 272-312. See also Anthony C. Thiselton, “The Parables as Language-Event: Some Comments on Fuchs’s Hermeneutics in the Light of Linguistic Philosophy,” in *SJT*, 23(1970), pp. 437-468; idem, “The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings,” in *SJT*, 25(1974), pp. 283-299; idem, “Communicative Action and Promise in Interdisciplinary, Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics,” in *The Promise of Hermeneutics* (eds. Roger Lundin, Clarence Walhout, and Anthony C. Thiselton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 133-239; Walter Houston, “What Did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament,” in *The Place Is Too Small for Us: the Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarships* (ed. Robert P. Gordon; Winona Lake: Eerdmans, 1995), pp.133-153. This is a reprint of Walter Houston, “What Did the Prophets Think They Were Doing? Speech Acts and Prophetic Discourse in the Old Testament,” in *BibInt*, 1 (1993), pp. 167-188; Gordon McConville, “Divine Speech and the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Trustworthiness of God: Perspectives on the Nature of Scripture* (eds. Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 18-38.

<sup>6</sup> A similar point must be made about Paul Ricoeur's use of the categories of speech acts as part of his general interpretation theory. He suggests that there is a difference between *explanation* (of propositional content) and *understanding* (of illocutionary force). See Ricoeur, “The model of the text: Meaningful Action Considered as Text,” in *Social Research* 38/3, (1971), pp. 528-562.

texts in preaching. In other words, they assume that the interpretive performance of Scripture could be the performance of patterns of action in Scripture (Buttrick 1987: 348-349; Campbell 1997: 104; Lash 1986: 37-46). This view may be interpreted as a tension between the action performed by the Scripture: “What was said and done by biblical texts such as the story of God, the story of Jesus and the story of Israel” and the preaching performed by the preacher: “What is said and done and suffered, now, by those who seek to share His will and hope” (Lash 1986: 42).

These considerations indicate that the biblical texts are really doing something; that is to say, those sovereign intentional actions in Scripture do warn, promise, or covenant. If the preacher performs the warning, promising and covenanting aspects, the preaching would truly be “biblical preaching.” In other words, when preaching performs appropriate meaningful actions considered as being Scripture itself (warning, blessing and promising, etc), it would lead to a biblical appropriation in homiletical practice. From this possibility, the preacher might recognize the Bible as God’ authoritative performative action. It will be realized that language and words are not neutral carriers of meaning, but are actually effective and achieve something (Austin 1962: 6; Searle 1969: 12). The performative aspect of biblical preaching might present biblical interpretation in preaching not as the preacher’s task to interpret words and texts in order to find the meaning of Scripture or the preacher’s task to describe the narrative shape of sermons in order to retell the biblical stories. Rather, the preacher’s task is to re-enact the performance of the living voice of God in community. This homiletical perspective – performative action – would cause a refocus on biblical preaching. It aims to concentrate on the normative aspects of the relationship between the Scripture, the preacher and the church in a modern world.

## 1.2. Statement of the Problem

In a certain sense, this dissertation comes up as a response to the performative action of the text itself in the context of a homiletical problem that could be resolved by the renewal of “biblical preaching.” The response can be explained by the following problem statement: The task of biblical preaching is not to be viewed simply as sampling or finding the propositional statement from the Scripture, nor is as having the sermon poses the shape of a biblical narrative. But rather, the crucial matter in biblical preaching should be the performative action of the text itself. If this is so, the question must be asked: How does the preacher explain the tension between the propositional statement meaning found in the exegetical process and the homiletical meaning produced by the inherent linguistic force of the text? This homiletical proposal will strive to distinguish between the basic biblical preaching, which puts an emphasis on the timeless truth of the text whose meaning must then be made available by the application in the preacher and the emphasis is on the available meanings which lie inherent in the linguistic force inherent in the text itself. This dissimilarity means every biblical text contains some indicators of the inherent force as part of meaning without the application of texts as well as the re-narration of the text on contemporary situation.

The possibility of a meaningful action in and by the inherent linguistic force in text itself is not an unprecedented concept.<sup>7</sup> The speech act theory (SAT) concerns itself with the performative nature of language. This promising theory about the use of language was initially introduced by John Langshaw Austin in “*How to Do Things with Words*”(1962) and eventually systematized by his student, John Searle in “*Speech Acts: An Essay in the*

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<sup>7</sup> In fact, the study of what we can do with words has a long history. There were philosophers before Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle. Aristotle, in *De Interpretatione*; Thomas Reid (1788), in his *Essays on the Active Powers of Man*; Husser, E.(1900-1901) *Logical Investigations*. Trans. By J.N. Findlay in 1970, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. For a detailed account and references, see Smith, B. (1990) “Towards a history of Speech Act Theory” in Burkhard, A.(ed.), *Speech Acts, Meaning and Intentions: Critical Approaches to the Philosophy of John R. Searle*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 29-61.

*Philosophy of Language*”(1969) and in “*Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts*”(1979). This linguistic philosophy and theory proposes that a speaker is not merely uttering sounds, words or statements, but is performing an action, hence, it is called the speech act theory(SAT). In SAT, the performative aspect of language usage sharply distinguishes among three categories of action when one uses the oral/written content, viz. (1) The locutionary act: uttering words (e.g., saying the word “Hello”); (2) The illocutionary act: what we do in saying something (e.g., greeting, warning, promise, command, etc.); (3) The perlocutionary act: what we bring about by saying something (e.g., deterring, persuading, surprising) (Austin 1962: 98-18; Searle 1969: 29).<sup>8</sup> From this prospect, the performative dimension of Scripture might imply that the insight of SAT has entered homiletic theory.

In particular, this homiletical emphasis on SAT is also not a new conception. Craddock (1979) already adopted the speech act theory as a primary homiletical theory. Craddock notes that, “J.L Austin has reminded us of the creative or performative power of words. Words not only report something; they do something” (34). He claims that too often today words simply describe; they “serve only as signs pointing to the discovered or discoverable data” (33). For Craddock, a word is “an action, something happening” (44); “words are deeds” (34), and his hope is to recover the “dynamistic and creative functions of language” (34). Nevertheless, recent preaching styles have simply missed the point of Craddock’s critique of the carelessness of biblical language used in the sermon. Craddock argues that “before they were smothered by a scientific and technological culture, words danced, sang, teased, lured, probed, wept, judged, and transformed” (1979: 34). In other words, the illocutionary action in the text itself is a divine symphony, putting breath into our dry sermons. The multiple speech actions

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<sup>8</sup> Open issues and recent critical voices of further development on SAT, see Sbisa, M. (2009) “Speech Act Theory” in Verschueren, J., & Östman, J. O. (eds.), *Key notions for pragmatics* (Vol. 1). Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing, pp. 229-242.

lead to a change from monotonous preaching to God's breath-giving life to the dry bones of the sermon.

### **1.3. Aim of the Research**

The aim of this research is to promote the renewal of biblical preaching in the light of the SAT by discovering the essence of the textual reality considered as the available homiletical meanings, which lie inherently in the inherent divinity linguistic force in the Scripture itself. These meaningful actions are not only made available by the preacher's application in the preached text. But rather, the alternative homiletical motif in the SAT is responsible for the double agency performance as the living Word of God for modern man.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, this research endeavours to investigate the inevitable issue of a practical application in two senses. Firstly, it will pay attention to how this inherent performance element of the Bible helps us to appreciate fully the original biblical author's intended message. Secondly, it will examine how this element helps us to compose a structure of preaching itself as an interpretive performance of Scripture to today's audience. In this way, the role of SAT in preaching may offer new ways of thinking about the preaching of the Word of God as the words of God.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, homiletical application of SAT suggests an alternative central idea through which a Scripture-based preaching could be performed.

### **1.4. Hypothesis**

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<sup>9</sup> The necessity for hermeneutical interpretation of the Biblical text for today, see Köstenberger, A. J., & Patterson, R. D. 2011. *Invitation to biblical interpretation: exploring the hermeneutical triad of history, literature, and theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, pp. 58-59.

<sup>10</sup> Searle (1969: 16) clearly states that "[t]he unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act ... More precisely, the production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts ... are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication."

The Bible is not a textual object but the text itself is a speech act in the Bible (Wolterstorff 1995: 74). This performative action is not merely a product of being “written” but rather a unit of linguistic communication in the communicative economy of the triune God in which “the Father is revealed, the Son reveals, and the Holy Spirit is the agent of revelation’s perfection” (Vanhoozer 1994: 143-181; 1998: 217; 2003: 165). The strength of this view is that SAT could reintroduce the sovereignty of God and the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ as a homiletic consideration when the preacher recognizes the Bible as God’s authoritative speech action. This homiletical identification of the Word of God in SAT could be clear on the fact that the illumination by the Holy Spirit is not contrary to the approach of SAT. This new avenue will serve the Holy Spirit to work in and through preaching of Scripture. This is how Calvin and the Reformers understood the Spirit’s illumination - the Spirit convicts us that the Bible contains God’s dynamic illocutions and enables us to respond to them as we ought (Vanhoozer 1997: 156). In fact, for Calvin, the biblical text was an indispensable part of the school of the Holy Spirit. It is the central issue in the mystery of preaching, expressed in the Reformed statement, “preaching is the Word of God as the words of God.” The verb “is” in that statement must be understood in a pneumatological way (Immink 2002: 161). Based on the Reformed context of preaching, therefore, this dissertation will also endeavour to focus on what should be preached and how this is directly dependent upon Scripture through the living Triune God. This hypothetical integration between SAT and homiletic theory, which will rethink the role of the Bible, the Holy Spirit and preaching in terms of the followed homiletical confession: Preaching is *basically a procedure of re-performing of God’s dynamic illocutions in Scripture* under guidance of the Holy Spirit.

## **1.5. Methodology**

This research will utilize Richard Osmer’s practical theological methodology. In his book,

“*Practical Theology: An Introduction*,” Osmer claims that practical theological interpretation involves four tasks namely the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks, which constitute the basic structure of a practical theological methodology (Osmer 2008: X). Even though, these four tasks are interpreted as connected conformance, normative and pragmatic tasks are central to practical theology as an academic discipline (Osmer 2008: 10-11). Therefore, this research will describe especially the relevance of the normative and pragmatic tasks.

### **1.5.1. The Descriptive-Empirical Task<sup>11</sup>**

The key question of the descriptive-empirical task is “what is going on?” This task produces suitable “information that helps us discern patterns and dynamic in particular episodes, situation, or contexts”(Osmer 2008: 4). This research deals with the notion of biblical preaching in the context of current homiletics, especially with Bible-oriented preaching and its effect. Information will be collected from a survey of literature on this topic namely from books and articles in the fields of hermeneutics, homiletics and philosophy of language. This will indirectly explain how preachers/interpreters appropriate Scripture in its context.

### **1.5.2. The Interpretive Task**

The key question of the interpretive task is “why is something taking place?” This approach will draw on “theories of the arts and science to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring” (Osmer 2008:4). Reality in a certain context is composed of different structures, properties and complexities which are interconnected. To

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<sup>11</sup> The researcher comes from a South Korean background and is expected that “empirical evidence” will be provided indicative of sermons in the South Korean context, namely, towards the performative dimension of biblical language in the SAT. So far, very little has been done in this direction. Therefore, it is not feasible to give or mention the South Korea context intentionally. In fact, there is currently no comprehensive monograph present in the South Korean homiletics arena.

interpret this complex reality of context, therefore, we need an interdisciplinary approach (Osmer 2008:118-119). Thus, for this task, this research will attempt to analyze a “thick description” of the performative dimension of the biblical language in Scripture.<sup>12</sup> This will be an explanation of a speech act hermeneutical approach that is multi-dimensional (locution, illocution and perlocution) in the biblical context of preaching. The approach could reveal a reality of biblical preaching.

### **1.5.3. The Normative Task**

At this stage, the research asks the key question “what ought to be going on?” To answer this question, theological concepts are used to interpret an examined context and to construct norms to guide our responses. Osmer states (2008:163) that “practical theology as an academic field and practical theological interpretation ... are inherently cross disciplinary in nature.” To develop a constructive theological perspective, practical theology dialogues with other theological disciplines as well as the arts and social sciences. Thus, this research will employ a multi-methodological framework, by employing SAT in the biblical context of preaching. Through this framework, some methodological precision of the normative task will be established.

The application of the speech act theory (SAT) may impact on preaching in one of the faithful responses to Scripture because SAT might demonstrate that the study of the meaning of language and the study of the response to it are not two independent studies but one study from two different points of view (Searle 1969: 18). This implies that using and understanding language does not mean that our words represent much less picture, some

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<sup>12</sup> The term “thick description” is borrowed from the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz. It understands social reality as a culture or network in which various institutions, acts, interpretations, traditions, customs, human decisions are connected (Geertz 1973: 3-32).

physical or mental act; no, the utterance or text itself is performed in the right way in the appropriate circumstances. That just is the performance of the meaningful action such as warning, promise, command, apology etc.

Earlier, we have noted that Austin (1962: 98-108) distinguishes three different things we do with words, three kinds of linguistic acts namely the locutionary act, the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. This performative action in language could distinguish between the meaning of what we say and the force of what we say. Austin's linguistic concept starts by proposing a difference between statements and performatives, and then explores the fact that it is impossible to draw a rigid distinction between them. His conclusion is that a statement is also a kind of performative. Therefore, Austin (1962: 109) stresses that only understanding of the locution level in the statement is "roughly equivalent to meaning in the traditional sense."

Furthermore, Searle develops Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts in "*Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*" (1969).<sup>13</sup> In Searle's (1968: 413) analysis, no utterance of a sentence and its meaning is completely "force-neutral," which is to say that "every rhetoric act is an illocutionary act."<sup>14</sup> From this, Searle shows clearly that the propositional act cannot stand on its own, that is, no language just indicates or describes things without making an assertion or asking a question or performing some other illocutionary act. The propositional acts cannot occur alone; an illocutionary act is always simultaneously performed. This incorporation of a propositional expression with its illocutionary act means that most illocutionary acts will have propositional content. More

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<sup>13</sup> According to Vanhoozer (1998: 209), "if Austin is the Luther of SAT, John Searle may be considered its Melancthon, its systematic theologian."

<sup>14</sup> Searle's (1969: 29) assessment: "One cannot just express a proposition while doing nothing else and have thereby performed a complete speech act .... When a proposition is expressed it is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary act."

clearly, Searle stresses (1969: 30) that what people do with a proposition is the illocutionary act: “The illocutionary force indicator shows how the proposition is to be taken.” Therefore, Searle (1969: 31) points out that the formulation of speech act can be represented as  $F(p)$  where “ $F$ ” is the illocutionary force and “ $P$ ” is the proposition. To put it simply, “ $F$ ” creates a proposition and counts as illocutionary acts (a warning; “ $W(p)$ ,” blessing; “ $B(p)$ ,” promise; “ $Pr.(p)$ ,” etc), and here, ( $P$ ) stands for the propositional content and  $F$  for the stance adopted by the speaker toward it (Vanhoozer 1998: 210). That is, a proposition becomes a meaningful action by illocutionary force.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, when a speaker utters a sentence in English (or any natural language), he/she is performing at least two, possibly three, things:

Pass me salt!		
Locutionary act	Illocutionary act	Perlocutionary act
It is the act of forming a sentence according to the rules of English imperative mood.	It involves the act of informing, ordering, undertaking, utterance, which has a certain conventional force.	It involves the act of convincing, persuading, deterring, surprising, etc.

This performative dimension of the SAT might lead to the rethinking of the biblical context of preaching in two areas – first, with regard to the preaching material and second, with regard to the execution of preaching. The preacher will consider the question of the preaching material at a locution level (informative proposition). In this case, a biblical passage through words and texts has a meaning as the “propositional content” in which the preacher only depends on a preachable material as the “the big idea or the moralistic theme.” However, the

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<sup>15</sup> William Alston (1964:39) acclaims the importance of the illocutionary action: “If this is the line along which meaning should be analyzed, then the concept of an illocutionary act is the most fundamental concept in semantics and, hence, in the philosophy of language.”

preacher considers the biblical word as “action (illocutionary level),” which refers not only to what it meant but also to the process of doing it. This performative aspect of the Scripture is a meaningful and an intentional divine action, which is understood by the logic of the God on the move in the world of the text (Müller 1991: 132). The theological movement creates the Christianity which impacts on how people live in a real life situation by changing their attitudes in a specific way. Similarly, Achtemeier (1980: 23) claims that “language brings reality into being for a person and orders and shapes the person’s universe.” For her, “if we want to change someone’s life ...we must change the images-the imaginations of the heart-in short, the words by which that person lives” (Ibid: 24). To put this point more precisely, God’s word is also a divine performative action. This divine action has the force to change the inner construct of reality. Such a perspective on God’s word enables us to distinguish between the meaning of what the Bible says and the force of what the Bible says.

In addition, the performative dimension of biblical language might cause us to rethink the execution of preaching. The preaching performance should try to discover the text’s momentum and its function in order to find the total impact when preaching becomes biblically. The dimension demands both participation and existential decision from the interpreter. First, if interpreters have themselves been interpreted by the performative dimension of the text, the preacher then can execute its performative force. This multiple homiletic motif may be useful homiletically to live in hermeneutical tension between the action performed by the Scripture and the preached text performed by the preacher.

The interpretive performance of Scripture in preaching will not only be engaged on the superficial level of the grammatical or historical meaning of the text, it will assess a different level of the text in which the preacher takes up a particular stance toward the openness of the

world of the text. This multidimensional concept of the biblical text might require that the preacher respect the role of the biblical text as agent. The Scripture is a doer; what is done is writing something. This conviction regarding the Scripture seems to arise in a certain sense from the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act of language. Consequently, the framework of the normative task will propose the methodological precision of how the preacher finds and utilizes the illocutionary action and the perlocutionary action through Scripture. These could allow us to introduce more satisfactory proposals for the homiletical appropriation of Scripture in the biblical context of preaching.

#### **1.5.4. The Pragmatic Task**

The pragmatic task of a practical theological methodology is to form strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable (Osmer 2008:175-176). Thus, the possibility of the meaningful action in the text itself will be tested to demonstrate the progress about the appropriation of Scripture in homiletic movement from text to sermon. The test has been chosen for several reasons. First, the move from text to sermon is a decisive event, which has been described metaphorically as the bridge in the preaching context (Craddock 1979: 54; Cilliers 2004: 110; Long 2005b: 100). In this homiletic bridge, one of the key concerns is to bring together the “biblical world” and the “contemporary world.” Despite the importance of the matter, however, there has been too little careful discussion about how these “two stories” are clearly understood in homiletical theory. Simply, in current homiletical considerations, deductive preaching begins with general propositions and moves to particular applications, while inductive preaching begins with the particulars of human experience and moves to general conclusions. More precisely, this homiletical dichotomy struggles to relate two different stories, worlds and meanings through the sermon ( Campbell 1997: 120).

On the contrary, biblical preaching with SAT could suggest new insights in “what the text meant” and “what the text means” in a homiletical context. In fact, the distinction is inappropriate to recognize any real zealous goal of meaningful divine actions in the Scripture. In SAT, there is no rhetoric act of a propositional-historical format (what the text meant) with a meaning that is completely “force-neutral,” but every proposition content is expressed as it is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary action (Searle 1968: 413). Out of this conviction, Lindbeck (1984: 18) explicitly appeals to a “cultural-linguistic model of religion” as an alternative way between cognitive-propositional models of religious language and experiential-expressive models, which he characterizes as typically conservative and liberal, respectively. One could say that where Lindbeck posits a third axis as a way of making sense of the other two (propositional content and force), SAT contents itself with showing ways in which these first two are integrally linked (Briggs 2001a: 14). In fact, Lindbeck’s “cultural-linguistic model of religion” also stresses (1984: 65) that the central function of language is the “performatory use of Language.”<sup>16</sup> This linguistic view is based on J. L. Austin’s notion of a performative aspect of language by which Lindbeck (1984: 65) claims that “the propositional truth of ontological correspondence only insofar as it is a performance, an act or deed, which helps create that correspondence.” Thus, there can be continuity between the “biblical world” and the “contemporary world” in SAT. Within this homiletical understanding of SAT, these two stories can be, in at least some cases, organic rather than artificial. This will reform/renew our view of true biblical context of preaching.

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<sup>16</sup> In “*Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei’s Postliberal Theology*,” Campbell (1997: 237) argues that Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic model of religion serves to focus on a primary homiletical question: *How does a particular passage of Scripture function to “build up” the church?* Campbell’s homiletical stance of Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic model will imply that the insight in illocutionary force has entered an alternative homiletical strategy for the appropriation of Scripture.

Homiletically, a more crucial reason is that Long (2005b: 106) emphasizes the importance in this movement from text to sermon based on the understanding that texts do not merely say something, but do something:

Texts do all these things through words, of course, which means that they *do* things by *saying* things in certain ways. And it is here-in the interplay between saying and doing-that we find the key to building the bridge between text and sermon. The bridge must be able to bear the traffic of both word and event. The preacher should bring to the sermon both what the text says and what the text does; or, to put it another way, what the text does by its saying [*his emphasis*].

What Long proposes might be a kind of homiletic bridge that moves neither deductively from abstract, cognitive propositions nor inductively from human experience, but rather operates as an act that is performed in the exposition of a text. He suggests that the preacher pays attention to the performative nature of Scripture. This possibility invites the preacher to acknowledge that the Bible not only says things with words, but it also does things with words, whereby the preacher may notice that the illocutionary action in Scripture creates new direction of biblical preaching. This direction is not simply a matter of decoding linguistic signs in text. Nor is it simply a matter of utilizing the narrative effect. No, this new direction about the appropriation of Scripture in homiletic movement is the performative process of inferring biblical intentions and of ascribing divinity illocutionary acts in Scripture.

For example in the biblical passages, “You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder” (James 2:19 NIV).<sup>17</sup> Even though, the audience in this text already knew an on locution level that God is one. But this locution level depends entirely on the nonlinguistic context of the text. It is therefore not enough to know the dictionary meaning of the terms used in the sentence; the preacher must infer or ascribe what

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<sup>17</sup> The Bible quotations in this study are taken from the NIV.

illocutionary act has been performed in a particular biblical passage. This distinction between locutions and illocutions is absolutely fundamental to interpreting text in terms of the biblical preaching. On this regarding, the illocutionary action in the text might raise an alternative account about the appropriation of Scripture in preaching. This account could have important implications for contemporary homiletics, which this dissertation will explore in the pragmatic task. Subsequently, using the SAT in biblical preaching would imply a different theological framework from most contemporary homileticians who operate from the biblical world to the modern world. Therefore, the appropriation of Scripture in homiletical movement which employs SAT approaches to preachable material in Scripture reflects a different hermeneutic from that of most homileticians. Applying SAT in preaching could point out a better understanding of the relationship between these two different stories or worlds called the “biblical world” and the “contemporary world” in the context of acts performed biblically in the world. In this way, the pragmatic task will introduce some creative suggestions for the true practice of the homiletical performance of the living triune god in the modern world.

## **1.6. Structure of the Dissertation**

This dissertation will comprise the following chapters: Chapter 1 will be the introduction of the thesis while Chapter 2 will explore a brief survey of the general notion about the homiletical appropriation of Scripture in the context of “cognitive propositional preaching” and “narrative preaching.” Furthermore, the chapter will describe the homiletical disregard for the relationship between the performative nature of biblical language and the homiletical appropriation of it from both a deductive preaching and an inductive preaching perspective. In addition, this brief survey will stress on the distinction between applied meaning on basis of timeless truth and on inherent linguistic force in the biblical language. Therefore, the

researcher will emphasise the need for a new homiletical appropriation of Scripture in contemporary homiletics. Chapter 3 will suggest an alternative homiletical strategy for the appropriation of biblical passages in the light of SAT. The purpose of the chapter is to survey briefly the methods and terminologies employed in the SAT, particularly in the works of Austin and his student, Searle's as well as of Evans. Furthermore, the chapter will develop an adequate interface of SAT and homiletic approaches for the meaningful action in the text in the context of biblical interpretation using SAT. In this case, the chapter will stress new directions for task of exegesis that would make the homiletical performance of the text possible in the broken world. Chapter 4 will rethink the idea of preachable material and its execution in the light of SAT. Furthermore, the chapter will emphasize the role of the threefold nature of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in biblical texts and their theological implications for the homiletical performance of the living Triune God in the modern world. The homiletical and hermeneutic consideration will provide both constraints and guidance for biblical preaching. This hybrid approach will stand not as an analogy but as a paradigm for biblical preaching in which the appropriation of biblical passages in the light of SAT will serve the promise of the mystery of preaching in the Reformed homiletical legacy. Chapter 5 will demonstrate an alternative homiletic performance from text to sermon in the light of SAT as a test case. This homiletical performance is represented by  $F(p)$  where *the Holy Spirit (a biblical content)* enables the Word of God in biblical preaching under particular valid conditions. Furthermore, the chapter will suggest that alternative homiletical shift be made from the biblical world to the modern world. Since homiletical application of the SAT is not the only bridge between the speaker and the audience in the synchrony dialogue situation, in certain cases, for particular types of illocutionary force in the homiletical appropriation of Scripture, it continues to play across time here and there. This role of SAT in preaching will offer new ways of thinking about the preaching of the Word of God as the

words of God. It could be required to be an alternative criterion by which preachers become not masters but minister for the truthful preaching in the modern world. Chapter 6 will contain the summary and conclusion of the dissertation.

## CHAPTER 2

### BRIEF SURVEY OF PERSPECTIVES ON THE READING AND PREACHING OF SCRIPTURE

#### 2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present a brief comparison of the contrasting concepts of reading and preaching of Scripture in the context of “propositional centered preaching” (PCP), “narrative centered preaching” (NCP), and “inherent linguistic force centered preaching” (ILFCP). In particular, the chapter will examine how these approaches understand biblical language and the hermeneutical and homiletical appropriation of the text. In this regard, the survey could provide some hermeneutical and homiletical importance between the appropriation of the text and its performance. Furthermore, this chapter could clarify how the understanding of biblical language serves/hinders the production of meaning in the homiletical movement. In fact, behind the homiletical movement from text to sermon lies an understanding of the nature of the biblical language, the kind of literature it is, how it came into being, and how it can be understood and appropriated by a modern congregation in the context of preaching.

In addition, the chapter will expand on the homiletical legitimacy in the relationship between the hermeneutical appropriation of a text and its homiletical performance in the context of the performative nature of biblical language. This homiletical understanding will explain the existing meaning of the text expounded in the linguistic elements inherent in the text itself. In this regard, this chapter will encourage rethinking of distinction between applied meaning on the basis of timeless truth and on the inherent linguistic force in biblical language. The research therefore will show that there is a need to expand the task of exegesis to cover the homiletical performance of texts today.

### 2.2.1. Reading and Preaching Scripture with the Propositional Centred Approach

Propositional centred preaching (PCP) is one of the oldest approaches to reading and preaching Scripture.<sup>18</sup> This hermeneutic and homiletical approach could be traced back to Augustine (354-430 C.E.) and his biblical interpretation theory that combined Christian preaching with classical rhetoric (Rose 1997: 13).<sup>19</sup> Even though Augustine's main goal of preaching was developed in line with Cicero's oratory purpose in classical rhetoric, Augustine "lassoed it and corralled it into a Christian thought" (Long 2009: 5). Augustine's biblical interpretation of preaching involved a larger theory of signs and proposition regarding the Christian faith.<sup>20</sup> The issue of signs in biblical interpretation can clarify certain divine truths and help to avoid ambiguous biblical meanings. In other words, Augustine's hermeneutical goal is devoted to revealing the transcendental signified proposition inherent in God's charity in which his aim in biblical interpretation will encourage to search for divine truth.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the meaning of a text can only be understood in the context of the finality of a theological lesson. From this hermeneutical realism, Augustine's homiletical appropriation of the text could be stated as, "what is read should be subjected to diligent scrutiny until an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is produced."<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the primary virtue in reading and preaching the text, according to Augustine, is finding and teaching God's charity, which becomes one of the crucial elements in biblical preaching.

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<sup>18</sup> According to Rose (1997: 13-14), throughout the nearly two thousand years of cognitive propositional preaching, traditional homiletic theory has shifted its boundaries and its emphases; yet much has remained the same. For more information on the contemporary reformulation of traditional theory, see James W. Cox. Section III of his textbook "*Preaching*" (1985).

<sup>19</sup> According to Long (2009: 5-6), Augustine's "*De Doctrina Christiana*, book IV" is the very first homiletical textbook in the history of the church.

<sup>20</sup> Augustine's treatment of signs is found mainly in three works, two of which - plus a substantial part of the third - were completed within about ten years of his conversion: "*On Dialectic*" (387), "*The Master*" (389) and "*Christian Teaching*" (began in 396). In particular, he developed, in "*Christian Teaching*," an elaborate account of how 'signs' found in scriptural texts can be interpreted.

<sup>21</sup> Augustine believes that the understanding of proposition in terms of meaning is more important than the words themselves: "The knowledge is superior to the sign simply because it is the end towards which the latter is the means." For more information regarding this issues, see "*Augustine: Earlier Writings in the Library of Christian Classics*." Ed. J. H. S. Burleigh. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953, p.88.

<sup>22</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 3.15.

On the notion of divine charity in homiletics, Augustine assumes that biblical language in Scriptures refers to some kind of divine value and truth.<sup>23</sup> This hermeneutical truth of preaching has encouraged the use of a propositional statement to clarify sermonic content and form. The use of a propositional centered hermeneutic has been developed and defended in part of some contemporary homiletical theory. In this approach, the preacher shows that the preaching statement will probably refer to a divine reality as the belief in the relation of biblical words to theological virtue.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, the key question in the homiletical appropriation of texts would be how the preaching statement (biblical language) refers to things (cognitive propositional themes; the charity) in which biblical propositions, truths or principles become the basis for the sermon (Buttrick 1994: 81).

The homiletical appropriation of the text in PCP introduces an occasion for the logical argument centred format. An introduction is followed by the text, which in turn is reduced to a propositional topic, developed in a series of points, before the sermon ends in a conclusion.<sup>25</sup> This stereotypical preaching outline has continued to be shaped and reshaped in much of mainline Protestant preaching until now. Thereby propositional sermons were viewed as the medium for propagating the great themes of the Christian faith. Therefore, sermons were often characterized by big principles and doctrinal propositions, and were built to carry certain religious information (Buttrick 1981: 46-47).

### **2.2.2. Purpose of Homiletical Movement in PCP**

The purpose of the homiletical movement in PCP is inextricably linked with presuppositions

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<sup>23</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 3.27.

<sup>24</sup> In Augustine's view, *both* sign and thing have determinate and proper reference (Rist 1996: 25).

<sup>25</sup> For further information on the basic outline for the PCP, see John Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), pp. 78-198 ; Ilion T. Jones, *Principles and Practice of Preaching* (New York: Abingdon, 1956), pp. 87-102.

about language (Rose 1997: 17). The idea that “signs refer to things” dictates how the linguistic reference in the text is appropriated to draw truths and to apply its meaning in the sermon. The decoding and encoding process has its own normative purpose whereby the eternal truth or principle is expounded by the sermon’s motif. The hermeneutical and homiletical implication is demonstrated mainly through illustrations. The purpose of illustrations is to explain the biblical truth of a sermon in a way that the congregation would understand and apply it in their lives. The goal of the homiletical movement is ultimately to produce the meaning in terms of the application. Therefore, behind the homiletical appropriation of the text in propositional preaching lies an understanding of the nature of the biblical language, referring to the truth in the biblical proposition and its application to produce meaning.

Consequently, the preacher has two tasks in the movement from text to sermon. First, he/she must interpret biblical texts in order to discover the truth that is relevant to the contemporary situation. This task includes applying “general or universal” truths to particular life situations (Cox 1985: 70). The second task is to formulate the truth of the text into the sermon’s central idea or theme so that it can be clearly transmitted, communicated, or imparted to the congregation.<sup>26</sup>

In the movement from text to sermon, the central task of the preacher is to span the gap between the text and the sermon with the biblical theme. The homiletical bridge requires that all of the meaning in the text should have an idea, harmonious with the theme of the text (Miller 1957: 55). The purpose of the homiletical bridge in PCP is really to persuade the

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<sup>26</sup> Cox (1985: 50) claims that in order for the homiletical transmission or communication to happen, the preacher and the congregation must “recognize or posit the existence of objective truth.”

hearer to accept the epistemological lesson in Scripture. Therefore, in the homiletical appropriation of biblical passages in PCP, a biblical passage is regarded as nothing more than a passive jar and container, full of theological truths. It is also assumed that the hearer is a saved believer. The Bible is imposed on the congregation as a sealed container with important ideas to which they must submit. Faith, then, is the acceptance of the theme of the Scripture, involving sometimes only the inside idea, waiting to be revealed. The gospel is therefore largely made up of the proclamation of propositions *about* Scripture and the gospel is understood as a linguistic reference to religious information.

### **2.2.3. Rethinking the Reading and Preaching of Scripture in PCP**

The fact that PCP has led congregations into genuine faith in Jesus Christ until now cannot be denied. Nevertheless, leaving all other questions aside, the homiletical appropriation of the biblical text in PCP could lead to two specific questions – first, with regard to the dynamic linguistic statements in Scripture and second, with regard to the “hermeneutical inobservance” in the application. The thoughtful interpreter/preacher must ask why Scripture displays the dynamic linguistic statements in a creative way, if the Scriptures are only sealed vessels of propositions to be opened by a sermon. Clearly, the Scriptures have been given to us in a variety of literary discourses. Texts are to be viewed “as poetic expressions displaying rhetorical and literary artistry” (Long 2005a: 39). There is a danger of the “hermeneutical underplaying of inherent linguistic force in text” in the application of the biblical text disregarding the inherent meanings in the text itself at the cost of the “preacher-made” meaning in the application. That is, the inherent meanings in the text may be produced by the inherent linguistic force in the text itself (meaning of the text), but a preacher-made meaning in the application could be produced using illustrations and anecdotes in the sermon (meaning about the text). Perhaps the statement, “Jesus is the son of God” is one of the best examples

of the truth of biblical proposition in the New Testament. After a careful reading of each of the biblical passages in the New Testament, one would notice their distinctive styles of composition, speech, and points of view particularly in the Pauline letters and the narrative texts. Even though the statement “Jesus is the son of God” is content as well as proposition in both the Pauline letters and the narrative stories in the New Testament and is similar in both instances in some way, the application is obviously different linguistically. In the Pauline letters, for example, it would be an essential part of the argument used to explain something, while in the gospel narrative it would be more suitable as the basis for showing something. Specifically, the same biblical proposition that “Jesus is the son of God” does not only say something, it also does something – for example, it warns, it comforts and it promises something. If this is so, the preacher must be asked that what the text wishes to do (warning, comforting and promising, etc.) through its propositional statement and how the congregation shows responsibility to its performative action in their situation.

### **2.3.1. Reading and Preaching Scripture in the Narrative Centred Approach**

The field of narrative centred preaching (NCP) comprises a cluster of related foci, which includes narrative homiletics, narrative hermeneutics and narrative theology (Lowry 1995: 342). The main homiletical umbrella for NCP is initially promoted through the 1958 study by H. Grady Davis, “*Design for Preaching*,” which identifies the relationship between biblical stories and preaching (Campbell 1997: 118; Long 2009: 3). In particular, Davis (1958: 157) considers the issue of the biblical narrative used in the sermon thus:

We preachers forget that the gospel itself is for the most part a simple narrative of persons, places, happenings, and conversation. It is not a verbal exposition of general ideas. Nine-tenths of our preaching is verbal exposition and argument, but not one tenth of the gospel is exposition. Its ideas are mainly in the form of a story told.

Especially interesting in the above quotation is Davis' claim that the biblical narrative can provide certain hermeneutical importance to the relationship between homiletical appropriation of biblical language and the sermonic form. In short, the NCP is not simply saying what the Bible says, it aims at the re-shaping of the biblical narrative in the form of the sermon (Davis 1958: 15). The narrative centred approach has undergone an experimenting with several preaching styles such as "inductive preaching, story preaching, dialogue sermons, and homiletical plot" in the context of "new directions" in preaching.<sup>27</sup>

This type of preaching actually began with the particular approach which emerged from the theological movement known as "the New Hermeneutic."<sup>28</sup> The programmatic statement of the movement is captured in the work of Ebeling and Fuchs which is based on the philosophy of Heidegger.<sup>29</sup> It is called the "New Hermeneutic" because it begins with Bultmann's "hermeneutic" concern but takes a "new" turn. The new hermeneutic highlights a striking confession of the word of God, and it claims that faith is a language-event (*Sprachereignis*) rather than a speaking-event (*Sprecherereignis*).<sup>30</sup> From this new appreciation of biblical language, homileticians began to learn anew from the exponents of "the New Hermeneutic" the relationship between Scripture and community in preaching. In particular, Craddock (1979) adopts "the new hermeneutic" as a promising concept for homiletical theory. In

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<sup>27</sup> The term "new directions" is borrowed from Wilson (1988: 22). Wilson (1988: 22-23) identifies "new directions" in a cluster of related narrative preaching and writes of "an apparent convergence of thought in the work of some of the people who have helped shape the new directions, people such as Elizabeth Achtemeier, Charles Bartow, Frederick Buechner, David Buttrick, Fred B. Craddock, H. Grady Davis, Eugene L. Lowry, Morris J. Niedenthal, Charles L. Rice, Edmund Steimle, Thomas H. Troeger, Robert Waznak, and others." In fact, those homileticians have become a popular and influential movement in contemporary homiletics, and numerous significant contributions have been published in the field (Campbell 1997: 118; Thompson 2001: 2-8).

<sup>28</sup> According to Campbell (1997: 131), Craddock's appropriation of the New Hermeneutic was preceded by David Randolph in *The Renewal of Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969). However, Craddock's work popularized this approach.

<sup>29</sup> It is called the "New Hermeneutic" because it begins with the precursor, Bultmann's "hermeneutic" concern but takes a "new" turn. See *The New Hermeneutic: New Frontiers in Theology, Vol. II* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964). This book contains an essay each from Ebeling and Fuchs, together with articles by the editors and others.

<sup>30</sup> Ernst Fuchs, *Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1960), pp. 427-28. (E.T., *Studies of the Historical Jesus*, London: SCM Press, 1964), p. 210.

Craddock's view, the approach offers a new possibility for a homiletical direction that moves from the preaching content to the congregation in the preaching event. Craddock notes that words "create and give meaning to human experience" (1979: 42). Thus, the preacher should seek to experience the Word as "an event" or "a happening" (1979: 35).

Eugene Lowry builds on Craddock's position, indicating that preaching in the form of biblical narrative involves re-shaping the sermon as a plot (1980: 15). Typically, narrative centred preaching will represent a story-like progression, "moving from opening conflict, through complication, toward a peripetia or reversal or decisive turn, resulting in a denouement or resolution of thought and experience" (Lowry 1995: 342). Thus, the form of the sermon can be developed based on the analogy with drama, short story and the novel (Thompson 2001: 5). The preacher believes that narrative centred reading and preaching of Scripture could serve preaching more biblically while the congregation is invited to participate more substantially in the sermonic event (Rose 1997: 61).

### **2.3.2. Purpose of the Homiletical Movement in NCP**

The advocates of the NCP argue that the congregation could not participate or engage in the homiletical process effectively through the conceptual method used in sermon production in PCP. The goal of the NCP does not involve a logical argument or a general idea in the text. Rather, preaching aims at experiencing the biblical world in the contemporary world. In short, the preacher has, based on the contributions of the biblical narrative, creative possibilities for preaching which go far beyond the staid formulas of the usual propositional sermon. In order to achieve this aim, again, the nature of the narrative will dictate how biblical stories are appropriated to explain the world of the text and to experience its meaning in the preaching event. The preacher employs an enriched homiletical technique which would theoretically

enable the congregation to “encounter” the world of the text.<sup>31</sup> The NCP could therefore serve to create the same effects in the biblical narrative in the contemporary world. The homiletical goal of the NCP systematically produces the existing meaning only in the rediscovery of the narrative form in the sermon. Therefore, behind the homiletic appropriation of the text in narrative preaching lies a reshaping of the biblical narrative in the form of a sermon, through the structure of its plot and its effect of producing meaning in the experiential event.

At this point, the movement from text to sermon in narrative preaching should weave together the biblical story and our stories, and its form should formally embody the various characteristics of a good story (cf. Campbell 1997:120). A part of this homiletic device is identified as and is accomplished in “the inductive movement” of preaching. For example, Craddock’s inductive methodology moves away from this compelling homiletical model<sup>32</sup> as an alternative type of preaching (inductive), which emphasizes contemporary human experience. In this case, the homiletical movement in the NCP does not seek primarily to convey propositional information or to develop a logical argument, but rather to effect an experience of participative in a biblical theme in the modern context.<sup>33</sup> In this regard, the NCP utilizes various hermeneutical guidelines such as synonyms, allegory, analogy,

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<sup>31</sup> Preaching and narrative in homiletics has been centred around the form of the story as a means of allowing congregational identification with the gospel. See Edmund Steimle, Morris Niedenthal, and Charles Rice, *Preaching the Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Eugene Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980); idem, *Doing Time in the Pulpit: The Relationship Between Narrative and Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985); James Sanders, *God Has a Story Too: Sermons in Context* (Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1979); Richard Jensen, *Telling the Story: Variety and Imagination in Preaching* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1980).

<sup>32</sup> In “*As One without Authority*,” Fred Craddock argues that traditional preaching is deductive and authoritarian; it promotes passiveness in the hearers rather than participation. He discards such a “downward” authoritarian movement of deduction in favour of the “upward” experiential movement of induction (1979: 56-57).

<sup>33</sup> In fact, over the last thirty years, a number of significant homiletic studies have attempted to find and explore various elements in the context of personal experience (Long 2005b:103).

metaphors, parables, imagery, and metonymy in the movement from text to sermon.<sup>34</sup> The purpose of the hermeneutical device in the homiletical task is to enable the hearer to experience the biblical world. Therefore, the homiletical appropriation of biblical passages in the NCP treats the biblical passage basically as artistic pieces. It is assumed that the hearer will count as just another *dramatis personae* in the narrative plot. The goal of preaching is therefore imposed on the congregation as certain unfinished dramas with a blank story ending which has to be filled, for example, with an available meaning that relates to human needs or current topics.

### **2.3.3. Rethinking the Reading and Preaching of Scripture in NCP**

The NCP approach examines the hermeneutical legitimacy of continuity between the biblical world and the contemporary world. However, there is no hermeneutical finality to the reading and preaching of Scripture in NCP. The NCP's homiletical appropriation of the biblical text is only struggling to relate the biblical world to the contemporary world in the individual experience (cf. Rice 1970: 73-74). To achieve continuity between these two worlds, the preacher simply weaves together the biblical story and our stories within the context of general human experiences (cf. Campbell 1997: 147). In this regard, the hermeneutical and theological monotonous analogy between these two worlds serves to make too much of the narrative structure. This monotonous concept of the biblical narrative is simply demonstrated through the "homiletical plots" in the homiletical theory (cf. Lowry 1980: 48).<sup>35</sup> This kind of appropriation of biblical narratives in the interpretation process of preaching is not enough to account for the nature of the biblical language in the narrative text. If the congregation believes the sermon being the Word of God, the homiletical appropriation of biblical

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<sup>34</sup> For more information, see Wilson (1996: 141-142).

<sup>35</sup> Lowry (1980: 48) has offered a good example of applying plots to the sermon form in "*The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon As Narrative Art Form.*"

language would clearly demonstrate to the congregation that God has always been doing something through His written word. The hermeneutical and theological reality in preaching is an encounter with the living God, in and through His Word, from the beginning to the end. The theological activity implies that the Word of God is a performative action; therefore, preaching homiletically re-performs His performative act in the contemporary world.

In fact, as mentioned earlier, “the New Hermeneutic” has shown the significance of “a language event” (cf. Ebeling and Fuchs) as a very definite proposal on the performative aspect of biblical language (Thiselton 1977: 312). For example, Fuchs (1964a: 196) stresses the contrast between functions of a language-event (*Sprachereignis*) and the place of propositions.<sup>36</sup> Ebeling’s concern is also similar to Fuchs’s understanding of the Word of God. Ebeling (1962: 187) claims that “we do not get at the nature of words by asking what they contain, but by asking what they effect, what they set going.” For Fuchs, language which actually conveys reality constitutes a “language-event” (*Sprachereignis*), while Ebeling uses the term “word-event” (*Wortgeschehen*) to refer to the same concept (Fuchs 1964a: 57). The terminological preference of “language-event” (*Sprachereignis*) or “word-event” (*Wortgeschehen*) indicates that the use of language is not to convey ideas or concepts (*Vorstellungen*). Rather, the question is, “what does language do? It justifies being. How does it do this?” (Fuchs 1964a: 207).

With regard to the theological aspect of language, Robert W. Funk has explained the primary role of using language. Funk (1966: 26-27) states that:

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<sup>36</sup> Cf., for example, Ernst Fuchs, *Zur Frage nach dem historischen Jesus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1960), pp. 410-412; *Zum hermeneutischen Problem in der Theologie: Die existentielle Interpretation* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1960), pp. 281-305.

A shift in the linguistic frame of reference may be of material assistance in explication language as event. It may be suggested that the function of language in *Sprachereignis* falls under the heading of what *J.A. Austin* has called *performative discourse*. In this order of discourse, a person is not merely saying something, he is doing something. The language itself is act [*my emphasis*].

Interestingly, Funk's brief but very useful suggestion above indicates some correspondence between the language-event of "the New Hermeneutic" and Austin's (1962: 6) "performative sentence or performative utterance." Similarly, for Craddock (1979: 34), there is a possibility that Austin's insight corresponds with the homiletical theory:

*J.L Austin has reminded us of the creative or performative power of words. Words not only report something; they do something. Words are deeds. Illustrations are shared abundantly: words spoken at the marriage alter, by the judge passing sentence, in the ceremonies of christening and knighting, to name only a few. These examples of dynamic and creative functions of language are the residue of primitive view of the power of speech before words become impoverished [my emphasis].*

Craddock points out that Austin's distinction between doing something and saying something must be understood in the context of the performative power of words. The correspondence between "the New Hermeneutic" and Austin's work lies in the use of language to achieve a performative action rather than to utter a certain informative fact. If NCP proponents really understand Craddock' view that language performs particular actions, preachers would understand that the biblical narrative must be seen as performing an intentional action.

Unfortunately, after Craddock, NCP has underplayed the performative aspect of biblical language. That is, the preacher simply has been appropriating the equivalent of the displayed narrative structure in the biblical text and the inherent force of the text in context of the homiletical plot in the sermon form. It has misunderstood the "language-event" by assuming

that it is only to be understood within the congregation's experiential event during preaching, and that the experiential event should be equated with the homiletical experience through a preacher-made homiletical event in the sermon plot. Therefore, the strategic presentation of the homiletical plot suddenly becomes very important, and biblical preaching becomes shallow entertainment (Campbell 1997: 126). The preacher-made entertainment in preaching involves overemphasizing such an individual experience. This neglect of community requirement is insufficient to serve the larger theological aims of the sermon (Long 2009: 10), Campbell (1997: 192) criticizes this limited appreciation of the Christology in contemporary narrative preaching as follows:

What is important for Christian preaching is not 'stories' in general or even 'homiletical plots,' but rather a specific story that *renders* the identity of particular person...[P]reaching in which Jesus is not the subject of his own predicates comes in for critique [*my emphasis*].

Particularly interesting is that Campbell refuses to reduce the story of Jesus to a general story. A consideration of the identity of the Jesus' story shows that the narrative action in the Jesus' story is working in a specific direction or intention. The intentional narrative direction is not only a semiotic phenomenon as if it could be explained purely in terms of its inherent force. In other words, the Jesus' story performs particular actions in order to *portray* the identity of a particular community. The sovereign intentional action in the narrative bestows specific theological reflection on the preaching event. The inherent act in the narrative text is said to cause or aim at a preaching event. If this is homiletically true, such a preacher-made homiletical plot in the preaching event has also to be redefined through a sovereign intentional action by the biblical narrative itself. The biblical consideration indicates a distinction between the preacher-made event using the homiletical plot and the preacher-performed event which serves the inherent narrative act in the text. That is to say, the

intentional action in the biblical narrative warns, promises, or covenants. Recognizing this meaningful action in the text is therefore crucial in evaluating biblical preaching of Scripture.

#### **2.4.1. Alternative Reading and Preaching through the Linguistic Force Centred Preaching**

Recently, a number of homiletical scholars have re-defined the purpose of biblical preaching as well as the content, language, and form (Rose 1997: 59). In particular, three contemporary homileticians namely Buttrick, Campbell and Long, have helped to shape these alternative views and methods in the homiletical appropriation of Scripture. The primary contributions of their homiletical theory have pointed directly at the performative aspect of biblical language and how the inherent linguistic force creates a guideline for biblical interpretation in preaching. The role of the performative aspect in the homiletical appropriation of Scripture is a fundamental question in the reading and preaching of Scripture. The scholars have asked the question in a variety of ways such as: *What does the passage want to do* (Buttrick 1981:54)? *How does a particular passage of Scripture function to “build up” the people of God in and for the world* (Campbell 1997: 230)? *“What does the text wish to say and what does the text wish to do through its saying* (Long 2005b: 107)?” These kinds of hermeneutical questions in preaching can be applied to debates over what constitutes the relationship between the intention of the biblical language and biblical preaching. The process could distinguish between the meaning of what is being said about the text and the meaning of what the inherent force is doing through the text. Furthermore, the hermeneutical sensibility may indicate that the existing homiletical meaning does not simply say what the Bible says nor does it monotonously re-shape the biblical narrative. Rather, biblical preaching pays attention to the inherent force in the text and how it produces a variety of possible meanings generated in reading and preaching Scripture. Certainly, the fact that the Word of

God creates new situations is what makes the utilization of the performative aspect of biblical language in creative preaching more biblical. The performative element describes the core of biblical preaching in an alternative way and is therefore open to different possible ways of appropriating the text biblically.

#### **2.4.1.1. Buttrick's Goal of Reading and Preaching in the Context of the Performative Aspect of Biblical Language**

Buttrick (1987: 14) attempts a phenomenological approach to homiletics. His homiletical theory is based on what language is and, more importantly, what it does.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, his approach to reading and preaching of Scripture is not interested in biblical language referring so much to historical event (as a past-tense event). Rather, Buttrick (1987: 346) stresses a consciousness that is "hearing the story now." Indeed, the congregation today hears the passage of Scripture and creates new situations through the awareness of the Scripture. This perspective of language in contemporary consciousness serves as the basis of his understanding of biblical preaching (Buttrick 1987: 308). In this understanding, the homiletical goal will depend on the role of biblical language, particularly its performative effect in contemporary communal consciousness. In this regard, Buttrick (1981: 54) remarks:

In the ancient world spoken language was employed in more sophisticated ways than in our crumbling linear culture. First century folk grasped language like a tool, choosing form and style and structure to shape purpose. Thus *biblical language is language designed to function* in consciousness [*my emphasis*].

According to Buttrick, the preacher sees biblical language as having a certain performative

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<sup>37</sup> Buttrick's work, "*Homiletic: Moves and Structures*," and his two other recent books have also focused on what Jesus did (i.e. acted) in his parable stories, which were more than what he probably taught. See "*Speaking Parables*" Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press (2000: 19); "*Speaking Jesus: Homiletic Theology and the Sermon on the Mount*." Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press (2002: 4).

force for it to have effect in the real world. This radically means that the preacher will get the validity of the sermon from a certain performative dimension of the text, rather than by conveying a single idea or biblical topic. In this case, the language of preaching will be the execution of the performative dimension of the biblical passage in order to change the congregation's perception or worldview (Buttrick 1994: 79). The biblical authors clearly intended their "original meaning" to do something by way of altering the consciousness of their first century audience. This intentional action however still has much to accomplish in our twentieth century consciousness. The performative force of a text therefore continues to have effect across time. The recognition of this reality is the vital function of true biblical preaching (Buttrick 1987: 374-375).

#### **2.4.1.2. Purpose of the Homiletical Appropriation of the Text in Buttrick's Homiletical Movement**

Buttrick (1987: 308) claims that there is not a direct movement from text to sermon. This means that preachers do not move directly from exegesis to sermon production. Instead, they move from exegesis to a field of understanding, and then to the production of the sermon. The movement is strategically designed as a certain action sequence. In order to explain the process, Buttrick (1987: 320) employs the illustration of a visitor to an art gallery:

The visitor stands in front of a painting - perhaps the picture of a city street scene - and allows *immediate impression* to form in consciousness. Later, the visitor may sit down *at some distance and think* about the painting as an image in consciousness. Finally, the visitor may leave the gallery with a back-of-the-mind visual impression and as a result, look at the urban world *in a new way [my emphasis]*.

Theoretically, Buttrick's homiletical bridge must be understood as a chain reaction. The movement consists of three moments namely the moment of immediacy (*immediate*

*impression*), of reflection (*at some distance and think*) and of praxis (*in a new way*). Even though each moment has its distinctiveness, the distinctions are interpreted and interrelated as a network of interpretative progression, that is, the preacher has noticed the immediate force. This movement will be created by the goal of the passage and it has to reflect on the structure of the meaning produced by the performative dimension of the passage. Further, the context produces a fresh understanding of the passage and creates a change in praxis. As a result of this ongoing response, the homiletical bridge is to be regarded as an execution of the intention of text. The movement focuses on recreating the intention of the text, and indeed, Buttrick's homiletical bridge has attempted to link preaching with notion that biblical language recovers the effect of the intention of the text. Therefore, Buttrick's contribution to homiletics does not only reorganize previous proposition-centred homiletical concerns or reshape biblical narrative in the homiletical plot. His homiletical bridge reflects indirectly the relationship between the performative power of biblical language and biblical preaching as movement towards consciousness.

In this regard, Buttrick assumes that the biblical text effectively performs its intention to challenge human knowledge. The intention of the text can be identified with the biblical narratives in a way that the narrative sequence will demonstrate "the purposes of God" (Buttrick 1987: 297). Buttrick (1987: 329) also clearly stresses that preaching always involves some intention to do something. For instance, the preacher is engaged in a peculiar intention of the text that enables him/her to re-plot plots and, to some extent, re-intend its original intentional language. In other words, the theological goal of preaching is to perform, somehow, the original intention of biblical language. Only this homiletical performance will enable the preacher to fulfil the purpose of the text. The preacher therefore will get ready to respond to what is needed to raise awareness of the performative dimension of Scripture.

Therefore, the movement from text to sermon is designed to proclaim its intentional action.

#### **2.4.1.3. Buttrick's Homiletical View in the Context of the Performative Aspect of Biblical Language**

Buttrick's (1981: 54) central question in reading and preaching Scripture is, "What does the passage want to do?"<sup>38</sup> This hermeneutic question emphasizes the divine action, because only the intentional action has divine force. The recognition of this action and force leads to "homiletical obedience" in preaching (Ibid: 58). The theological activity pays attention to the performative purpose of the Scripture in order to obey its divine intention. In this case, the fundamental rule of Buttrick's reading and preaching Scripture is that the preacher must be obedient to the text itself as the basis of meaningful action. It is therefore not "What did the text mean?" but "What does the text prompt us to say now (Buttrick 1987: 273)?" The preacher must allow the text to determine the interpretation in terms of the intention in preaching. It follows that the performance of preaching depends on the meaning of the text as intentional action. It also means that preaching will re-perform the divine intentions of the text, homiletically. In this regard, Buttrick (1987: 456) remarks that, "Preaching is the 'Word of God' in that it *participates in God's purpose, is initiated by Christ, and is supported by the Spirit* in the community in the world" [*my emphasis*].

Thus, Buttrick's homiletical proposal seeks to perform preaching in the Trinitarian activity in the contemporary world. God is shaping the church and renewing creation in Christ through the Spirit, and this Triune participation agrees with the promise of the mystery of preaching.

This perspective is helpful when structuring the sequence of the sermon. The preaching form

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<sup>38</sup> Buttrick (1981: 50-54) proposes six questions, which may indirectly inform a hermeneutical framework for biblical preaching: (1) "What is the form?" (2) "What is the plot, structure or shape?" (3) "What is the field of concern?" (4) "What is the logic of movement?" (5) "What is the addressed world?" (6) "What is the passage trying to do?"

manifests itself in the divine activity it refers to (Buttrick 1987: 317).<sup>39</sup> In this regard, the theological pre-condition of biblical preaching is to be faithful not only to the content of a text, but also to its purpose expressed through its performative momentum. If the Scripture is an intentional action, and if the intention of action depends on the intention of its elements, it follows that the meaning of the text as an act depends on its original divine intention. Such a divine intention will be the normative task of preaching in which case preaching functions in the consciousness of its receiver, in terms of both the “what” of the text and the way the text is told. To put this homiletical point more precisely, true preaching should be a speaking of Scripture and not about Scripture (Buttrick 1981: 46). Buttrick’s perspective in reading and preaching Scripture will indirectly reorient the faith that is seeking textual understanding when we preach biblically. Therefore, the performative dimension of the biblical text must enable the preacher to recognize the mystery of divine action from its mother tongue of faith within the Scripture. This is the miracle of preaching according to Calvin.

#### **2.4.2.1. Campbell’s Goal of Reading and Preaching Scripture in the Context of the Performative Aspect of Biblical Language**

Campbell’s (1997: 222) approach to reading and preaching Scripture stresses that the central function of preaching is to edify the church. In order to achieve this theological goal of preaching, Campbell bases his homiletical stance on Hans Frei’s narrative theology, on Richard Hays’ narrative substructure of the Pauline Letters, and George Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic model of religion. The interdisciplinary approach of Campbell’s (2002b: 460) homiletical theory shows the new homiletical direction, which is neither “deductive” nor “inductive” but rather operates with “building up the church.” Campbell (1997: 190) offers an

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<sup>39</sup> On this perspective, Long (1987: 4) notes that “Buttrick returns to the theoretical ground which was abandoned by neo-orthodoxy, but which served as home for homiletics from Augustine to the nineteenth century.” Specifically, when preachers perform exegesis in order to prepare a sermon, they will expect something to happen: a certain divine action in the reading of the Scriptures.

alternative view of reading and preaching Scripture in the context of the performative dimension of the narrative text thus:

[N]arrative is important neither because it provides a “homiletical plot” for sermons nor because preaching should consist of telling stories. Rather, narrative is important because it is the vehicle through which the gospels *render the identity of Jesus of Nazareth*, who has been raised from the dead and seeks today *to form a people who follow his way*. Accordingly, *preaching from the gospels begins with the identity of Jesus [my emphasis]*.

Especially interesting is that this view criticizes the limited reading and preaching of biblical narratives in the contemporary narrative preaching method. In this approach, the preacher interprets merely the displayed narrative structure of a biblical passage and then moves to apply those findings in a general way. This simplification is precisely what a number of narrative homileticians have endorsed. However, Campbell’s new direction in reading and preaching Scripture stresses that the gospel narratives are the primary elements in preaching because they reveal the identity of Jesus.

Furthermore, the theme of Jesus’ identity orients and governs the interpretive practice at the centre of preaching. In this way, the identity of Jesus of Nazareth points the way to being a Christian, that is, to the identity of a Christian. More precisely, the identity of Jesus governs the theological goal of the preaching motif. This homiletical proposition can be seen as focusing on Jesus’ intentional action as a significant guide to Christian preaching (Campbell 1997: 192). In this case, the reading and preaching of Scripture do not suggest that the congregation should find their stories in the biblical story. Rather, the homiletical appropriation of the text suggests that the biblical story may “re-describe” the congregation’s

stories.<sup>40</sup> To put it simply, Campbell's goal of reading and preaching Scripture shows that as the history of the meaning of the biblical text continues, we must tell the story differently. Thus, what Jesus did, in the biblical narrative, how he acted and governed his people in what he hopes to say and do in his narrative continue to let Scripture speak in the modern world?

#### **2.4.2.2. Purpose of the Homiletical Appropriation of the Text in Campbell's Homiletical Movement**

Campbell's homiletical movement offers a persuasive critique of narrative centred preaching.<sup>41</sup> For instance, the preacher has often misunderstood the essential task of preaching as fostering the individual experience in the preaching event. The preacher is then merely struggling to relate the biblical world to the contemporary world (Campbell 1997: 120). This homiletical bridge is too simplistic, however, because the movement of the text to the sermon consists the rein mainly of a monotonous analogy. Its hermeneutical approach tends to simply weave together the biblical story and our stories within the context of general human experience (Campbell 1997: 204; 2003: 30). There has been no careful examination of the theological and hermeneutical presuppositions behind the biblical narrative and its performance in preaching (Campbell 1997: 121). As a result of this carelessness, recent narrative preaching is biblically inadequate to communicate the element of the biblical story

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<sup>40</sup> According to Ricoeur (1995: 145), the action of redescription of the productive imagination will be closely linked to the ordinary expressions of the experience of the holy at work in the biblical texts: "I would like to consider the act of reading as a dynamic activity that is not confined to repeating significations fixed forever, but which takes place as a prolonging of the itineraries of meaning opened up by the work of interpretation. Through this first trait, the act of reading accords with the idea of a norm governed productivity to the extent that it may be said to be guided by a productive imagination at work in the text itself. Beyond this, I would like to see in the reading of a text such as the Bible a creative operation unceasingly employed in decontextualizing its meaning and recontextualizing it in today's *Sitz-im-Leben*. Through this second trait, the act of reading realizes the union of fiction and redescription that characterizes the imagination in the most pregnant sense of this term."

<sup>41</sup> Campbell (1997: XI) shows that preachers have tried to use several preaching styles such as "inductive preaching, story preaching, dialogue sermons, and homiletical plot" in the context of "narrative preaching." These directions from text to sermon, however, did not succeed in bringing new life to the church (Campbell 1997: xi-xiv).

namely the normative nutrition in formulating the identity of the Christian community (Thompson 2001: 10). Consequently, recent narrative preaching is theologically insufficient for the task of building the homiletical bridge between text and sermon.

In order to avoid this neglect of the larger theological aim of preaching, Campbell provides a useful redefinition of biblical narrative in the context of homiletical appropriation. His narrative approach can be achieved by reflecting on the narrative substructure (Hays 2002: 15).<sup>42</sup> According to Campbell (1997: 204; 2003: 34), the logic of the narrative substructure has often been ignored by homileticians. His views are supported by several studies of the Pauline Letters, which reveal the significant role of narrative elements from non-narrative texts (Hays 2004: 218).<sup>43</sup> The studies claim that Paul's argument in his letters is not based on "logical necessities" or cognitive propositions but rather on the function of the intentional action in specific sequential events in the narrative (Bal 1997: 5).<sup>44</sup> This inherent act will define the causing or aiming the role of narrative elements from non-narrative texts. Therefore, Paul attempts to represent the story of God, the story of Jesus and the story of Israel through his letters in order to achieve his various ministerial goals in Christ (Meeks 1993: 196).

Within the narrative framework of the biblical story, various arguments are possible because the gospel story itself is "polyvalent" (Hays 2002: 224-225; cf. Ricoeur 1976: 45-46,92-93).

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<sup>42</sup> Particularly, modern narratology is built precisely on the distinction between what is told and the way in which it is told. For further information on these issues of "story and discourse," see the work of Russian formalists such as Tomashevsky (1965:67) who distinguishes between *fibula* (story) and *sjuze* (discourse), see also Chatman (1978:19), Bal (1985: 5), Marguerat and Yvan (1998: 18-28).

<sup>43</sup> For more information on this issue, see Bruce W. Longenecker (ed), *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2002).

<sup>44</sup> Mieke Bal gave a convincing definition of narrative event. He points out in "*Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*," that events are caused or experienced by the act of the actors. Even though actors are agents that perform actions, they are not necessarily human. The actors have an intention; they aspire toward an aim. That aspiration is the achievement of something (Bal 1997: 202). Therefore, Bal's considerations can prompt an inherent force in the narrative text.

The multidimensional function of the story allows the interpreter to focus on the “logic” of the gospel narratives (Campbell 2002b: 466). This narrative approach will direct preachers to go not only beyond a simple recitation of the biblical story, but also beyond a simplistic reshaping of the homiletical plot in the sermonic form. The narrative substructure of the biblical story provides the crucial connection between the sermon’s direction and the intention of the biblical passage. The intentional act can clearly be seen as being dependent on the deep narrative predicate (not the surface linguistic) in action (Chatman 1978: 146). This view challenges simplistic movements from a narrative Scripture to a narrative sermon (Campbell 2003: 34). In short, the story itself is a meaningful action and the narrative shows how the audience (reader) learns from this action when it is performed intentionally (Tomashevsky 1965: 76).

In Campbell’s (1997: 230) view, the central hermeneutical question in reading and preaching Scripture is, “How does a particular passage of Scripture function to “build up” the people of God in and for the world?” He shows that, “As performance of Scripture, 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” (Campbell 1997: 217; *my emphasis*).

For this reason, the key task in the movement from text to sermon is not the translation of the meaning or the self-understanding of a biblical story into a sermonic unit. Rather, the homiletical movement should involve the church’s practice of preaching itself as an interpretive performance of Scripture (Campbell 1997: 212).

#### **2.4.2.3. Campbell’s Homiletical View in the Context of the Performative Aspect of**

### **Biblical Language**

Campbell shows that the homiletical performative dimension of Scripture highlights the relationship between preaching and the church through the pattern of Christ's intentional action. The performative dimension will encounter the rethinking of two preaching elements – first, with regard to the homiletical appropriation of Scripture, and second, with regard to the pragmatic performance of Scripture. In this case, the performative aspect in biblical interpretation encountered in preaching should include not only the narrative itself, but also the community and the history of its relationship with the narratives. That is, preachers need to think seriously about the relationship between preaching and the larger life as well as the discipline of the church in order to nurture a rapport with their people (Campbell 1997: 257).

Campbell, therefore, focuses on the pattern of Christ's intentional action as a living resource and not just as knowledge about the Scripture. Specifically, he believes that an interpretive performance of Scripture does not mean that the preacher is retelling Jesus' story, but that the preacher is required to react to the pattern of Jesus' story in their life (Campbell 1997:210). That ongoing action will provide the pattern of action for the people of God in Jesus Christ. Subsequently, the most important issue in the homiletical appropriation of the biblical text is simply not what a text "means" in the mode of existence (*is*) but how a particular passage of Scripture functions as "a communal instance of ruled behaviour" in the meaningful action(*does*) (Campbell 1997: 233; cf. Searle 1969: 12). In short, grammar and grammatology alike are only part of the meaning of a text. Alongside questions of the performative aspect of the biblical narrative must be placed questions regarding the practice of Christianity. The biblical stories are practically "rules-governed behavior" to provide training in ways of being a disciple of Jesus. In fact, the Christian interpretation of the gospel begins to deliver its full meaning only when it is performed by Christian communities, and the story of Jesus is a text

that could illustrate that fact (Lash 1986: 42) .

In addition, it should be kept in mind that Campbell's approach to reading and preaching Scripture would qualify the homiletical performance as a response to the performative elements in the text. This attitude emphasizes the pattern of Christ's intended action as it is narrated in the Scripture (Frei 1975: 160). The autonomous action of the Scripture is performed independently to reveal the intention of God in Jesus Christ (Frei 1975: 158). The effective performance of this divine action in preaching can instruct the community to understand its character in Jesus Christ. From the performative action, the preacher should say that God in Jesus Christ is not primarily the predicate of individual human needs or experiences. Rather, this living resource is the active subject to biblically build up the people of God to embody and witness Jesus' presence in the modern world (Campbell 1997: 227; 2002b: 463). In this approach, the preacher should recognize the Bible as God's authoritative performative action. It would be realized that language and words are not neutral carriers of meaning, but are actually effective and achieve something (Austin 1962: 6; Searle 1969: 12). The performative aspect of biblical language refers to the mystery of divine action, which points out the truth of God in human history. In other words, the preacher gives an account of how God speaks through the Bible. The homiletical performance clarified for His people something that God creates, contemplates, and evaluates, that is, His community in Jesus Christ. This miracle can be performed through preaching.

#### **2.4.3.1. Long's Goal of Reading and Preaching Scripture in the Context of the Performative Aspect of Biblical Language**

In an earlier work titled "*Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*," Long (1989: 12) states that "when we ask ourselves what a text means, we are not searching for the *idea* of the

text. We are trying to discover its total impact upon a reader—and everything about a text works together to create that impact.” Long’s goal of reading and preaching Scripture cannot accurately discern the meaning of a passage of Scripture without considering the form of the passage. He asserts that form and content are inseparable; it is an injustice to meaning to discuss form and content separately. The implications of Long’s assertion on the *form of the content* for preaching are clear— texts do not only intend to say something, they want to do things, and engender effects on their hearers in a “literary communication” (1989: 33).

In this regard, various literary forms have been understood explicitly and theoretically as a patterned communication of action in some areas of social community, that is, literary conventions describe rule-governed patterns of social communication (Bakhtin 1986: 80).<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the form of the content is an essential clue in determining the literary communication in a number of textual contexts such as narratives, proverbs, and in apocalypse. The aspect of literary communication has already been emphasized in order to explain the value of literary knowledge. According to Livingstone (1988: 260), literary knowledge has something to contribute to other disciplines; literary knowledge serves “to challenge and to refine the complexity and perfect hypotheses within the other anthropological disciplines.” In this view, the preacher could add, from a Christian perspective, that the biblical texts serve to challenge and refine our view of what it is to be Jesus’ disciples and present-day readers of Scripture.

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<sup>45</sup> To show the relationship between genre and cultural communication in some areas of social community Bakhtin (1986: 80) observes that, “Many people who have an excellent command of a language often feel quite helpless in certain spheres of communication precisely because they do not have a practical command of the generic form used in the given spheres.” Bakhtin coins the term “speech genre” to refer to the everyday use of language in everyday life. The nature and forms of speech genres are as diverse as the forms of social activity with which they are associated (e.g. grocery lists, military orders, parliamentary motions, medical diagnoses, etc.). Whereas for Wittgenstein genres may be considered language games of a higher order, for Bakhtin languages games may be viewed as genres of a lower order. See Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, pp. 60-102 (Vanhoozer 1998: 363).

Long's goal of reading and preaching Scripture asks an important question about the homiletical appropriation and performance of the text: what does the text wish to say and what does the text wish to do through its literary genres?<sup>46</sup> These questions should be the starting point in biblical preaching. Which elements should belong to some genre in order to derive the biblical content? Why did a biblical author prefer a particular genre to the other? Is it possible to base the determination of a genre on social convention? It should be pointed out that these literary genres mark at least one area where biblical genre and homiletics literature join with performative forces. That is, how did the forms of gospel, proverb, apocalypse, history prompt the identification of their readers or hearers with them and how can that original impact be reduplicated through preaching today? In relation to shorter forms, such as parable or apothegm, how is the reader confronted by them as divine communicative act? How did they function? How can the same confrontation be achieved in the proclamation of the biblical message in the modern church?

#### **2.4.3.2. Purpose of the Homiletical Appropriation of the Text in Long's Homiletical Movement**

Long (2005b: 99) argues that the verb "to witness" has two main meanings – to see and to tell. In short, "witness" in the first sense means to *perceive*; in the second sense, it means to *testify*.<sup>47</sup> He explains the move from text to sermon thus:

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<sup>46</sup> Long's (1989: 24-34) approach to homiletics is based on five hermeneutical questions: (1) "What is the genre of the text?" (2) "What is the rhetorical function of this genre?" (3) "What literary devices does this genre employ to achieve its rhetorical effect?" (4) "How in particular does the text under consideration, in its own literary setting, embody the characteristics and dynamics described in the previous question?" (5) "How may the sermon, in a new setting, say and do what the text says and does in its setting?"

<sup>47</sup> In "*The Witness of Preaching*," Long proposes the metaphor of a "witness" to explain what it means to preach. His book focuses on four images of the preacher as a herald, pastor, storyteller, and witness. Long (2005b: 46-51) argues that the image of the pastor as a witness appears better than and it could overcome the limitations of the other three images.

When the preacher makes the turn from the exegesis of the biblical text toward the sermon itself, the preacher moves from being the first kind of witness to the second kind... The move from text to sermon is a move from beholding to attesting, from seeing to saying, from listening to telling, from perceiving to testifying, from *being* a witness to *bearing* witness (Long 2005b: 100; *his emphasis*).

To assist the preacher in the task of bearing witness, Long (2005b: 108-109) recommends careful crafting of two aspects of sermon production – a “focus” statement that indicates what the sermon is about and a “function” statement that indicates what the sermon wants to do. Long’s focus and function statement depend on what the text wants to say and what it wants to do. To put this differently, biblical texts say things as well as do things, and this indicates that the sermon is to say and do those things. The approach takes the nature of the biblical text into consideration since texts are not intended to convey only certain religious information. Rather, Scripture is pragmatic, created in a real life situation with a view to persuade, change attitudes, get people to do things and act in specific ways (Craddock 1979: 33-34; 1985: 123). Long’s (1989: 30) central hermeneutical question in biblical interpretation in preaching is that the issue of literary genre of the text must be placed at the centre of its function because “what a text says clearly governs what it does” (see also, Long 2005b: 107). From this, preachers should pay attention to the effects that a text intends to have on its reader by assessing its literary genre such as a psalm, proverb, narrative, parable, or epistle; this will include an understanding of the corresponding rhetorical devices. The preacher can then compose a sermon that will “create a similar effect for hearers” (Long 1989: 50).

When reading a text, the preacher is “expecting something to happen, expecting some eventful word that makes a critical difference for the life of the church”; then, the preacher begins to form the sermon (Long 2005b: 106). What the biblical text intends to say and do now becomes what the preacher hopes to say and do in the sermon. The hermeneutical

possibility is not independent of a meaningful and intentional divine action on Scripture. This regulative idea is homiletically understood by the logic of the God on the move in the world of the text (Müller 1991: 132). The theological movement creates the Christianity which impacts on how people live in real life situations by changing attitudes in a specific way.

Similarly, Achtemeier claims (1980: 23) that “language brings reality into being for a person and orders and shapes the person’s universe.” For her, “if we want to change someone’s life...we must change the images—the imaginations of the heart—in short, the words by which that person lives” (Ibid: 24). To put this point more precisely, God’s word is also a divine performative action. The divine action has a force that could change the inner construct of reality. This perspective on God’s word enables us to distinguish between the meaning of what the Bible says and the force of what the Bible says and intends to do. Thus, in the interpretation of Scripture, the preacher needs to attend not only to what the Bible says (i.e. to the propositional content of the biblical text) but also to what the Bible intends to do by what is said.

#### **2.4.3.3. Long’s Homiletical View in the Context of the Performative Aspect of Biblical Language**

Long’s homiletical view unambiguously involves a performative aspect of biblical language – what the Bible actually says (the form of text) as well as what it does (the intention of text). This interpretive reflection on the text is not a matter of following rules or procedures, but of acquiring skills and learning how the preacher becomes a living witness to the biblical passage. That is, the witness could afford insight into how the preacher understands biblical language as one of the meaningful events.

Further, preachers are to find their position in this divine event. The preacher can then testify, “I was there at the event and saw and experienced for myself what happened.” Based on this homiletical testimony, the performative aspect of language becomes crucial in the evaluation of biblical preaching. Reading and preaching Scripture can actually be the agent of a new creation; a fact of course known to Paul long ago (cf. 1 Cor. 1:21-24), but now newly apprehended and heartening to preachers. If texts create reality, signify, and give access to a new reality, the interpretation process will therefore be one of production of meaning. This does not refer to some or other repetition of the eternal idea or the timeless theme lying hidden in the text. However, the interpreter-preacher considers the biblical words to be “action (performative),” which refer not only to what the text meant but also to the process of doing it. In the sermon, the preacher’s performance of the ongoing action in the text therefore becomes the actual witness –the preacher must be an apprentice of the intention of the text in the modern world.

According to Lash (1986: 42), the homiletical motif may be useful in the hermeneutical tension between the action performed by Scripture (“what was said and done by story elements such as the story of God, the story of Jesus and the story of Israel”) and the preaching performed by the preacher (“what is said and done and suffered, now, by those who seek to share His will and hope”). Hermeneutical obedience must allow the traffic of both word and event. The preacher gains not merely knowledge about the text, but a testimony of what the text is about, of what God is already doing for us in Jesus Christ.<sup>48</sup> In fact, Scripture does not come to the Christian community as a general informative database, but in the shape and form of a concrete biblical text. In this case, the biblical language in texts is not only a

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<sup>48</sup> Long is not alone in arguing for the role of testimony as Christian interpretation. The classic point of departure on this issue is Paul Ricoeur’s essay, “The Hermeneutics of Testimony.” According to Ricoeur (1980: 128-130), Christian hermeneutics or Christian interpretation is not based on facts but rather on testimony, which is an entirely different interpretive framework.

linguistic reference, but also a linguistic invitation giving access to different *worlds* of available meanings. The world of the text has a “*surplus of signification*”(Ricoeur 1976: 55). In the case of biblical texts, the signified worlds of the text into a profound and meaning driven literary structure is such that it not only indicates, it also *gives access* to the new world it signifies – that it describes. Biblical texts are lenses, focusing on available worlds; they are keys to these worlds. They are *purpose-driven*, have an *intention* that needs to be heard and to be believed as the basis of a firm trust. The homiletical reality is attained by appreciating the inherent intentional linguistic force in the text rather than by using illustrative material in preaching. On this distinction, when the preacher successfully enacts the inherent intentional linguistic force in the text, we could see it as “meaning accomplished.” However, when the preacher brings these meanings to bear on other applications in the sermonic text, we could see it as “meaning applied.” The distinction between the accomplishment of meaning and the application of meaning has to do with rethinking the criterion for a legitimate homiletical appropriation of the text. It re-describes the core of biblical preaching in an alternative way and therefore opens up different biblical appropriation of the text.

In this case, preaching as testimony not only reconstructs the biblical propositional theme but also reconstructs the Christian life. The action of being a witness of the text can reconstruct the time and place of preaching as well as the time and place for the practice of imagination (Brueggemann 1997a: 32). The “reimagination of reality” is constructed by the performative dimension of the biblical language. The preacher then sees that the language of Scripture can be imagined in terms of God’s ongoing action in the world and the church.<sup>49</sup> From the homiletical confession, witness in preaching has to wait on divine action in the text. It is

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<sup>49</sup> This idea is also proposed by Brueggemann (1997a: 32-35). He (1997a: 33) strongly comments on the creative function of imagination in the generation of meaning in preaching thus: “the image gives rise to a new world of possibility; preaching as understood here aims at images arising out of the text that may give rise to a church of new obedience.”

based on the premise that God himself speaks in and through Scripture. Therefore, the re-imagination of the performative dimension of biblical language will establish the Christian life through God's action.

## **2.5. Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter contains a brief comparison of the homiletical appropriation of Scripture in the context of “propositional centered preaching” (PCP), “narrative centered preaching” (NCP) and “inherent linguistic force centered preaching” (ILFCP), especially as expounded by Buttrick, Campbell and Long who explored the role of biblical language in the hermeneutical appropriation of the text, and how the preacher performs the text homiletically. In PCP, the biblical exposition in the text is regarded as a passive jar and container, full of theological truths; therefore, biblical preaching in PCP is largely made up of the proclamation of propositional information *about* the Scriptures. In NCP, biblical language in narrative form is understood as the medium for giving new perspective on the individual experience. To do the narrative structure must be reshaped in the homiletical plot. The goal of reading and preaching Scripture is accomplished on a rather superficial level in terms of the grammatical or narrative structure of the meaning of the text.

However, the exegetical process and the meaning generated in reading and preaching through both PCP and NCP is an example of what Ryle (1971: 478) calls examples of “thin description.” According to Geertz (1973: 6), the “thin description” could be illustrated with the limited description of a wink, which offers a minimal account of a person's action when he is seen “rapidly contracting his right eyelid.” The description is thin because it omits the

broader context of the event in a way that it appears to be an intended action.<sup>50</sup>

To conclude: the PCP underplays the inherent linguistic force in the text, namely, the inherent meanings in a text as product of the inherent linguistic force in the text itself (preaching the open text) - whilst a preacher-made meaning in PCP could only be produced by depending on illustrations and anecdotes in the application of the sermon (preaching the closed text).

Similarly, NCP also entails a hermeneutical focus on the inherent linguistic force in the context of a narrative substructure. If indeed, the intrinsic linguistic force in the narrative substructure shows a “narrative form,” preaching the biblical narrative calls to mind how the community appropriates the inherent intentional action in the narrative and then performs its intentional force in a contemporary situation. The distinction demands a rethinking of the criterion for the legitimate reading and preaching of biblical narratives. Therefore, the homiletical appropriation of the biblical text in narrative preaching is not simply reshaping the biblical form. Rather, preaching is attentive to the “thick description” of “the narrative substructure”; its intentionality is not silent in the preaching event or in the community’s response.<sup>51</sup>

In this regard, Ricoeur (1985: 88) regards the “narrative voice” as the voice that commends a specific value in the world of the text to the individual reader. The “narrative voice” is thus the “bearer of the intentionality belonging to the text” (Ricoeur 1985: 187). This

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<sup>50</sup> Clifford Geertz has famously applied Ryle’s terminology of “thick description” and “thin description” to the practice of cultural anthropology in his book, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. (London: Fontana, 1973), pp. 3-13.

<sup>51</sup> According to Ryle (1971: 474-475), the thick description stresses “what he is doing, being in terms of what he is doing it for”, and the goal of the thick description contains a reference to the one in mind will be or may be., see “Thinking And Reflecting.” In *Collected Papers [of] Gilbert Ryle: Collected Essays, 1929-1968*. (London: Hutchinson, 1971), pp. 472-479.

hermeneutical reality implies homiletically that the narrative text must be seen as an intentional action such as vindication, defence, attack, and provocation. Furthermore, these meaningful actions in biblical narratives are “arms of combat and they require an immediate reply” (Ricoeur 1984: 508). Therefore, Scripture involves “divine aspiration” – the projected biblical narrative that is proposed for not only our consideration of but also our responsibility to the Christian community.

Therefore, if the preacher remains with the “thin description” of reading and preaching in the context of the closed text, the preacher could not abide by the homiletical confession of the Reformation which says the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God. The use of the verb “is” in that statement is not based only on any epistemological, exegetical or homiletical applications but on the manifestation of the text; it is an expression of faith, that is, faith in the fact that God speaks in and through his Word in the power of the Holy Spirit (Müller 2011: 339). Thus, when the preacher pays attention to the inherent linguistic force in the text itself, he/she reclaims the Reformed Fathers’ homiletical principle that “the preaching of the Word of God is the word of God” based on Calvin’s confession, which says, “without the illumination of the Holy Spirit the Word has no effect.”<sup>52</sup> In this case, the illumination by the Holy Spirit is not contrary to the approach of the inherent linguistic force in the text through which the preacher has learned a new avenue for the Holy Spirit to work in and through the preaching of Scripture. It is an affirmation of this Reformed principle. This new avenue can serve to explain a dialectical relationship between exegesis and the inherent linguistic force of the text itself. That is, biblical preaching is simply not a question of repetition or reshaping

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<sup>52</sup> cf. Calvin *Inst.* III.2.33: *sine Spiritus Sancti illuminatione, verbo nihil agitur* - without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word has no effect.

but an application and appropriation of the inherent power of the text in modern world.<sup>53</sup>

The discussion has also highlighted the significance of the distinction between a speech-event (*Sprachereignis*) and a speaker-event (*Sprecherereignis*) as well as the “inherent linguistic force centred preaching” (ILFCP) in the context of new hermeneutics as demonstrated by three well-know homileticians, Buttrick, Campbell and Long. If preachers learn afresh the nature of the performative aspect of language from “new hermeneutics” and the “inherent linguistic force centred preaching” (ILFCP), the preacher would acknowledge that the propositional statement and the performative action in the text are integrally linked. In fact, Scripture itself appreciates the creative power of language as well as how the performative nature of language creates reality. For example, when Jesus called his disciples in Mark 1:17, he said, “Come, follow me,” and “I will make you fishers of men (Mark 1:17).” Language has the power to change perception or to create a new situation. Furthermore, John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” There is no distinction between the signifier and the signified in Jesus, but to perform His speech act in history, God’s word was performed in Christ in order to reveal Himself to the world.

In this biblical heritage, the interpretive performance of Scripture in preaching does not occur only on the superficial level of the grammatical or historical meaning of the text. Rather, it assesses a different level of the text in which the preacher takes up a particular stance toward the open world of the text. The multidimensional nature of the biblical text requires that the preacher respects the role of the biblical text as agent. The Scripture is a doer; what is done is writing something. This conviction regarding the Scripture seems to arise in a certain sense

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<sup>53</sup>Ricoeur (1976: 92) highlights that: “[A]ppropriation remains the concept for the actualization of the meaning as addressed to somebody. Potentially a text is addressed to anyone who can read. Actually it is addressed to me, *hic et nunc*. Interpretation is completed as appropriation when reading yields something like an event, an event of discourse, which is an event in the present moment. As appropriation, interpretation becomes an event.”

from the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act of language.<sup>54</sup> From this perspective, contemporary biblical hermeneutics and homiletics can act as true friends of reading and preaching Scripture through their emphasis on the role of the performative dimension of biblical language. Furthermore, the chapter explores how Craddock and Funk appropriate Austin's "Speech Act theory" (SAT) on which their homiletical and hermeneutical theory is based in order to show the performative power of language. Even though several technical and philosophical problems have been addressed, particularly, the careful examination and application of SAT in reading and preaching Scripture, it is argued that Calvin's homiletical principle that the Holy Spirit works in and through the preaching of the text could be reclaimed through the SAT. To put this homiletical point more precisely, the preacher must rethink the notion of divine intention in terms of the illocutionary act. An illocutionary act therefore becomes the most fundamental concept in the preaching material as well as the production of possible meanings. This homiletical perspective appreciates the descriptive power of the speech act theory with regards to the link between the text and biblical preaching.

For example, Tostengard (1989: 78) proposes that a sermon should seek "to *do* the text for the hearer." Consequently, the illocutionary action in the biblical passage must generate in the interpreter a new self-understanding or a new insight into reality by the necessary appropriation of the text, resulting in a wise performance of the text by faith. The undeveloped homiletical prospect in SAT could help to provide an alternative criterion for evaluating the reading and preaching of Scripture. Furthermore, it will focus on how

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<sup>54</sup> According to Austin (1975:98-108), the performative aspect of language in the SAT sharply distinguishes between three categories of action when one uses the word/text, viz. (1) The locutionary act: uttering words (e.g. saying the word "Hello"); (2) The illocutionary act: what we do in saying something (e.g. greeting, warning, promising, commanding, etc.); (3) the perlocutionary act: what we bring about by saying something (e.g. deterring, persuading, surprising).

preaching creates possible meanings by appropriating the illocutionary force in the text, not applying meaning on the basis of timeless truths or reshaping the biblical form. Therefore, the next chapter will suggest a way forward by means of an analysis and application of the speech act theory. It will explore the potential contributions of the speech act theory in the homiletical appropriation of Scripture, as well as new directions for the task of exegesis that would make the homiletical performance of the texts possible in the contemporary world.

## CHAPTER 3

### **RECONCEPTUALIZING THE HOMILETICAL EXEGETIC METHOD BASED ON “BIBLICAL ILLOCUTIONARY FORCES” (BIF) AND “PERLOCUTIONARY HOMILETICAL RESPONSE” (PHR)**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter highlighted the lack of the importance of understanding the performative dimension of biblical language when reading and preaching Scripture. The SAT provides an alternative criterion for evaluating the homiletical appropriation of biblical texts. Furthermore, the chapter focused on how preaching creates possible meanings by appropriating the illocutionary force in the text, thereby not applying meaning on the basis of timeless truths or reshaping the biblical form. This was explained in terms of illocutionary action. This view of Scripture arises, in a certain sense, whereby the illocutionary act of language; that is, the reading and preaching of Scripture may be identified according to illocutionary acts in the biblical passage (what the text is doing in what it is saying). It is at this point that the insights of the speech act theory enters homiletic theory.

The present chapter will suggest an alternative homiletical exegetic method for the appropriation of biblical passages in the light of SAT. The purpose of this chapter is to survey briefly the methods and terminologies employed in SAT, particularly in the works of Austin and his student, Searle as well as that of Evans. Furthermore, the chapter will suggest that the new additional task of exegesis is to assist texts to be performed homiletically in the modern world. In this regard, one could say that there are two different goals when using the speech act theory: it could be used to refine our exegetical procedures and can be utilized in the theoretical re-conceptualization of homiletical exegesis.

### 3.2.1. J.L. Austin's Preliminary Aspect of SAT

In his book, *How to do Things with Words*,<sup>55</sup> Austin points to a type of language use which had been largely ignored by philosophers. His main reservation about the use of language has to do with the traditional “descriptive fallacy” in the assumption of philosophers as well as grammarians in their understanding of words (1962: 4-5). The role of “statements” is conventionally understood as the description of a state of affairs; as such, statements are either true or false. However, Austin's unusual suspicion regarding the linguistic function serves to demonstrate that all instances of “making statements” in language perform particular actions. In other words, performatives are used when we say, “I do” (in a marriage ceremony), “I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth” (in christening a ship), “I give and bequeath my watch to my brother” (in a will), or “I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow” (in a bet):

In these examples it seems clear that to utter the sentence (in, of course, the appropriate circumstance) is not to describe my doing of what I should be said in so uttering to be doing or the state that *I am doing it: it is to do it* (Austin 1962: 6; *my emphasis*).

Thus, Austin begins his discussion of language in terms of a distinction between what he calls the “constatives” and the “performatives.” For example, “constatives” are descriptive statements whose primary business is to refer, describe and state, and performative statements are which in their utterance do something rather than merely say something.<sup>55</sup> Statements also try to do something else altogether. Austin's view of utterances introduces the concept of SAT which indicates mainly that the use of language employs a performative action instead of uttering a certain informative fact. This distinction in the use of language shows, at least,

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<sup>55</sup> Later, Austin (1962: 133-147) rejected the “constative” and “performative” categories in favour of the categories of “felicity” and “infelicity,” which determine whether constatives are appropriate or inappropriate relative to the conditions of their utterance. Austin's work was subsequently refined and systematized by his student, Searle (see Vanderveken and Kubo2001: 5).

three important extra-linguistic perspectives in the context of performative dimension of words. It is therefore necessary ultimately to suggest that we reorient what we should do when we say something, and which condition is necessary when we do things with words.

First, Austin coins the phrase “the doctrine of the infelicities” in order to stress that statements perform certain actions. Austin’s (1962: 14) terminology serves to explain “the things that can be and go wrong on the occasion of such utterances.” It serves to evaluate a certain condition in which a performative linguistic action is “unhappy” when it turns into “abuse” or “misfires” (Ibid: 15-20). For instance, the “misfiring” in question is not only purported but void (e.g. someone who is not authorized to judge the accused); or the “abuse” is achieved but not properly (e.g. a dishonest promise).

Secondly, Austin focuses on the matter of convention when one use words in ordinary situations:

There must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, that procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances, and... the particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked (Austin 1962: 14-15).

In Austin’s view of the performative dimension of language, there are conventional relationships between saying  $x$  and the statement bringing about  $y$ . For example, saying  $x$  is constituted as or counted as  $y$  under the factual circumstance  $z$  (cf. she is saying “love” fifteen when she is playing tennis on the tennis court; she said that I “love” watching tennis game in the sport bar).

Thirdly, some intentions lead to the uttering of certain words: "...[utterance] procedure must in fact have those thoughts or feelings, and the participants must intend so to conduct themselves and further must actually so conduct themselves subsequently" (Austin 1962: 15).

Clearly, words are performed for a purpose in which utterance is a form of intentional action. In his stimulating essay on responsibility, "Three Ways of Spilling Ink," Austin suggests that intentionality pertains to the fact that language users usually have a general idea of what they are doing. As we have seen, Austin (1966: 284) compares language to a toolbox; and intention is therefore like "a miner's lamp on our forehead which illumines always just so far ahead as we go along." In other words, understanding the intention of the language user is not a matter of recovering psychic phenomena but of reconstructing a public performance in terms that make its nature as an intended action clear. In this regard, Austin's understanding of intention is not the same as the so-called inaccessible "inner mental process." To understand the intentionality in a text or an utterance is to understand what the person behind the utterance is doing. Accordingly, a theory of language must be part of a theory of action. It goes further to show how indispensable this concept remains for hermeneutics and for the notion of "illocutionary action."<sup>56</sup>

Austin's (1962:52) conclusion is that philosophers and grammarians have underplayed the meaningful actions in utterances, that is, in their view a statement can be considered true or false in isolation from the total performative dimension in the use of the language which is being performed. This means that a statement can no longer be evaluated merely in terms of

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<sup>56</sup> Regarding this issue, Vanhoozer (1998: 213) correctly observes that, "illocution need not imply a return to the traditional psychological model of the author's intention. Viewed in the light of speech act philosophy, author returns as a communicative agent." See also Patte (1988: 91) in "Speech Act Theory and Biblical Exegesis." in *Semeia*, 41 (1988), pp. 85-102. The relationship between intention and illocutionary force in the context of the production of meaning in the SAT will be discussed further in section 3.2 of this study.

being either true or false, but the terms used for this evaluation in the SAT include felicitous/infelicitous, happy/unhappy, appropriate/inappropriate, effective/ineffective, and so on (Botha 1991: 64). In this case, the performative language is related to these un-displayed actions if those actions are appropriate or inappropriate where the circumstance of the utterance clarifies whether it had been successfully performed or not. This hermeneutic reality that underlies extra-linguistic conditions in the speech act, therefore, becomes the principle of verifiability for asking how the expression of language performs a specific action.

### **3.2.2. Austin's Formulation of SAT -Locution (content), Illocution (function) and Perlocution (response)**

Austin(1962: 98-108)says that the performative utterance can be divided into three meaningful actions - the locutionary, the illocutionary, and the perlocutionary acts. Austin's observation serves to answer the question: what kind of linguistic reality is created through each performative action?

First, the locutionary act is the performance of an act of saying something. It expresses the content of what has been said, its topic and what the sentence is stating with that topic. From this, three distinct actions happen when people use language as a locutionary act; namely the phonetic act, the phatic act, and the rhetic act:

The phonetic act is merely the act of uttering certain noises. The phatic act is the uttering of certain vocables or words, i.e. noises of certain types, belonging to and as belonging to, a certain vocabulary, conforming to and as conforming to a certain grammar. The rhetic act is the performance of an act of using those vocables with a certain more-or-less definite sense and reference(Austin 1962: 95).

Second, the illocutionary act is the performance of an act in saying something. It functions as

the force of what we do in saying something. Third, the perlocutionary act is “what we bring about or achieve by saying something”(Austin 1962: 109). It reacts to the intended effect of what has been said:

Saying something will often, or even normally, *produce certain consequential effects* [my emphasis] upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them; and we may then say, thinking of this, that the speaker has performed an act in the nomenclature of which reference is made either (C. *a*), only obliquely, or even (C. *b*), not at all, to the performance of the locutionary or illocutionary act. We shall call the performance of an act of this kind the performance of a ‘perlocutionary’ act(Austin 1962: 101).

On this category of performance action, Austin (1962: 1-5) points out that, for too long, linguists have neglected the performative dimension of language or more accurately, its illocutionary action. Most attempts to define linguistic studies usually concentrate on grammatical form (locution) or its effect (perlocution) but not the illocution which does not describe anything but “is a part of the doing an action”(1962: 5). While locution has to do with a grammar system, the circumstance and conditions make illocution and perlocution actions possible, with language in action. Austin(1962: 101) provides an example to show how this distinction works in an ordinary dialogue situation:

Act (A) or Locution:

He said to me, “Shoot her!” meaning by “shoot”, shoot and referring by “her” to her.

Act (B) or Illocution

He urged (or advised, ordered, &c.) me to shoot her.

Act (C. *a*) or Perlocution

He persuaded me to shoot her.

Act (C. *b*)

He got me to (or made me &c.) shoot her.

Austin regards type (B) above a performative utterance of saying in which the illocutionary action has a particular force. Further, this force causes an effect in communication, that is, the illocutionary force creates the receiver's response (C.a /C.b). For example, the illocutionary action of advising (B) may achieve efficiently the effect of persuading or convincing as well as warning (C.a /C.b). In addition, this illocutionary effect of being heard and understood may also frighten, scare or alarm (C.n) (Austin 1962: 117-118). This type of action, according to Austin, is "perlocutionary." The fundamental feature of the perlocutionary act is that it refers to an effect upon the receiver achieved by an illocutionary act. The definition of some illocutionary verbs, such as request, refers necessarily to the perlocutionary act associated with the receiver (the attempt to get a hearer to do something) (Austin 1962: 119). Theoretically, a complete understanding of an utterance according to Austin involves an agreement on all these three levels of action (locution, illocution and perlocution) between the sender (statement/text) and the receiver (listener/reader). To be precise, the meaning of a text or utterance is a three-dimensional performative action, with form and matter (locution level), energy and force (illocution level), and teleology or final purpose (perlocution level) (Vanhoozer 1998: 218). Furthermore, this performative dimension leads ultimately to how the meaning is produced and made available.

### **3.2.3. The Potential of Illocutionary Action as the Inherent Force in the Text**

Austin (1962: 151) further divides illocutionary actions into five classes namely *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behabitives* and *expositives*:

- (1) *Verdictives*: giving of a verdict in which someone (or something) is declared to be good or bad, guilty or innocent, correct or incorrect (e.g. to estimate, reckon or appraise);
- (2) *Exercitives*: exercising of powers, rights, authority or influence (e.g. to appoint, vote, order, urge, advise or warn);

- (3) *Commissives*: committing oneself to a future act to do something (e.g. to promise);
- (4) *Behabitives*: having to do with attitudes and social behaviour (e.g. apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing and challenging);
- (5) *Expositives*: explaining points of view, opinions etc. (e.g. “I reply,” “I argue,” “I concede,” or “I postulate”).

From Austin’s classification of illocutionary actions, we may conclude that meaning is an act performed by illocutionary actions. The purpose of communication is to try and accomplish the illocutionary action; in this case, the successful communication occurs only when there is a response to the illocutionary force within an apparent action (perlocution level). To summarise, if the receiver executes the intention of the sender, the receiver gets the meaning from the illocution level, not only on the locution level. Thus, the receiver brings about an apparent perlocutionary action. It is possible to distinguish between the *meaning* of what we say and the *force* of what we say (Austin 1962: 108).<sup>57</sup> This distinction can produce a particular hermeneutical sensitivity as well as a biblical meaning in preaching.<sup>58</sup> How this approach works for those who study and teach or preach the Scriptures is that even when we have correctly identified the biblical meaning as the content of a given passage, our interpretive task is not yet complete.

Equally important is the need to determine which kind of illocutionary actions we seek to

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<sup>57</sup> Austin starts with the suggestion that there is a difference between statements and performatives, but then he explains that it is impossible to draw a rigid distinction between them. His conclusion is that a statement is also a kind of performative. Therefore, Austin (1962: 109) stresses that the understanding of only the locution level in the statement is “roughly equivalent to meaning in the traditional sense.”

<sup>58</sup> In the SAT, meaning is neither something in which words and texts have meaning as the “impersonal sign system” nor something where only readers (receivers) produce meaning as their “self-conscious subject.” In other words, in “biblical meaning,” the word “act” refers not only to what is done but to the process of doing it. Therefore, Vanhoozer (1998: 214) says, “thanks to speech act philosophy, the author has begun to recover his or her voice.” If an analogy could be drawn between the author and the biblical author, the preacher could also say thanks to speech act philosophy, the preacher has begun to recover the living voice of God as the divine action in the process of reading and preaching the Scriptures.

accomplish and anticipate in the passage. The illocutionary action gives the sermon its inherent energy in such a way that a good exegesis must always be directed by the inner dynamic action in terms of the illocutionary force. In preaching this inherent force has to break the “limits” of the appropriation of the text whereby preaching only appropriates the preachable material in the text such as the surface grammatical properties, historical world and literature style, etc. Furthermore, the illocutionary force paves the way for biblical interpretation in preaching not only in terms of the grammatical and literary structure but also in terms of the context in which the illocutionary actions are made, the intentions, attitudes and faithful responses, the relationships between participants and the generally unspoken rules and conventions that are understood to be at work when a text is performed and received (cf. Pratt 1977: 86). From this role of the illocutionary force, we may conclude that the purpose of biblical interpretation in preaching is to try and demonstrate these illocutionary actions. Similarly, successful biblical preaching occurs only when there is a response to the illocutionary force within an apparent action (perlocution level).

For example, when James writes that “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder”; (James 2:19), he writes not only to explain monotheism, but also to warn the fake believers, namely those who do not produce good deeds in the community. Since the audience in this text already knew on the locution level that God is one, it is not necessary to reconstruct the sociological or historical structure in order to understand its locution level. However, this well-known knowledge of God does not make any difference to their understanding that “God is one” in their lives. In order to avoid this misunderstanding, the preacher will have to involve not only the locution level, but also the illocution level. If some preacher preaches only this biblical passage about God’s uniqueness, it would reduce the divine illocutionary action to the level of a dogmatic statement.

The fundamental problem with “theme preaching” is that it cannot account for the fact that in the text in which the living God is at work in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and that this is the foundation stone of the life and mission of the Church(see Eph 2:20ff). This divine action has to take the initiative, to begin to accomplish an intention; an action is an actualization of power (see Rev 1:8). This alternative approach must re-establish the links between the language of the text and the inherent force of the text. The language of the text has the inherent power to perform an act. In Scripture-centred reading and preaching, illocutionary force must be involved. The illocutionary force is the fundamental hermeneutic device for finding the intention of the biblical text as well as the normative task of preaching.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, one of the most important benefits of illocution action is to rethink the meaning of Scripture and the faithful response to it.

### 3.3.1. John Searle’s Theoretical Development of SAT

In his book “*Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language*,”<sup>60</sup> Searle (1969) develops in a persuasive way Austin’s initial study of the perspective dimension the result of which is the study of “speech acts theory”(SAT). Searle stresses that “[t]he unit of

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<sup>59</sup> William Alston acclaims the importance of Austin’s analysis of illocutionary action: “If this is the line along which meaning should be analyzed, then the concept of an illocutionary act is the most fundamental concept in semantics and, hence, in the philosophy of language.” See William P Alston, “*Philosophy of Language*” (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> Austin’s term, the performative utterance, has been employed most notably in the work of John Searle, who studied under Austin. Searle’s major contributions to SAT may be considered under four main categories: 1) amplification of locutionary-illocutionary distinction as *F(p)*; 2) classification of different types of illocutionary act; 3) explanation of the direction of fit between words and the world; 4) development of the role of constitutive rule in SAT. For more information of his major contributions to SAT, see John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); idem (ed.), *The Philosophy of Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971); idem, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); idem, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and with Daniel Vanderveken, *Foundations of illocutionary Logic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). He also contributed to and co-edited John R. Searle, Ferenc Kiefer and Manfred Bierwisch (eds.), *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics* (Dordrecht, Boston and London:D. Reidel, 1980). He developed aspects of SAT further in his *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995); and offered various responses to critics in Ernest Lepore and Robert Van Gulick (eds.), *John Searle and His Critics*, (Cambridge, MA, and Oxford:Blackwell, 1991).

linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the ... performance of the speech act.” In this case, “a theory of language is part of theory of action”(Ibid: 16-17). From this perspective, SAT in fact has to be regarded as a special theory of action: “the production of the sentence token under *certain conditions is the illocutionary act*, and the *illocutionary act is the minimal unit of linguistic communication*” (Searle 1971: 39; *my emphasis*).

Searle’s fundamental claims about SAT agrees with Austin’s perspective of using language as the basic unit of communication not in its “constative” dimension, but rather as performing a speech act. However, he suggests a more detailed framework within the performative aspect of language usage. For example, Searle points out that Austin’s distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts has a pragmatic weakness. In fact, earlier, Austin (1962: 110) predicted that “it is the distinction between illocutions and perlocutions which seems likeliest to give trouble.” His initial distinction between locutionary and illocutionary acts has been reconfigured and clarified by Searle.<sup>61</sup> In Searle’s (1968: 413) analysis, no utterance of a sentence having with its meaning is completely “force-neutral.” Every literal text contains some indicators of force as part of its meaning, which is to say that every locutionary act is already an illocutionary act. In this case, Austin’s isolated locutionary act has proved unhelpful, since his “rhetic act” is already an illocutionary act (Searle 1968: 405). In Searle’s view, “One cannot just express a proposition while doing nothing else and have thereby performed a complete speech act... When a proposition is expressed it is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary act” (Searle 1969: 29).

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<sup>61</sup> In fact, Max Black and L. Jonathan Cohen already indicate a weakness of Austin’s distinction of illocution from locution before Searle in 1968. See Max Black, “Austin on Performatives.” In *Philosophy* 38 (1963), pp. 217-226; L. Jonathan Cohen, “Do Illocutionary Forces Exist?” in *The Philosophical Quarterly* 14 (1964), pp. 118-37.

In this regard, three different types of actions are observed when people use the word/text, viz. (1) *utterance acts*: to utter words (e.g., morphemes and sentences); (2) *propositional acts*: to refer and predicate; (3) *illocutionary acts*: to state, question, command, promise, and so on (Searle 1969: 29). Searle claims that the propositional acts cannot stand on their own; that is, no language can just indicate and describe without making an assertion, asking a question or performing some other illocutionary act. Propositional acts cannot occur alone, always an illocutionary act is simultaneously performed. This incorporation within a propositional expression and its illocutionary act means that most illocutionary acts will have propositional content. Searle (1969: 30) states more clearly that what people do with a proposition is an illocutionary act: “The illocutionary force indicator shows how the proposition is to be taken.” Therefore, Searle (1969: 31) shows that the formulation of a speech act can be represented as  $F(p)$  where “ $F$ ” is the illocutionary force and “ $P$ ” is the proposition. To put it simply, “ $F$ ” creates a proposition and expresses it in terms of illocutionary acts (a warning “ $W(p)$ ”, blessing “ $B(p)$ ”, promise “ $Pr.(p)$ ”, etc.). Here, ( $P$ ) stands for the propositional content and  $F$  for the stance adopted by the speaker toward it (Vanhoozer 1998: 210), that is, a proposition becomes a meaningful action through its illocutionary force.

### 3.3.2. The Production of Meaning in SAT

Searle (1969: 43) also goes further to demonstrate that meaning is produced and is available. In considering the role of meaning in SAT, it may be useful to mention another SAT theorist, Paul Grice. On the role of meaning in the utterance Grice (1957: 385) states that, “to say that a speaker  $S$  meant something by  $X$  is to say that  $S$  intended the utterance of  $X$  to produce some effect in a hearer  $H$  by means of the recognition of this intention.”<sup>62</sup> This view of

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<sup>62</sup> This notion of meaning is proposed by Paul Grice who, along with other SAT theorists, argues that meaning is primarily a matter of intention; others emphasize the role of conventions. The strength of Searle’s theory lies in the fact that it includes both factors, see Grice’s work on “Meaning” in *Philosophical Review* (1957), pp. 377-

meaning shows clearly that the intention of *S* produces an effect on the audience. The definition seems plausible, yet it requires further examination, because it confuses illocutionary with perlocutionary acts. In other words, illocutionary acts through the sender succeeds in doing what he/she is trying to do by getting the receiver to recognize what text or utterance *S* is trying to get across.

However, the “effect” on the hearer is not a belief or response; it consists simply in the hearer/readers’ understanding of the illocutionary act of the speaker/author. Searle (1969: 47) argues that this effect is an illocutionary effect (*IE*). Therefore, he proposes an alternative definition of meaning in terms of SAT, namely, “the speaker *S* intends to produce an illocutionary effect *IE* in the hearer *H* by means of getting *H* to recognize *S*’s intention to produce *IE*”(Ibid: 47). According to his definition, the meaning is specifically a matter of illocution, not perlocution (Searle 1971: 45).

Specifically, Searle refuses to assign any function to perlocution in the foundation of meaning: “I will reject the idea that the intentions that matter for meaning are the intentions to produce effects on audiences”(Searle 1983: 161). If Searle’s thought experiment makes sense, the biblical illocutionary force in the text, regardless of how people respond to it, but it only persuades the people if they respond to its testimony in faith. Simply, the location of meaning is a matter of the illocutionary stance, not that the perlocutionary stance. Therefore, the meaning is the intention, as expressed in the illocutionary action. The illocutionary points are created by the author’s intention which determines how the propositional context relates to the world. The disclosed reality is specifically a matter of the illocutionary action that is created by the author’s intentional purpose, not by the reader’s individual experience.

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388; cf. Searle 1971:44-46.

In this regard, biblical preaching is not preaching about individual experiences. When the preacher prepares a sermon using the illocutionary action of the text, the preacher is not merely gathering propositional information about that text. Rather, the preacher tries to demonstrate how the propositional information works together as an illocutionary act simultaneously performed through biblical preaching. For example, the utterance of the centurion in front of Jesus: “Surely this man was the Son of God!” (Mark15:39) is neither simply  $p$  nor simply  $F$  but  $F(p)$ . Specifically, it is an assertive which entails presenting the messianic reality in the context of the Passion of the Christ. This reality is created by the illocutionary action which the author performed. It is not created by self-evident reading. The illocutionary force is “a living language voice in search of a hearer, a voice which seeks to break in upon us from beyond” (Tostengard 1989: 81). There is nothing for preachers perform sermon until they recognize the illocutionary act in the God’s living languages. Thereby, the preached text executes the God’s living illocutionary voice on the broken world. This homiletical execution of the text in the SAT is the proclamation of what the Scripture has stated -the illocutionary act in the text is a message in which the form and content of preaching are driven by the illocutionary force. With regard to this assessment of meaning in SAT, therefore, it becomes crucial to ask how people recognize the divine intention in producing the illocutionary force. It expects God’s warning, promises, commands, healing, etc.

### **3.3.3. Classifying Illocutionary Acts in terms of the Direction of Fit**

Searle (1976: 3) points out that the speaker’s intention creates an illocutionary force in which some illocutions have a part in their purpose. This illocution point determines the kind of directedness between the propositional content and the world in order to represent the place of the object in the world. In this case, “the direction of fit” becomes the important concept

used for establishing a taxonomy of illocutionary acts (Searle 1976: 3-4). It is a matter of how the propositional contents match the world through the purpose of illocutionary points. As Searle (1969: 47) stresses, the author intends  $F(p)$  to be both a propositional content and the energy of an illocutionary force. From this, whenever an elementary illocutionary act is satisfied in an actual context of utterance, a success of fit between language and the world is required (Vanderveken 2001: 32). This necessity is called “the direction of fit,” which helps in understanding the logic of illocutionary action (Searle 1979: 3-4).

Searle (1979: 10-16) states that there are basically five types of speech acts  $F(p)$  which people do with language (i.e. *assertives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives* and *declarations*). Often, the speaker uses more than one of these at once in the same utterance: (1) *assertives*: utterances to say how things are; (2) *directives*: utterances trying to get people to do things; (3) *commissives*: utterances which commit us to do things; (4) *expressives*: utterances expressing our feelings and attitudes; (5) *declarations*: utterances which bring about change.

Therefore, the classification of illocutionary acts is based precisely on the distinction between different illocutionary points. This distinction shows how the speaker’s intention makes the same proposition count as an illocutionary act, for example, as a warning; “ $W(p)$ ,” blessing; “ $B(p)$ ,” promise; “ $Pr.(p)$ ,” etc. (Searle 1976: 2). In order to explain the idea of directedness in SAT, Searle uses an illustration of the shopping list of both a shopper and a detective:<sup>63</sup>

In the case of the shopper’s list...*to get the world to match the words*; the man is supposed to make his actions fit the list. In the case of the detective...*to make the words match the world*; the man is supposed to make the list fit the actions of the

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<sup>63</sup> Searle borrows this illustration from Anscombe’s “*Intention*”(Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1957: 56).

shopper. This can be further demonstrated by observing the role of ‘mistake’ in the two cases. If the detective gets home and suddenly realizes that the man bought pork chops instead of bacon, he can simply *erase the word ‘bacon’ and write ‘pork chops.’* But if the shopper gets home and his wife points out he has bought pork chops when he should have bought bacon he *cannot correct the mistake by erasing ‘bacon’ from the list and writing ‘pork chops.’* (Searle 1976: 3; *my emphasis*).

Searle’s illustration of shopping lists shows that even though the propositional content (*p*) of the two lists are the same, their force (*F*) will be quite different. This difference is equated with the author’s intention that determines the direction (and manner) of fit between words and world (Vanhooser 1998: 247). For example, in James’ statement that “You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder” (James 2:19), the proposition content “God is one” purposes an assertion point, which has a word to match the world direction of fit. However, when Paul writes that “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus”, (1 Timothy 2:5), its purpose intends a promise, which has a world to match the words direction of fit. Both biblical passages have partly the same propositional content, “God is one”; however, the distinction between the different directions of fit is precisely the distinction between different kinds of illocutionary points.

In Searle’s view, each illocutionary point basically makes only four possible directions of fit (word-to-world direction, world-to-word direction, double direction or empty direction) (Searle 1976: 10-16; 1979: 12-20):

(1) Illocutionary acts with an *assertive* point (e.g. assertions, conjectures, predictions) have the words-to-world direction of fit. This illocutionary point represents how things are (e.g. it is raining).

(2) Illocutionary acts with the *commissive* or *directive* point (e.g. promises, vows, acceptance,

and requests) have the world-to-words direction of fit. This illocutionary point aims to transform the world by the future course of the action of the speaker (e.g. Open the window!).

(3) Illocutionary acts with the *declaratory* illocutionary point (e.g. definitions, appellations, appointments, benedictions and condemnations) have the double direction of fit to bring about correspondence between propositional content and reality (e.g. You are fired!).

(4) Illocutionary acts with the *expressive* point (e.g. apologies, thanks, complains, boasts) have the empty direction of fit. This illocutionary point is just to express the speaker's mental state about a represented fact. In this case, in *expressive* utterance, speakers do not attempt to represent how things are and they do not want to change things (e.g. I am so sorry).<sup>64</sup>

These differences of intentionality in the direction of fit between words and the world is important in overcoming the homiletical problem of the so-called gap between method of exegesis (what is meant) and what homileticians aim to do in preaching (what it means), when the preacher has correctly identified a preachable material (propositional content), appropriating it within a part of the sermonic content. It is important to determine how the biblical words (more strictly, their propositional content) fit with the world. In other words, if the biblical propositional content is sufficient to display a type of speech act  $F(p)$ , the difference of the direction of fit serves the homiletic distinction in terms of the homiletic goal.

In this case, the relationship between the illocutionary act and its direction of fit will serve biblical preaching in an alternative way. The exegetical task should pay attention to classifying illocutionary acts in biblical passage in order to clarify the meaning of a text in the

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<sup>64</sup> For more information and its analysis on direction of fit, see Vanderveken (1990: 103-110).

context of a preachable statement and then the direction of fit will extend to the preaching content. This process of reading and preaching Scripture is related to how the preacher executes an illocutionary action after he or she has successfully performed it within the appropriate direction of fit. The reading and preaching of Scripture in SAT, thus, aims to demonstrate how the illocutionary act in Scripture fits with the world. In fact, because of the weakness of the appropriation of findings of biblical studies in preaching, many preachers use only the biblical content to urge the congregation to respond to the “how-toss” of its biblical ideas observed in the text. In this case, they concern only (*p*), which easily transforms the text into a dogmatic or moral lesson. The preacher can too easily find the moral vision or dogmatic essence in the Scripture, but not particularly pay attention to the relationship between the illocutionary act and its direction of fit.

In order to achieve goal of biblical direction of fit in the sermon, the interpreter-preacher should imitate the biblical author’s attention as  $F(p)$ . This homiletic motif is produced when both the Scripture and the sermon concentrate on the same theme in the same way. In fact, the purpose of Scripture is not merely to inform, but to do something else such as giving a promise, comfort, warn, etc. True preaching thus will endeavour not only to retell the same propositional content as the text, but will also aim at obtaining the same response as the original biblical author intended. It is necessary to evaluate our homiletic goal in which the hermeneutical and homiletical cogency between the appropriation of the text and its performance aims to overcome problems in the gap between what the text “meant” and proclaiming what the text “means” in terms of how it fits the world in the context of the illocutionary acts in the text? Therefore, the relationship between interpretation methods and homiletic content is largely a matter of following directions - the direction of reading and preaching of Scripture takes place when both hermeneutics and homiletics attend to the same

matter in the same way that in the context of the direction of fit between words and world. This attention provides the crucial connection between the biblical world and the sermon's direction. It is not the repetition of a past event, but a creative responsibility for the behest of the dynamic illocutionary force.

### **3.3.4. The Reality of Institutional Fact**

On account of the difference in “the direction of fit” in SAT, the rules are not displayed in the text or utterance. The role of the direction of fit in SAT could provide markers in the use of language. The study of texts in SAT often involves clarifying something which is not in the text, being part of the production of meaning by the text. This approach leads to one of the fundamental arguments in Searle's work on SAT. Searle states that:

[T]he semantic structure of a language may be regarded as a conventional realization of a series of sets of underlying constitutive rules, and that speech acts are acts characteristically performed by uttering expressions in accordance with these sets of constitutive rules (Searle 1969: 37).

Searle (1971: 40) teaches that the use of language is also explained by these constitutive rules, and it governs human behaviour. From this, the propositional content can be understood as having certain “constitutive rules.” The constitutive rules constitute and regulate activities, and often have the form: “X counts as Y in context C” (Searle 1969: 35). For example, under the constitutive rules of soccer, when the soccer player kicks a soccer ball into the goal, it *counts as* one score. There are conventions involved in these constitutive rules, which are related to all kinds of non-linguistic criteria. Therefore, to perform illocutionary acts will be to engage in “a rule-governed form of behaviour” (Searle 1979: 17). In this case, Searle differentiates between “brute facts” and “institution facts” in the context of producing meaning (Briggs 2001a: 58). Anscombe (1958: 69-72) has coined the notion of “brute facts,”

which comes in essence from the natural sciences and concerns facts about physical states of affairs, regardless of what anyone thinks about them.

On the other hand, Searle (1969: 51) proposes the notion of “institutional facts,” which “are indeed facts; but their existence, unlike the existence of brute facts, presupposes the existence of certain human institutions” (e.g. marriage or the rules of baseball). The particular sense of “institution” which Searle has in mind here is a “system of constitutive rules.” Thus, “the fact that a man performed a certain speech act, e.g., made a promise, is an institutional fact” (Ibid:52).

In fact, the biblical text is itself “a rule-governed form of behaviour,” for it contains certain “constitutive rules” such as honour and shame, kinship, the value system of purity, or the idea of ancient economy. The reading of Scripture clearly encounters a totally different world and it manifests itself in the discussions of the social, political and cultural dynamics of the world of Scripture. Cultural conventions involved in these constitutive rules are related to all kinds of “institutional facts.” These non-linguistic elements would help us to recognize where illocutionary action is working, and that the illocutionary action creates “new realities.” For example, the statement, “You are guilty,” is an “institutional fact” that creates a social reality within a successful performance of the relevant speech act in a court of law (Searle 1995: 54-55). In this way, the benefit of Searle’s formulation, “X counts as Y in context C,” in SAT is that it calls attention to the central problem with being self-evident.<sup>65</sup> For a long time in its history, the preacher has been aware of how easy it is to use Scripture to prove a particular dogma or to justify a particular practice, only to be accused of misrepresenting the text.

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<sup>65</sup> In Searle’s key formula, the utterance X counts as Y in context C is an “institutional fact” as shown in his book, *The Construction of Social Reality* (1995). It is clear that this kind of “counting as” operation creates a state of affairs. For example, ‘You are guilty as charged’ is an institutional fact that creates a social reality. This conceptuality is a fruitful idea for biblical scholars to explore in analysing how the biblical world is constructed.

Therefore, the preached text in the SAT should be more concerned with textual meaning as an institutional fact, and less concerned with his or her own subjective responses to the clear or abstract fact of the text.

### 3.4.1. Donald Evans' Interdisciplinary Link between SAT and Biblical Interpretation

A significant early appropriation of the language theories of SAT for the biblical language is the work of Austin's student, Donald Evans.<sup>66</sup> His book, "*The Logic of Self-Involvement*" (1963), published only one year after "*How to do Things with Words*," highlights the linguistic empathy of "the parallel between conventions in everyday life and covenant in the context of divine action or decree" (Thiselton 2009: 351). To recognize that language often involves action and its situation indicates what the SAT calls "*self-involving activity*" or "performative force of language."<sup>67</sup> Particularly, Evans develops the illocutionary action with reference to God's act of creation. In simple terms, God's word is the creative act; His Word is therefore an illocutionary language, and there is an analogy between God's word and the word of man. Evans claims:

Older logics deal with propositions (statements, assertions); that is, they deal with relations between propositions and relations between terms of propositions. Modern biblical theory, however, emphasizes *non-propositional* language, both in its account of divine revelation (God's 'word' to man) and in its account of human religious language (man's word to God). In each case the language or 'word' is not (or is not merely) propositional; it is primarily a *self-involving activity*, divine or human. God does not (or does not merely) provide supernatural information concerning Himself, expressed in flat statements of fact; He 'addresses' man in an 'event' or 'deed' which commits Him to man and which expresses His inner Self (Evans 1963: 14;*his emphasis*).

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<sup>66</sup> Evans began research under J.L. Austin in Oxford and completed it after Austin's death under I. T. Ramsey.

<sup>67</sup> Austin (1962: 6) also uses the terminology "self-involving activity" as a special type of performative language which involves performance. On this point, Evans prefers to use "performative" rather than illocutionary language; Evans (1963: 38) said that "Austin pointed out that this illocutionary force which I call performative force."

The starting point of Evans's "logic" is not an ontological understanding of language events such as provided by the late Heidegger.<sup>68</sup> Bultman's biblical interpretation agrees with Heidegger's view of language in which language is either descriptive or an address (Evans 1963: 21; Thiselton 2009: 180).<sup>69</sup> As theologians who have imbibed deeply the outmoded view of biblical language, these scholars are convinced that there are irreducible differences between the biblical language and the modern one. One could say that it makes sense to say "I believe that Bible is meaningful today but I don't believe that biblical language works the in modern world." This sort of pathetic mistaken tradition about biblical language leads to the view of Scripture as a rival to modern worldview. Nevertheless, we now know from "ordinary linguistic philosophers" that language overlaps regarding its function and that the speech act could depend on the state of affairs in which "there would be no way to differentiate between *finding out* what someone means by a word, and *influencing* his linguistic behaviour relative to the word" (Hanfling 2000: 57).

Thus, as one of the "ordinary linguistic philosophers," Evans has shown that his linguistic concept of "self-involving activity" is the fullest expression of Austin's linguistic theory in the context of illocutionary action<sup>70</sup> Evans (1963: 15) believes, furthermore, that this

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<sup>68</sup> For a critique of the view of language espoused by the late Heidegger and its influence on biblical hermeneutics from the viewpoint of Austin and the ordinary language analytic school, see Zuck (1972) and Verhaar (1969: 17) who points out that Ebeling's New Hermeneutics shows that "total lack of a theory of language, may be understood in one way today, and in another tomorrow."

<sup>69</sup> Bultmann embraced the disciplines of the historical-critical method as a means of dealing with the text as an artefact of the past, and he imaginatively drew upon the philosophy of Martin Heidegger to provide an existential analysis in terms of which the message of the New Testament could be made understandable to human beings in the cultural framework of the twentieth century. In so doing, however, he bequeathed to the subsequent generation a bifurcation between collective, objective history (*Historie*) and individual, existential history (*Geschichte*), which, in spite of numerous efforts, has not yet been overcome. For more information on the critique of Bultmann's historical-critical method, see Archie L. Nations, "Historical Criticism and the Current Methodological Crisis" in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 36 (1983), pp. 59-71.

<sup>70</sup> The contributions of both "illocutionary force" and "self-involving force" in ordinary language never force any prescription of arbitrary or metaphysical principles; rather, these sought to describe the actual work being done in communication.

illocutionary language activity to which he should appeal is biblical language.<sup>71</sup> For example, when Jesus asked the expert in law: “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” He replied: “The one who had mercy on him.”; and then Jesus told him: “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:36-37). This biblical scene is one good example of how biblical language and its illocutionary force can be understood as a self-involving act. Obviously, that expert in law, who expressed his opinion, was doing something as he was involved in an activity which is not basically one of production of meaning.

In SAT, the illocutionary action helps us not to reduce the meaning available to reference or to attend only to the propositional content of the biblical text. Each case of language should not be merely an outward expression of an inner intellectual or emotional reality, but rather in its very utterance, something occurred which coincides with the real action (Urmson 1977: 120-127). Moreover, the production of meaning in an ordinary linguistic situation stands behind or apart from the displayed words in the syntactic structure. In the same way, modern people could also find or understand meaning and its value for the Christian from the dialogue between the expert in law and Jesus.

Furthermore, the available meanings of these biblical passages are logically distinguishable from the actual employment of their grammatical expression and the speech act with its illocutionary force. In this way, the meaning of biblical texts in self-involving activity is rendered unbelievable by careful attention to certain conditions entailed in the basic unit of meaning which is not the word but a performative action. The biblical language is not merely propositional, but it is primarily a self-involving activity (Evans 1963: 11). To recognize this

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<sup>71</sup> Evans (1963: 17) explains that, “my main point, in any case, is that the basic ‘ordinary’ language to which an analytic philosopher should appeal when he considers *Christian* conceptions is biblical language”[*his emphasis*].

relationship between the speech act and its illocutionary activity involves taking the first step to serve the “*sensus plenior*” in biblical preaching. Therefore, the explanation of the “illocutionary force” of language suggests a new and additional task of exegesis in preaching.

### **3.4.2. Reconceptualization of Homiletical Exegesis in terms of Self-Involving Activity and its Theological Reflection from Trinitarian Logic**

Evans devotes the first section of “*The Logic of Self-Involvement*” to the classification of illocutionary force. His linguistic analysis aims to explain how God’s use of His word in self-involving activity and men’s use of word to talk about God as Creator are “performative” (Evans 1963: 27). Evans claims that:

...God’s self-revelation is a self-involving activity (‘His Word is claim and promise, gift and demand’) and man’s religious language is also a self-involving verbal activity (‘obedient, thankful confession and prayer’), theology needs an outline of the various ways in which language is self-involving- and, more generally, and outline of the various ways in which language an activity (Evans 1963: 14).

Earlier, we have noted that Austin (1962: 6) describes different types of language which involving “self-involving activity” as “illocutionary forces.” Evans (1963: 68) prefers to call this “self-involving force.”<sup>72</sup> In both cases, illocutionary force or self-involving force contribute to biblical interpretation. Logically, its user must make certain self-involving commitments with respect to her/his acknowledgment of the stance and role as well as the feelings and attitudes.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, the elucidation of self-involving language in terms of the

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<sup>72</sup> Austin classifies speech acts with their illocutionary force whereas Evans refers in his classification as a classification of performatives. However, there might seem to be no real difference between the two, except in terminology. Evans (1963: 39) states: “(i) I use the label ‘performative’ rather than ‘speech-act-with-its-illocutionary-force’. (ii) I use the label ‘*Constantive*’ rather than ‘*Expositive*’ for the fifth class (having retained the labels ‘*Verdictive*’, ‘*Exercitive*’, ‘*Commissive*’ and ‘*Behabitive*’).”

<sup>73</sup> Even though Evans’s work in the philosophical consideration of biblical language is only partially successful in the biblical epistemology, it merits close attention since it remains the most detailed attempt to articulate a construal view of speech act in biblical interpretation, see Briggs (2001a: 153).

performative force of language could apply the idea of illocutionary action to biblical interpretation.

We have also noted that Austin (1962: 151) divides illocutionary actions into five classes such as a *verdictives*, *exercitives*, *commissives*, *behabitives* and *expositives*. Evans develops Austin's main ideas on illocutionary action in a somewhat modified form to explain illocutionary force in terms of the "self-involving" character of certain speech acts predominant in divine discourse (according to Neufeld 1994: 53).<sup>74</sup> In particular, Evans (1963: 32;37) suggests four primary illocutionary forces (the *expressive*, the *commissive*, the *representative* and the *directive*). Each illocutionary force is uniquely "self-involving." This self-involving aspect in biblical language views certain passages in Scripture as the expression of the person who indwelt it and who created its inherent force. Furthermore, this inherent force creates the reality in the real world.

For example, in the case of the Korean Presbyterian Church Community *appointing* a missionary to South Africa, he/she would *accept* this new offer by utterance, e.g. "The Korean Presbyterian Church Community has appointed me as a missionary to South Africa. I *commit* myself to future conduct in accordance with the new position and new role." Similarly, "self-involving" language in a biblical text could also be understood or interpreted as a promise, an appointment, a commitment, etc. The biblical text does not merely state or report the propositional biblical content; but there is a "self-involving" language in the

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<sup>74</sup> At this point, Evans (1963: 38) elucidates a new logic of self-involvement on the basis of Austin's theory of the performative force of language:

- (1) *Constatives* (class includes statements): bets, estimates, guesses, warnings, statements, etc.
- (2) *Commissives* (more-than-verbal commitment): covenant, promise, pledge, undertake, etc.
- (3) *Exercitives* (an exercise of authority): appoint, decree, order, name, give, etc.
- (4) *Behabitives* (concerning social behaviour): confess, glorify, worship, praise, etc.
- (5) *Verdictives* (class includes verdicts): judge, rate, find, grade, value, etc.

biblical text.<sup>75</sup> This new logic of biblical language implies using illocutionary force to make the biblical reality. Evans (1963: 35-37) states the point as follows:

It is probably true that most human language concerning God is *Behabitive* or *Commissive*; but this does not automatically eliminate the relevance of facts-factual presuppositions, and, sometimes, factual content... For *Commissive* and *Exercitives* are no way of referring to what *is* the case, but are used to 'create' something: undertaking (for example, by a promise) or an institutional relation (for example, by a decree) [*his emphasis*].

At this point, the self-involvement with the biblical text is more a matter of certain attitudes or actions of logic, since it operates on the posture taken by the interpreter as influenced by the text (Briggs 2001: 8). The speakers in the act of utterance involve themselves in specific ways in the interaction, promise, plan or relations in which the various forms of these expressions of self-involvement entails remaining in a certain communicative covenant.<sup>76</sup> That means that the logic of self-involvement in the biblical text is an interactive agent with the potential of creating a relationship with God and with others. From a Christian perspective, God established a personal relationship with men and women by covenantal communication covenants (see, Gen 9:8; Gen 15:18; 2 Sam 7).

In addition, God's very being can be described as a self-communicative act that constitutes and enacts the covenant of discourse: the speaker (Father), Word (Son), and reception (Spirit) are all interrelated (Vanhoozer 1998: 456). In short, God himself continues to address people today through the biblical text, and the Father reveals Himself through the Son to those illuminated by the Holy Spirit. On the basis of this confession, the preacher views Scripture

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<sup>75</sup>According to Thiselton (2002: 286), the existential language in Kierkegaard, Bultmann and European continental philosophy all too often overlooks the necessary interaction between self-involvement and questions about the "truth" of the state of affairs on which the currency of this self-involving dimension is often based.

<sup>76</sup> This conceptual nature of self-involvement is further explained by Evans's logical grammar in which he claims that, "Looking on *x* as *y* involves placing it within a structure, organization, or scheme. This often involves the ascription of a status...to *x*" (1963: 127).

as the living voice of God through which we encounter the saving acts of the living triune God. Note Vanhoozer's remark in this regard:

*If the Father is the locutor, the Son is his preeminent illocution, Christ is God's definitive Word, the substantive content of his message. And the Holy Spirit—the condition and power of receiving the sender's message—is God the perlocutor, the reason that his words do not return to him empty (Isa. 55:11) (1998: 457; my emphasis).*

From this perspective, the Trinitarian logic inherent in the Scripture provides fresh motivation for the integration of exegetic and hermeneutic methods in which the SAT centred homiletical exegesis provides new directions for biblical centred preaching. For example, some approaches such as the homiletical exegesis in "expository preaching" focus on the biblical text and then should concentrate on its locutionary aspect - its form, structure and theme. Other approaches such as the homiletical exegesis in the "new homiletics" focus on the effects of perlocution on the congregation. However, both approaches to homiletical exegesis are not good enough to address the issue of illocutionary force in biblical passages. Therefore, both these types of homiletical exegeses in "expository preaching and in the new homiletics" cannot realistically be part of the dynamic of the full Trinitarian illocutionary force.

Furthermore, underplaying the illocutionary force in reading and preaching Scripture by many homileticians results in another "descriptive deficiency" in the appropriation of Scripture. Searle (1969: 29) clearly points out that the "descriptive" proposition is always expressed in terms of the performance of an illocutionary act. That is, any biblical text is neither simply  $p$  nor simply  $F$  but  $F(p)$  in which the propositional subject cannot stand on its own but work only through its illocutionary force. Of course, there is more to Searle's conception of  $F(p)$  in the SAT than simply uttering a sentence. Lanser addresses the possibility of applying illocutionary force to texts directly, thereby rejecting the distinction

between ordinary and literary discourse.<sup>77</sup> Lanser (1981: 293) states the point as follows: “Much like the biblical parable, the novel’s basic illocutionary activity is ideological instruction; its basic plea: hear my word, believe and understand.” For example, Neufeld (1994: 41) suggests that the book of 1 John has its illocutionary forces as *F(p)*; *Confessing Jesus* (1John).<sup>78</sup>

Similarly, other parts of Scripture may have their own *F(p)* such as *Exhorting* (Revelation), *Praising* (Psalms) and *Warning* (Gospel of Mark), etc. Accordingly, on the canonical level another illocutionary force *F(p)* could be seen: *Proclaiming God’s salvation* (Conon) or *Promising Christ’s advent* (Conon), *Undertaking Holy Spirit’s work* (Conon) (cf. Thiselton 1992: 287; Vanhoozer 1998: 342). Even though the *F(ps)* in Scripture are only approximations with rough edges, homiletically, the description of the homiletical exegesis in the *F(p)* has great potential in aiding the recovery of biblical preaching. In this way, the homiletical exegesis in the SAT can best be understood as a paradigmatic homiletical theory for searching for the full Trinitarian texture of the divine revelation in Scripture; that means specifying the goal of biblical preaching in the SAT as re-performing a Trinitarian illocutionary activity in the modern world.

This type of biblical preaching has an inherent force that is crucial to direct our reality (as Christians) in the world. Consequently, demonstrating the transformative effects of illocutionary acts on homiletic theory can best be understood through preaching as re-

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<sup>77</sup> According to Lanser (1981: 65), “literature is communicative both in usage and intent, and the distinction between ‘literary’ and ‘ordinary’ language which poetics have tended to assume is not supported by linguistic research.”

<sup>78</sup> Dietmar Neufeld, in his work *Reconceiving Texts as Speech Acts: An Analysis of 1 John* (1994), observes that 1 John represents the most thorough integration to date of an exegetical question with an illocutionary action (Briggs 2001: 171). He remarks that, “The language of the *incipit* with its profusion of sensory verbs shifts the focus away from the task of defining the specific content of the message proclaimed to determining the illocutionary forces involved in the act of proclaiming the message” (Neufeld 1994: 65).

illocutionary action: to preach the *truth* in *love* [the preaching is  $F(p);love (truth)$ ]. To put it simply, “*F*” (love) creates a proposition (*biblical truth*) and counts as re-illocutionary action in biblical preaching whereby the preacher can rightly construe the illocutionary act performed. This fresh understanding of Scripture as God’s performative action and homiletics as a re-performance of this action offer practical guidelines for promoting homiletic criteria and building the Christian community in the modern world. In other words, the biblical word should be viewed neither as simply containing a general truth nor as merely creating an individual experience. Rather, the biblical word is an invitation that gives access to different worlds of available meaning in the modern community.

### 3.5. Summary and Conclusion

To refine our exegetical procedure or to step back and utilize the theoretical reconceptualization of our exegesis, this chapter has investigated the views of Austin, Searle and Evans. The philosophy of their linguistic theory offers four important contributions that underline, firstly, speaking as the performance of an act; secondly, in preaching on biblical text, the ability to distinguish between the meaning of what we say (locution), the force of what we say (illocution), and the response by saying something (perlocution); thirdly, to recognize constitutive rules regarding the its reality of institutional fact in language for it to count as an action; fourthly, the ability to explain that a proposition is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary act. This is symbolized as  $F(p)$ .

From these contributions developed in the light of the SAT, the preacher is able to distinguish between the *meaning* of what we say and the *force* of what we say. This distinction can create a particular hermeneutical sensitivity for finding the illocution in the text. The illocutionary action refreshes preachable material because the propositional content in the biblical text is

usually recognized as a fixed topic.

Understanding the illocutionary points in the text will enable the preacher to express the homiletical ideas (theme, subject purpose as  $F(p)$ : a warning “ $W(p)$ ,” blessing “ $B(p)$ ,” promise “ $Pr.(p)$ ” etc.), where ( $p$ ) stands for the propositional content and  $F$  for the stance adopted by the text toward it. To put it simply, these  $F(ps)$  can be termed “*biblical illocutionary forces*” (*BIF*), and this new terminology in the SAT centred homiletic theory will replace the term “biblical meaning” or “main idea,” thus, rendering *BIF* as the normative task in homiletical exegesis. Furthermore, preaching is “*re-performance of BIF.*” This guides the preacher not only to look at the text but also to look through the text in order to describe the new and alternative possibilities, realities, and worlds to which the Spirit invites one in the Scripture. In addition, in the SAT, the authors’ intention creates an illocutionary force (Searle 1969: 47). Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that homiletical exegesis in the SAT gives superiority of place to the intended meaning of original biblical author through the *BIF*. In this sense, homiletical exegesis in the SAT will indirectly reorient the aim of biblical exegesis according to Calvin.<sup>79</sup> Thus, if preaching in the reformed tradition was seen as the meticulous exposition of the biblical text and it is based on the premise that God himself speaks in and through the biblical text, then, the *BIF* could serve preaching in the reformed tradition and now as well as in the future just as it did in the past.

In addition, preaching engages the institutional convention through the confession of the Scripture. It is clear that the *BIF* engages in “a rule-governed form of behaviour.” This

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<sup>79</sup> *Institutes*, IV.viii.9. According to Thiselton (2009: 21), Calvin states that the first duty of biblical exegesis is “to lay bare the mind of the author.” See John Calvin, *Iohannis Calvini Commentarius in Epistolam Pauli ad Romaos*, ed. T.H.L. Parker (Leiden: Brill, 1981), p.1. See also T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin’s Old Testament Commentaries* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), pp. 81-82.

constitutive rule concretizes a particular identity that is focused on communal confession. Thus, constitutive rule and its institutional fact are part of the “proclamation event” or the “Word event” that takes place in the text through which God wishes to make His Word accessible to us linguistically. This is used in and by a particular community living at a particular time and place with particular shared beliefs, institutions and practices (MacIntyre 1988: 373). The institutions help us recognize the identity of God’s illocutionary force.

Furthermore, the identity of the *BIF* is precisely spelled out in the divine intention of its time; in the words, the concepts, the images, the presentation, etc. This dynamic of *BIF* shows how God’s intentionality can make the same proposition count as different types of *BIF* such as warning “*W(p)*,” blessing “*B(p)*,” or promise “*Pr.(p)*,” etc.(see, Searle 1976:2). In this way, the congregation realizes how the biblical text continues to challenge the modern world. The *BIF* is fruitful in the sense that the preacher and congregation gain new practice in Christianity. This is the gospel, the good news, the promise of the text – that God acts in the text; therefore, the preacher can preach biblically.

We can consider for example a possible exposition of Philemon vv.15-16 in the light of SAT oriented homiletical exegesis. This passage has been chosen for several reasons. First of all, Philemon is one significant text that can be used to support illocutionary action. The fact that the text of Philemon might be understood in the sense of “persuading” in the illocutionary action has been reaffirmed by several scholars. A more crucial reason is that Philemon has hardly been used in preaching because this short letter (335 words in Greek) does not usually rank among the great Pauline compositions; therefore, this undervalued Letter is not

attractive sermon material to preachers.<sup>80</sup> However, the exegetical procedures of SAT here could be homiletical perlocution (response) about Paul's illocutionary action in Philemon 1:21b, which says, "I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask" (ἔγραψά σοι, εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ ὑπὲρ ἃ λέγω ποιήσεις). To put it simply or to paraphrase the statement homiletically, one could say: *the preacher will preach* is even more than what *biblical authors write in the Scripture*. If the preacher accepts this paraphrase, it would help us to refine homiletical exegesis in the light of SAT, and the following three questions could provide a frame work for our approach:

- (1) *Which constitutive rules and how the reality of institutional facts govern this biblical passage?*
- (2) *What kind of "biblical illocutionary forces" (BIF) point does this biblical passage perform?*
- (3) *How does BIF in the text determine the characteristic of "perlocutionary homiletical response" (PHR) for opening up an alternative reality in the Christian life?*

Even though each question is distinct, the distinctions are interpreted as connected through the interdependence of our interpretative methodology. The preacher who applies SAT to homiletical exegesis in the light of the three aforementioned questions will show a different homiletical frame work for Philemon vv.15-16, as explained below:

(1) *Which constitutive rules and the reality of institutional facts govern this biblical passage?*

The preacher of Philemon vv.15-16 would encounter a totally different cultural world that becomes manifest firstly in the cultural manner for treating slaves who ran away from their

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<sup>80</sup> For further information on the purpose of Philemon, see Petersen (1985: 43-85), Malina (2006: 328) and Witherington III (2007: 29).

owners. In particular, the letter of Philemon points out the Christian way to solve this urgent household problem. The preacher should therefore ask questions such as whose responsibility it was to accept the escape of a slave and how it is applicable in this context. In addition, the Letter illustrates the potential tension between “household management” and “house churches” in the formation and growth of the early Christian movement.<sup>81</sup> The contrast between two kinds of institutional rules –“visible temporal property” and “invisible permanent property” serves to clarify biblical illocutionary action as well as its suitable perlocution action as part of its homiletical content. In this regard, the institutional rules would help the preacher recognize the identity of the illocutionary action in the text as well as avoid subjective exegesis.

(2) Which kind of “biblical illocutionary forces” (BIF) does it perform in the biblical passage?

In SAT, literary structure contains some indicators of force as part of the meaning of a text, which is to say that every locutionary act is already part of the total illocutionary act (Pratt 1977: 115; Searle 1968: 405).<sup>82</sup> Wendland’s (2008: 242) analysis of Philemon vv.15-16 is useful for understanding its literary structure, and to analyse the structure of the locution level to demonstrate  $F(p)$ :

Τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη		Perhaps this is why <b>he was separated</b>
πρὸς ὥραν,	A	for an hour,
ἵνα αἰώνιον	B	so that for all time
<u>αὐτὸν ἀπέχης,</u>		<b>him you might have back,</b>
οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον	A’	no longer as a slave
ἀλλ’ ὑπὲρ δοῦλον,		but more than a slave
ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν,	B’	as a beloved brother,
<b>μάλιστα ἐμοί,</b>		<b>especially to me,</b>

<sup>81</sup> For further information on Philemon’s “house-church, see Elliott J.H., “Philemon and House Churches.” in *the Bible Today* 22 (1984), pp. 145-50, and Murray J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), pp. 70-75.

<sup>82</sup> This linguistic aspect of the SAT offers a useful and interesting way of looking at homiletic theory which supports Long’s (1989: 30) approach to the literary structure of the Bible and its effect on preaching.

πόσῳ δὲ <b>μᾶλλον</b> σοὶ		but how much more <b>rather</b> to you
καὶ ἐν σαρκί	A”	both in the flesh
καὶ ἐν κυρίῳ.	B”	and in the Lord”[his emphasis]. <sup>83</sup>

The structure of this biblical passage on the locution level clearly shows strong “textual unity” with the phonetic element (in bold and underlined above) and certain pragmatic elements (repeated personal pronoun). However, the preacher can find contrasts in this unit of utterance (e.g. “for an hour”/all time”; “slave/brother”; “to me/to you”). In SAT, the textual structure must be viewed as *a pragmatic use* rather than a kind of literary attire. In other words, the preacher must seriously ask the question: Is the illocutionary force “*F*” of this propositional content “*p*” (in each contrasting set of words such as “for an hour”/ “all time”; “slave/brother”; “to me/to you”) really intended to count as a moralistic message? For example, the preacher must pay attention to how the intentionality of the text creates a proposition (*p*; *contrast between temporal time and eternal time*) referring to an illocutionary act such as warning “*W(p)*,” blessing “*B(p)*,” or promise “*Pr.(p)*.” More specifically, the proposition of the *contrast words* counts as a promise “*Pr.(contrast between an hour and forever)*.” The *BIF* as “*Pr.(p)*” will be highlighted by an important biblical constitutive rule and its reality of institutional fact such as “X counts as Y in context C in the SAT”(Searle 1969: 35). To be precise, the constitutive rules in the house churches constitute and regulate activities, and often have the form: X (eternal time) counts as Y (invisible permanent property) in context C(God’s promise in Jesus Christ).

The preacher should therefore preach God’s promise in Jesus Christ which is fulfilled by the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the execution of *BIF* represents and performs God’s promise in Jesus

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<sup>83</sup> Wendland (2008: 248) states that any hortatory discourse in the New Testament epistles operates as “an integrated communication system within the framework of the broader pragmatic theory of speech (and “text”) act, which refers to what words (oral or written) actually *do* as distinct from what they overtly *say* (his *emphasis*).”

Christ and its testimony by Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this invisible action will prescribe the ascriptive criteria of constitutive rules and the reality of institutional fact. In this case, the task of the integration of exegetic and hermeneutic methods in SAT should involve the process of re-performance of God's action in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Thus, the invisible Triune action governs HIS visible Church. The *BIF* will continually create different effects of fright, alarm or hope on the congregation in modern contexts.

(3) *How does BIF in the text determine the characteristic of “perlocutionary homiletical response” (PHR) for opening up an alternative reality in the Christian life?*

It is possible for the preacher to take as his or her primary propositional information the fact that the text relates the event of the return of an “escaped slave” (Onesimus) to his “household owner” (Philemon) to Paul's evangelical counsel. The preacher perform sand continues to construct a sermon plan with the proposition. The goal of the sermon may be to explain how “forgiveness keeps the community” or “what the cost of being brothers and sisters is.” The preacher may then illustrate his point with certain recent understanding of “a loving brother.”

However, if the preacher pays attention to the living voice of God in its full SAT context (the constitutive rules and the reality of institutional fact, biblical illocutionary force), then the sermon has to serve as a meeting point between the living congregation and the living God, and it will arrive at a different sermon goal. In order to arrive at a different sermon goal, the preacher should pay attention to the perlocutionary action. We call this attitude “*perlocutionary homiletical response*” (*PHR*), and this terminology will replace the “sermon form” or “preaching design” in the context of homiletic theory, thus, rendering this “*PHR*” as

the normative task of the homiletical content in the SAT. The *PHR* is as a mediating concept between the text and the preacher, who is also part of the congregation and the act of communication. The *PHR* is seen as a suitable perlocutionary action just as the intention of the *BIF* anticipates the truthful responsibility from homiletic obedience.<sup>84</sup> It is often pointed out that the homiletical response in terms of sermon content or form is “saying the same thing as the text” or replotting the same plot as the text. However, in SAT, homiletics suggests “doing the same thing as directedness of the text.” Therefore, the *PHR* seeks the intentionality of the text in which the homiletical purpose pertains to the directedness of the illocutionary effect in the text. The association leads to the notion that preaching “*counts as*” seeking to accomplish and the response the author anticipates from the passage as is the testimony of the people’s faith. The necessity of the *PHR* arises from the contemporary crisis in homiletical theory in which there are constant calls for the renewal of “biblical preaching.” Many contemporary approaches are reductionist in their understanding of Scripture or of the homiletic task. The *PHR* argues that the task of biblical preaching is not to be viewed simply as finding a propositional statement from the Scripture, nor as simply giving the sermon the shape of the biblical narrative. Rather, the crucial matter in biblical preaching should be the performative action of the text itself. A rediscovery of this divine action will transform the way we view the task of homiletics and spiritual formation and will promote human dignity in the modern world.

From this conclusion, it is clear that SAT serves to refresh both the preaching material and the preaching praxis as “*biblical illocutionary forces*” (*BIF*) and “*perlocutionary homiletical response*” (*PHR*). Thus, the homiletic theory in the light of SAT not only aims to reflect the

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<sup>84</sup> The new term perlocutionary homiletical response can be useful in developing one of the vital homiletic aspects of Buttrick’s (1981: 58) “homiletic obedience.”

same ideas or the same form as the biblical text, but also aims at being faithful to the same purpose and seeking to elicit the same response as that of the illocutionary force. To put it simply, Scripture uses the preacher; the preacher does not use Scripture. It becomes clear therefore that the homiletical exegesis in the SAT should require a response that shows a proper and responsible appreciation of the Scripture. The essence of interpretation in preaching is to recognize the *BIF* in the Bible because the *BIF* creates the *PHR*.

Therefore, the next chapter will show how these new homiletic terminologies based in the *BIF* and the *PHR* can help in the application of important homiletical issues such as “preaching Jesus,” “witness as preaching” and “God’s presence in the sermon.” Consequently, interdisciplinary approaches in hermeneutics and homiletics in the light of SAT should simply not utilize the biblical text as a footnote in the sermon or suggest a single magical homiletic methodology as the praxis of preaching. This understanding will assist our basic homiletic confession in which the homiletical appropriation of Scripture with the SAT re-introduces the sovereignty of God and the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ as a reformed homiletic understanding of preaching the Word of God.

## CHAPTER 4

### REVISITING THE REFORMED HOMILETICAL LEGACY IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE AS GOD'S AUTHORITATIVE SPEECH ACT

#### 4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has emphasized the role of the threefold character of the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts in biblical texts and their overall linguistic implications for the reconceptualization of a homiletical exegetical method. In this way, SAT serves to refresh both the preaching material and its execution as “*biblical illocutionary forces*” (*BIF*) and as a “*perlocutionary homiletical response*” (*PHR*). To put it simply, the homiletical execution of the *BIF* can be termed *PHR*. This new homiletical terminology will provide both constraints and guidance for homiletic exegesis. From the *BIF* centred homiletical approach in SAT, the appropriation of biblical passages in the preached *PHR* will arrive at different sermon goals in the light of the three afore-mentioned hermeneutical questions, namely:

- (1) *Which constitutive rules and how does the reality of institutional facts govern a specific biblical passage?*
- (2) *What kind of BIF point does this biblical passage perform?*
- (3) *How does BIF in the text determine the characteristic of PHR for opening up an alternative reality in the Christian life?*

Thus, in order to perform a suitable *PHR*, the preacher must be aware of the illocutionary acts in the text such as acts of promising, hinting, arguing, blessing, condemning, announcing, evoking, praising, praying, telling, and joking. These *F(ps)* in SAT have a far-reaching effect on the character of the *BIF*. Recent SAT studies have painstakingly classified over 270

“performative verbs” and analysed how the text and reader relate to them.<sup>85</sup> This has been done according to whether the author is declaring something, committing himself to some course of action, directing the text in some way, asserting something, or expressing some psychological state. On this, a number of illocutionary categories have a significant overlap with actions performed in and by Scripture. The recognized *BIF* will help to revisit the production of meaning in the text and its availability to the preacher as well as its use by the biblical scholar. Both the preacher and biblical scholar must perceive the biblical text as a complete speech act. Therefore, once biblical interpretation has accepted this dynamic application of SAT in homiletics and biblical studies, the theological sound first step is to learn how to discern the *BIF* from the biblical text in order to clarify important sermonic issues. In fact, several recent theological studies on SAT have called attention to new theological descriptions of the God’s Words in Scripture (Thiselton 1992: 286; Vanhoozer 1998: 291; Wolterstorff 1995: 13). These studies attempt to provide a new way forward in biblical interpretation by looking at Scripture as God’s authoritative speech act.<sup>86</sup>

The present chapter will consider how the application of SAT can help theological resonance in homiletics. This theological echoing will encourage the contemporary church to revisit the reformed homiletical legacy, with its inherited homiletical confession continuously promoting the preaching of the Word of God in the modern world. Particularly, the *BIF* and its effect on the *PHR* would elucidate the Christ’s teleological preaching, the witness of the text as the preacher and the presence of God in the sermon. In this way, these loyal homiletical

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<sup>85</sup> For more information on the classification of “performative verbs,” see Vanderveken (1990: 166-219), also see J.P. Louw and E. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*. Vol. I: *Introduction and Domains*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), §33, ‘Communication,’ pp. 388-445.

<sup>86</sup> According to Briggs (2001b: 230), “speech act theory has obvious potential for assisting in the interpretation of texts (biblical and otherwise). . . Despite a slow trickle of articles over the past 25 years, there have been only a handful of more extensive works making exegetical use of speech act insights.” This under-utilized aspect of the SAT in current theological research has not been fully tapped in homiletics.

contributions can be revisited to show that preaching is the living voice of God and a part of God's total speech act. These promising interdisciplinary approaches do neither simply utilize the biblical text as a footnote in a sermon, nor simply suggest a magic single homiletic methodology as the praxis of preaching. In certain cases, the integration of biblical studies and homiletics in the SAT reorients the nullified relationship between Scripture, the power of Holy Spirit, and the preacher in contemporary preaching. This re-conception of preaching emphasizes God's authority in the speech act. Therefore, SAT could re-echo the sovereignty of God and the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ as preaching is the Word of God to be *F(ps)*, the *Holy Spirit (Jesus)*.

#### 4.2.1. Revisiting “Christ’s teleological Preaching” according to SAT

Thiselton's works have frequently proposed that biblical language can be understood as a speech act in a variety of hermeneutical and theological areas.<sup>87</sup> One of his primary works on blessings and curses in the Old Testament is “The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings”(1974). Thiselton claims that accepted constitutive rules could help biblical hermeneutics to recognize the identity of the illocutionary action and its effect.<sup>88</sup> On this subject, Thiselton has written two New Testament commentaries in the light of SAT; one on

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<sup>87</sup> Thiselton, Anthony C, “The Parables as Language-Event: Some Comments on Fuchs’s Hermeneutics in the Light of Linguistic Philosophy.” in *SJT*, 23 (1970), pp. 437-468; idem, “The Supposed Power of Words in the Biblical Writings.” in *SJT*, 25 (1974), pp. 283-299; idem, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading*(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992); idem, “Speech-Act Theory and the Claim that God Speaks: Nicholas Wolterstorffs *Divine Discourse*.” in *SJT*, 50 (1997), pp. 97-110; idem, “Communicative Action and Promise in Interdisciplinary, Biblical and Theological Hermeneutics.” in *The Promise of Hermeneutics*. Edited by Roger Lundin, Clarence Walhout, and Anthony C. Thiselton.(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), pp.133-239.

<sup>88</sup> In Thiselton's (2006: 62-63) assessment of this issue, “Blessing and cursing are prime examples of what J.L. Austin called performative language, namely, a language-use in which ‘the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action’. It is an “illocutionary” act, i.e. performance of an act in saying something, as opposed to performance of an act of saying something... Acts of blessing in the Old Testament rest on accepted conventions; on procedures or institutions accepted within Israelite society, and usually involving conventionally accepted formulae. They are effective, in most cases, only when performed by the appropriate person in the appropriate situation.”

1st Corinthians and the other on Hebrews.<sup>89</sup> The commentaries operate on the notion that biblical words can be refreshed as Scriptures by emphasizing its *BIF*. In particular, certain biblical words are not dependent on primitive notions of “word-magic.” Rather, the power of biblical words renders the nature of the speaking agent and the illocutionary force of what is uttered to be in line with the accepted institutional fact. For example, in the Jesus’ miracle in which the wine supply ran out during the wedding festivities, Jesus’ mother spoke to him about the problem but Jesus said: “My time has not yet come” (John 2:4). The interpreter of this passage should ask questions about the total speech act including the meaning of what we say (locutionary act), the force of what we say (illocutionary act), and the response of saying something (perlocutionary act). This linguistic logic in SAT would help the preacher to recognize the characteristic of the *BIF* in the Jesus’ utterance in the text as well as its purpose. To put it simply, Jesus’ miracle has its *messianic illocutionary force* in which Jesus’ miracle of supplying wine is a past event but its *BIF* energy and its teleology are continuously being echoed through the point that is directed at the modern world. Thiselton’s (1992: 294) remark in this regard is noteworthy:

Some illocutions have part of their purpose or “point”, to “get the words (more strictly, their propositional content) *to match the world*.” This is the case with *assertions*. But others have the inverse function: “*to get the world to match the words*.” This is the case with *promises* and *commands*.<sup>90</sup>

Therefore, the continued *BIF* energy and its teleology of Jesus’ utterance in the miracle event of the wine supply offers a sermon alternative methodological appropriateness of the Christ centred preaching in terms of the messianic illocutionary point. The *BIF* could be represented

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<sup>89</sup> Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000); idem, “The Epistle to the Hebrews,” in eds. J.D.G. Dunn and J.W. Rogerson. *Eerdmans commentary on the Bible*. (Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 1451-1480.

<sup>90</sup> Thiselton’s quotations came from Searle’s italics in his *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979), p. 3.

as  $F(ps)$ : a warning “ $W(p)$ ,” a command “ $Com(p)$ ,” and a promise “ $Pr(p)$ .” Specifically, in the force of an illocutionary action with reference to a propositional content in the appropriation of a biblical text, the proposition of the Jesus’ time counts as a promise “ $Pr(Jesus’\ time)$ .” This category of appropriateness in homiletical appropriation of the *BIF* explains how the messianic illocutionary action highlights the identity of Jesus. The final purpose of the *BIF* energy concerns the appropriateness of the Christ centred preaching and its inherent teleology. For example, God/Jesus is seen as the bridegroom of his people. From this perspective, the *BIF* in Jesus’ utterance creates its intended perlocutionary effect, and then this teleology of intended perlocutionary effect stresses the directedness point of Jesus’ intention on the appropriation of the preached statement. In this way, purpose or point of the *BIF* in Jesus’ utterance in the biblical text should be to engage the congregation in specific guideline for the congregation’s and preacher’s behavior. This makes concrete the particular identity that has a focus in the communal confession in Jesus’ intention. This attention is used in and by particular community living at a particular time and place with particular shared beliefs, institutions and practices more than a simple re-mention of locution level about Jesus’ words in text. It is clear to show how direction of *BIF* energy influences a new appropriation of the text and its perlocutionary effect for Christian life.

As a result of the contribution of the homiletical appropriation of *BIF*, the preached word will apply the continued *BIF* energy more concretely to all Jesus’ illocutionary actions in the Synoptic Gospels. This work showed that the words of Jesus in the narrative texts can be demonstrated by it having a speech act character in the light of the illocutionary points. These *BIF* points create the inherent force and its purpose in the text such as *exercitive*, *directive* and *verdictive* (Thiselton 2006: 76-81). For example, Jesus says, “My son, your sins are [hereby] forgiven” (Mk 2:5; Mt 9:2; Lk 5:20), or “Peace! Be still” (Mk 4:35-41; Mt 8:23-

27; Lk 8:22-25). In particular, Thiselton makes an important observation on the application of SAT to one of the most famous of Jesus' utterances, the so-called "Great Commission":

"Go therefore and make disciples." (Matt. 28:19) constitutes an *exercitive* which appoints, commands and *assigns* an "institutional" *role*. "Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." (Matt. 28:20) combines the *exercitive* and *behabitive* dimensions of *authorization*. "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt. 28:20) represents a classic illocution example of the sub-category identified by Austin, Evans, Searle, and Recanati as *commissives* (Thiselton 1992: 287; *his emphasis*).

From this hermeneutical application of SAT, the preacher may identify a number of other examples of *BIF* categories in Jesus' utterances in other biblical narrative sequences. This SAT application highlights the *BIF* point and indicates the appropriateness of the preached *PHR*. The homiletical execution of the *BIF* suggests an alternative criterion for the preached *PHR* in a better sermonic appropriation of Jesus' words and his identity. In this case, the significance of the *PHR* is based on two principles. First, the *PHR* is more than a simple flat re-description of abstract doctrinal facts or a re-plotting of didactic stories. Basically, the *PHR* preaches the gospel of "God's instituting, appointing, or exalting Christ as Lord" (Cf. Thiselton 2006: 77). Second, the *PHR* would respond without stopping God's action in the modern world if the preacher is aware of the potential long-term consequence of the *BIF*. The significance of these principles will serve to create different *PHR* effects of fear, alarm, or hope within the congregation. The characteristic of Jesus' utterance in the *BIF* should "govern interpretations of conventional messianic language, rather than ready-made assumptions" that the meaning of such language should govern an understanding of Jesus (Thiselton 2006: 80). Therefore, the *F* (*Jesus' words*), in particular, the utterance of Jesus in biblical narrative texts can be termed as the "*messianic illocutionary force*" (*MIF*) in which the preacher can preach God's promise in Jesus Christ.

#### 4.2.2. Revisiting the Homiletical Approach to Narrative Plots in the Stories of Jesus According to the “Messianic Illocutionary Force” (*MIF*)

If the narrative plot in the stories of Jesus can be understood as a part of the “*messianic illocutionary force*” (*MIF*) in the SAT, Jesus’ utterances should be seen as performing actions to execute His messianic purpose. Thus, the *MIF* is also observed through intended actions such as warnings, commands, invitations, judgments, promises, or pledges of love (Thiselton 2006: 78). These *MIF* points in the narrative plots in the stories of Jesus can be represented as  $F(p)$  where “*F*” is the illocutionary force (what Jesus intended) and “*P*” is the propositional expression (what Jesus actually said) (cf. Searle 1969: 31). This narrative content cannot occur alone; there is always an illocutionary act that is simultaneously performed. In other words, what a narrative text expresses within its propositional context is the illocutionary action (cf. Searle 1969: 30).<sup>91</sup> Jesus’ effective words are basic to the illocutionary activity in which several of his stories can also be represented unambiguously as  $F(p)$ . They should be characterized in the form of a promise “*Pr(p)*,” warning “*W(p)*,” blessing “*B(p)*” etc. These *MIF* points in biblical narrative texts clearly suggest the reality of the preached *PHR*, namely its basic proclamation: “Hear Jesus’ word,” “Believe Jesus” and “Follow Jesus.”

Consequently, when preachers execute *MIF* points in “Christ centred preaching,” they have a new understanding of the homiletical appropriation of the biblical narrative. Therefore, in SAT, the biblical narrative is important neither because it provides a “homiletical plot” for sermons, nor because preaching should involve storytelling. Rather, the preacher must execute the *MIF* points according to the intended perlocutionary effect. This homiletical point will help the preached *PHR* to reveal its final messianic purpose in which preaching asks

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<sup>91</sup> The biblical narrative can have genuine illocutionary force (Lanser 1981: 293). The biblical author projects a world towards the reader. In a narrative, (*p*) is best viewed not as propositional content but as the plot (Vanhoozer 1998: 227).

seriously why the Word (being) must become flesh (living). Accordingly, preaching Jesus begins with searching the “*biblical illocutionary forces*” (*BIF*) in the text, accomplishing its “*intended perlocutionary effect*” (*IPE*) in the preached “*perlocutionary homiletical response*” (*PHR*).

If it is true that the *BIF* and the *IPE* serve to emphasize the preached *PHR* in the Christ centred preaching, it could operate successfully using Campbell’s (1997) main argument in his “*Preaching Jesus: New Directions for Homiletics in Hans Frei’s Postliberal Theology.*” This study attempts to overcome a limited narrative appropriation in the approach of the contemporary narrative preaching method. Instead of the preacher interpreting merely a displayed narrative structure of the biblical passage, in the SAT, the displayed narrative structure must be regarded as part of the total locutionary action. Then the preacher moves to apply these locutionary findings in the general transmission of preaching. This simplification is precisely what a number of narrative homileticians have done according to Campbell (1997: 190). However, if preachers execute the *MIF* in order to attain a suitable *PHR* in preaching Jesus, their sermon can be seen not only to focus on Jesus’ words, but his total speech act. If the preacher is reading and preaching Jesus’ stories in the biblical narrative as his total speech acts, Jesus’ intentional action will become a significant guide to Christian preaching (cf. Campbell 1997: 192).

Since in the SAT the Jesus’ utterance in biblical narratives is also part of the total speech act, it can have a genuine *IPE*. In this case, Jesus’ intentional action exposed his *IPE* and this unique force projects a narrative world opened by eye witness (biblical authors) to the reader. Interestingly, even though Jesus’ utterance has been expressed in different devices or genres for a long time, its unique and inherent *BIF* and its *IPE* is never ending. In this case,

preaching does not aim at making the congregation find a similarity between their stories and those of the biblical narrative. Rather, the preacher must stress the unique and inherent Jesus' *BIF* and its *IPE* on the preached *PHR*. This means that the preacher should pay attention to seeking the *BIF* according to its *IPE* in order to establish the preached *PHR* in "Christ centred preaching."

Thus, preaching Jesus in the *PHR* embodies a kind of alternative criterion for understanding and using a sermonic illustration and its application in preaching. Specifically, the preacher must seriously ask whether his/her sermon actually follows the *BIF* according to its *IPE* and not only uses a similar locution level of a display narrative between the Jesus' stories and other contemporary stories such as the feeding story, healing story or teaching story in parts of the sermon content. To put it simply, Jesus' narratives remind us of the *MIF*, not of other stories we heard from our grandmothers. Because, this teleology of Jesus' *BIF* and according to its unique *IPE* are not to allow us projecting of other stories in order to avoid having to respond to the Jesus' intentional action in his words.

It is often pointed out that some homileticians suggest "saying the same thing in order to repeat the text." However, in the SAT, homileticians suggest "doing the same thing to follow the *IPE* of the text." For example, Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished!" (John19:30). This narrative of Jesus' sufferings is neither simply *P* nor simply *F* but *F(P)*, or more specifically, an assertive which entails the intentionality. The assertive *MIF* creates a proposition and counts as the declaration of a new reality. This reality of the *MIF* is created by its *IPE* in which Jesus successfully performed his messianic mission. The messianic teleology is not a reader-made effect because, as Searle points out (1969: 47), the speaker intends to produce an illocutionary effect. Further, any proposition expressed is always expressed in the

performance of an illocutionary act (Ibid: 29). For example, Jesus' *IPE* on his utterance, "It is finished!" (John 19:30), should be seen from a unique Christian worldview in which the modern Christian confession is evaluated by Jesus' *IPE* in the context of the Passion of the Christ. This *IPE* as "*declaration (the Passion narrative)*" generates an alternative reality, which can correct a fake confession as well as fake biblical preaching. The correction focuses more on what Jesus promised or guaranteed in the Christian life, than how the preaching will improve the understanding of Christology and its appropriation homiletically.

#### **4.2.3. Revisiting the Homiletical Contribution of Christology in the Modern World according to the "*Intended Perlocutionary Effect*" (*IPE*)**

If the preacher understands that the goal of Christology is primarily concerned with the nature and person of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament, then the "messianic illocutionary force" (*MIF*) in the SAT is explicitly utilized to establish a better understanding of the uniqueness of the homiletical appropriation of Christology. Earlier, we have noted that the recorded text is a three-dimensional performative action namely "form and matter (locution level), energy and force (illocution level), and teleology or final purpose (perlocution level)" (Vanhoozer 1998: 218). If the SAT is right, the preacher will ask questions about the complete speech act of Jesus to find suitable Christological answers to relate to his *IPE* on the entire speech act: when Jesus says something, what kind of response does he want? In this case, the goal of the preached *PHR* is not only to reconstruct a past episode; rather, these Christological propositions could be understood as the continuous energy of the *MIF*.

In SAT, the recorded texts of a propositional-historical format always have the inherent illocutionary energy. Thus, according to the principle of the conservation of energy, the state

of the *MIF*; *F* (*p* of *Christology*) and its total amount of illocutionary energy remain constant over time. In this regard, the *MIF* could open up the possibility of a new approach to the relationship between *Christology* and its homiletic content. It will add on the question of homiletical responsibility for us. That means the Christ centred preaching in SAT is not basically dichotomy between ontological arguments (illustration) and functional arguments (application) of the homiletical content. Rather, the dichotomy prods the preacher to seek how the *MIF* creates the preached *PHR* as it relates to the communication of the *IPE* to the people. In this way, the preached *PHR* suggests new insight about “what the text meant” and “what the text means” in its homiletical context. In fact, the dichotomy between “what the text meant” and “what the text means” is inappropriate to the extent that it fails to recognize the goal of the illocutionary energy in the SAT. That is to say, in SAT, there is no rhetic act of a propositional-historical format (what the text meant) with a meaning that is completely “force-neutral” - every proposition content is expressed as it is always expressed in the performance of an illocutionary action (Searle 1968: 413; 1969: 29).

Therefore, the homiletical application of the *BIF* and its *IPE* to the preached *PHR* is necessary to positively fulfil the messianic mission through our responsibility. That is, the preacher envisions a better appropriation of the Christological proposition in preaching, and invites the community to participate in this transformation. The vision of the preached *PHR* is biblically adequate for the normative nourishment of the church (cf. Campbell 1997: 257). In this regard, the homiletical goal of the preached *PHR* must ask how the preacher can move from the sermon as effective communication to the sermon as genuine responsibility. This homiletical responsibility in the preached *PHR* should prompt preacher and congregation to examine themselves to see if they are in the faith as they seek Jesus’ illocutionary action as his unique warnings, commands, invitations, promises and pledges on the Scripture as well as

the preached text. Perhaps, the rationality of the preached *PHR* in Christology is right to create an inevitable alterative attitude in the preacher. The preacher becomes not only an attractive storyteller of but a living witness of the *MIF*. At this point, the preacher does not preach what the congregation members consider to be their familiar experience in the biblical passage. Rather, the preacher and congregation perform the *IPE* in order to impact an intended messianic action on the preacher and the congregation's life. All Christian life has to be on and activated by such performance of the *IPE* in the preaching event.

To put it simply, Jesus' total speech acts in the *MIF* –*warnings (cross), commands (cross), invitations (cross), promises (cross), and pledges (cross)*; and their *IPE* continue to be enacted over time through the preached *PHR* in terms of Christ centred preaching. That is to say, true preaching is more than proclaiming a mere past event or propositional-historical information. Preaching in SAT is executing the *MIF* as His promises, His arguments, His blessings, and His commanding in the Christian community. Furthermore, *IPE* empowers preaching to invite the modern church to trust, obedience, surrender and devotion under the messianic ministry. In preaching Jesus, the *MIF* seeks Jesus' intentionality and its purpose whereby the homiletical purpose pertains to the *IPE* in the text. This attention on the *IPE* results in seeing preaching *as* seeking to accomplish something and the response Jesus anticipates in the biblical narrative is that the world today will respond to its testimony in faith. This does not mean that Jesus' ministry should be viewed as a past event or that his work should be appropriated to fulfil our contemporary need. Since Jesus' *IPE* remains performative through the preached *PHR* according to what he hopes to say and do in the contemporary world, it will continue to resonate with his people. The *IPE* is actually the essential nourishment for fostering the witness of Jesus Christ in the modern world.

### 4.3.1. Revisiting Preaching as Public Testimony according to *IPE*

Vanhoozer considers Scripture as “God’s authoritative speech acts,”<sup>92</sup> and the biblical text useful for defending the notion of textual meaning as the intended authorial meaningful action against a “Cartesian methodology” of psychological probing into the private subjective consciousness. In this case, the meaning of a text has the characteristic of the public domain. The Vanhoozer remarks that, “it is important to recover the author’s thought, but this is best done not by psychological intuition, but by historical inference—by an analysis of the author’s *public* communicative action”(1998: 230; *his emphasis*). This perspective recovers textual meaning as the author’s meaning according to the historical and public domain. Two principles of reading and preaching of Scripture in communion are presented. Firstly, the biblical authors and their intention reappear to determine meaning in the process of reading and preaching of Scripture; secondly, when the preacher resurrects the author’s voice in the public domain, the communion testimony is important in replacing individual need in the preaching event.

For example, when Jesus’ disciples became so worried about having no bread (Mark8:17), Jesus asked twice, “how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?” (Mark 8:19b). Even

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<sup>92</sup> In “Is There a Meaning in This Text?”, Vanhoozer (1998:207) argues that the characteristics of biblical language can be understood by the “covenantal medium of interpersonal communication.” His linguistic view is based on three philosophical views: Searle’s speech act theory, Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, and Habermas’ social theory. Based on Searle, Vanhoozer uses the SAT to rediscover the necessity of the author’s intended meaning through the illocutionary force in interpretation. Vanhoozer finds value in Ricoeur’s idea of a text counting as a meaningful action. Even though Ricoeur finds meaning in the text itself is not outside, eg in the author. Vanhoozer, grasping Ricoeur’s apparent belief in the intention in text according to a character of illocutionary force in the SAT, turns it into a defense for the author: “If the text is a meaningful action, and if the meaning of an action depends on the intention of its agent, it follows that the meaning of a text as act depends on its author’s intention” (pp. 216-217). From Jürgen Habermas, Vanhoozer gleans the idea that language is a means primarily of coordinating human action. He appropriates Habermas’ injunction for interpreters “not to separate speech acts from the context of their utterance or from their speakers” (p. 217). From the works of these three philosophers, Vanhoozer defines meaning as “a three-dimensional communicative action, with form and matter (propositional content), energy and trajectory (illocutionary force), and teleology or final purpose (perlocutionary effect)” (p. 218). In this case, Scripture will count as God’s authoritative speech acts in which the goal of biblical interpretation thus becomes grasping “what has been done, together with its effects; the possibility of attaining such understanding is the presupposition of communicative action” (p. 218).

though the disciples immediately replied, “Twelve,” and “Seven” (Mark 8:19-20), Jesus asked them, “Do you still not understand?” (Mark 8:21b). The disciples gave an absolutely right answer in terms of epistemological response, but Jesus seemed dissatisfied with their explanation. Although the disciples’ answer was expressed as part of their understanding of how to relate to Jesus, it is clear that their knowledge and experience stemmed from the ignorance of what Jesus’ total speech act in his public ministry was. Since they must have been thinking about *F(ps)*; *MIF(bread)*, only my hunger (physical issues) rather than our hunger (communion issues), the public domain of the Christian life is able to neither perform the *MIF* nor appropriate its (*p*) bread in the disciples’ theological responsibilities. In this case, Jesus’ *IPE* misfired; furthermore, the “authors’ intended meaning” misfired in his intention of the question. If it is true, the preached *PHR* is the conviction that the “authors’ intended meaning” and the “*IPE*” should complement each other in the preached text.

Similarly, when the *IPE* is banished from the interpretative process, the preached text misrepresents the intended “author’s intended meaning”<sup>93</sup> which ignores the total speech acts of Scripture as God’s authoritative speech act. Unfortunately, when God’s authoritative voice is omitted in the preached word, sounds of subjectivity and relativism would fill the empty place. In fact, many contemporary homileticians believe that the Bible is largely “non-propositional” and an “aesthetic object” so that our preaching is “aesthetic communication” (Lowry 1985: 83). Thus, the preached word is a touchable, noticeable “Word-event” in the human experience (Campbell 1997: 143). This goal of preaching is required to create an

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<sup>93</sup> The “author’s intended meaning” in the *intended perlocutionary effect* is Hirsch’s notion of the equality of the author’s meaning: “*Meaning* is that which is represented by a text; it is what the author meant by his use of a particular sign sequence; it is what the signs represent” (Hirsch 1967: 17; *his emphasis*). To paraphrase Hirsch’s statement above in the light of the SAT: Meaning is that which is represented by the intended perlocutionary effect; it is what the author meant by his using of a particular illocutionary force. Interestingly, both the “author’s meaning” and the “intended perlocutionary effect” will resurrect the author’s voice in the text. It will also resurrect the living voice of God in the preaching.

experiential event for the individual audience. In every sense, this kind of linguistic logic as “aesthetic object” in biblical language confuses the roles of illocutionary force with the perlocutionary effect in the process of producing meaning and its availability in the reading and preaching of Scripture. The total speech act in the text – the illocutionary act – builds upon locutions based on specific reasons for using performative action “*in*” the linguistic system as opposed to performative action “*of*” the linguistic system. To put it simply, interjection is also part of the grammar. In this case, the perlocutionary act goes beyond the illocutionary act based on the authors’ possible intention or design in eliciting consequential effects on the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience. This linguistic principle in SAT helps to distinguish between the illocutionary force (energy and trajectory) and the perlocutionary effect (teleology or final purpose) (Vanhoozer 1998: 218).

When the preacher is aware of the differences between the role of the illocutionary force and of the perlocutionary effect, it is possible to distinguish the authors’ intended meaning from the reader-made meaning as well as between the production of meaning and the appropriation of meaning in the text. However, aesthetic centred homiletic methodologies overemphasize preaching as a receiver-experienced event on the emotional level (Campbell 1997: 139). On the effect of emotional issues on the preached text, a preacher needs better skills to produce meaning as an experiential event in order to become the master producer of the experiential event.<sup>94</sup>

The emphasis on aesthetics will have two negative side effects on preaching. Firstly, the

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<sup>94</sup> The aesthetic methodology in sermonic form is central to Lowry’s “homiletical plot” (Campbell 1997: 140). Furthermore, the logic of aesthetics uses several preaching styles such as “inductive preaching, story preaching and dialogue sermons” in the context of a “new homiletic.” This new trend, however, has not succeeded in bringing new life to the church. For more information regarding this issue, see Campbell (1997: xi-xiv) and Thompson (2001: 9-11).

preacher becomes the consumer of the text and its meaning. Secondly, the preaching content is filled with subjectivities. Furthermore, this cognitive bias of the text and its preaching will attenuate the living voice of God in the preaching event. Subjectivity makes the absorption of God-events our business by showing that the preaching effect is subjective and no point to compare its goal. The concept of what constitutes a better preaching experience is highly subjective here. There is no adequate principle for raising questions about the real direction of the “Word-event” in the preached text. It comes either from human experience or from illocutionary force of Scripture. It is hard to consider that the preached text recognizes the cause-and-effect relationship between the two. Therefore the preaching content cuts and pastes the biblical text for our convenience. However, when preachers stress God’s *IPE*, the saving activity of God focus on the “Word-event” in the preached text as “God’s total speech act.” God’s authoritative speech act helps the faithful witness of the *BIF* according to its *IPE* so that the preacher again becomes the servant of the text. Thereby, God’s living voice reappears in contemporary preaching.

According to Vanhoozer (1998: 291), if the biblical interpreter applies the *IPE* according to the biblical language, the final goal of biblical interpretation will lead us to both modify and intensify the witness of Scripture in the public domain. Note his remark in this regard:

The conclusion highlights what follows for biblical interpreters from this analysis [speech act theory]. It is not insignificant that the leading categories for describing interpreters-*witness*, *disciple*-are drawn from the language of theology. For nothing less will do in describing our properly *theological responsibility* to hear, and to understand, what God and neighbor are saying/doing when they address us (Vanhoozer 2002: 161; *my emphasis*).

Theoretically, Vanhoozer’s usage of the SAT in biblical interpretation can be understood as “*theological responsibility*” in the public arena. In this case, being a witness or being a

disciple of Scripture can show something about what we encounter in the *IPE* that calls us to respond (Cf. Vanhoozer 1998: 368). From this, the preaching itself can count as another type of “*theological public responsibility*” in a broken world. In fact, according to Allen (1993: 21), “preaching is pre-eminently a theological act” in which the preaching event itself performs theologically responsible action according to the theological analysis of biblical text. Preachers thus have a sense of responsibility to execute their theological view in order to persuade, to change their congregants’ attitudes in a specific way. In this case, the *IPE* is useful to strengthen bilateral relationships between what the preacher says (*being* a witness) and what the preacher actually is (*bearing* witness). Therefore, the execution of the *BIF* in following the direction of the *IPE* is the moment preaching becomes a “*living testimony of God’s IPE*” in the public domain. This moment is itself evidence for explaining how the preacher becomes a witness of the text in the modern world. This means that preaching is not to be performed in isolation of the public significance, but it is to be performed by the people of God to minister to a broken world.

#### **4.3.2. Revisiting the Theological Analysis of the Holy Spirit’s Role in Preaching according to the Witness of *F(ps)***

The theological implication of “witness” was emphasized by all the great Reformed theologians. In particular, Calvin claims that the role of the Holy Spirit is to witness to Scripture and the testimony of the Holy Spirit is neither to bring new revelations nor to make self-acknowledgment.<sup>95</sup> Rather, the Holy Spirit enables the individual to decipher what he/she has heard and received from the Father and the Son, and not from himself (John 16:13). Therefore, in Reformed view, the ordinary human being could not be convinced of the divinity of the Scriptures by arguments presented by the church, logical and rational as the

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<sup>95</sup> Calvin called this the “internal witness of the Spirit”; see *Institutes* 3:1:1, 1:7:5.

human way of understanding (1 Cor. 2:14; see also, Wallace 1957: 101-102).<sup>96</sup> Only the Spirit illuminates the people to believe that God speaks through the Scriptures, leading their hearts to accept the sovereign action of the triune God, and giving them full assurance of the promise of God's action, thereby generating faith in their heart.<sup>97</sup> The theological implication of Calvin's work is that in reading and preaching Scripture, the role of the Holy Spirit is one of most important keys for empowering the preached text to become the Word of God. In this reformed homiletic legacy, the preacher will be revisiting the role of Holy Spirit in terms of the illocutionary action. On this matter, Vanhoozer (1994: 180) helpfully writes:

Calvin refers both to the majesty of God's Word and to the divine stammering. To say that God's word is 'majestic' is to say that his illocutionary acts are mighty... On the other hand, God's mighty speech-acts are clothed in the form of human speech genres... The divine speech-acts, though humbly clothed, are nevertheless, powerful enough to liberate the captive, empower the weak, fill the empty and sustain the suffering.

In this regard, if the preacher understands the majestic word of God as His mighty illocutionary act, theoretically, the preacher can find epistemological and practical similarities between the role of the Holy Spirit and the characteristics of the *F(p)* as guideline for the preached text. For the sake of clarity, we may describe three aspects of the similarity in the role of the Holy Spirit and the function of the *F(p)* according to their inherent characteristics. The internal powers help us to reconsider the most significant sub-criteria in the theological account of the homiletical moment:

1) The Holy Spirit and the *F(p)* introduce the fact that Scripture has a sovereign *IPE*: The

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<sup>96</sup> *Institutes* 1:8:13, 1:7:4.

<sup>97</sup> *Institutes* 3:1:1, 3:2:33-4, 2:2:20, 1:7:5. See also Calvin's Commentaries: First Epistle... to the Corinthians, tr. J.W. Fraser (Edinburgh, 1960), pp. 58-64, on 1 Cor. 2:10-16; The Gospel According to St John 11-21, tr. Parker (Edinburgh, 1961), pp. 302-3, on 1 Jn. 5:6-7; Second Epistle to the Corinthians, tr. T.A. Smail (Edinburgh, 1964), pp. 302-3, on 2 Tim. 1:14-15.

preached text testifies that the triune God's teleological action makes preaching to be the word of God.

2) The Holy Spirit and the  $F(p)$  have a dynamic communicative form serving the recognized author's teleology: the preaching styles and their figure fit the directedness of the *IPE* in Scripture.

3) The Holy Spirit and the  $F(p)$  are continuously performing a meaningful and miraculous action in order to fulfil the inherent purpose of the text in the modern world: the preacher's final goal is to re-present and re-enact the presence of God and His Word in today's world.

In fact, a rising problem in recent homiletical issues is that the significant theological analysis of the preached text is overlooked (Allen 1993: 21). This issue deals not simply with the absence of theological reflection, but also the character and quality of the theology that is presented (Campbell 1997: XII). Consequently, the fundamental problem in contemporary homiletic theory is the lack of shared theological sub-criteria for judging the preached statement. To put it simply, preachers have lost their biblical mother tongue since preaching has lost the guiding light of the Holy Spirit that would enable preaching to become the Word of God.

However, the SAT-centred homiletic theory is useful for strengthening the typical Calvinistic's stress on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in reading and preaching Scripture. This reformed theological base of the SAT can provide answers to certain homiletic questions: First, how is God present and active in the moment of preaching? Second, what are the implications of illumination by the Holy Spirit in shaping the message? Third, how does

God's teleology help the sermon in the preaching process?

If the SAT is right, the sermonic text used in the illocution and perlocution will suggest a new homiletical discriminant and actual instruction. This homiletic guideline helps to distinguish between text centred preaching and other preaching styles. Furthermore, it explains how the preacher proclaims the text biblically according to Calvin's claim of the internal witness of the Holy Spirit. This distinction actually explains how Calvin's internal witness of the Holy Spirit continuously reorients the homiletic appropriation of Scripture in the present logic of a discriminant sermon.

Earlier, we have seen that the execution of the *BIF* creates the *PHR* in which the sincere *PHR* bears faithful witness to Scripture. In this case, the preacher does not only bring a new or appealing message in the application of the SAT. The performance of the *PHR* is not the only bridge between the preached messages and congregation in the biblical themes. In certain cases, the *PHR* effect creates the sermon as a testimony in the public domain whereby the preacher as witness then rightly construe the *BIF* performed on the modern audience. The metaphor of witness in the SAT is not only attractive in drawing attention to past biblical events, but also performing what it asserts in the present. According to this assertion, in the *BIF*, the preached *PHR* will empower the preached text to breathe new energy and power on God's promises. To put simply, in the SAT, the preached statement is more than a noun definition; it is a responsible verb in a broken world. Therefore, the preacher and congregation should beware of seeing, the preaching as something enlivening, energizing text, but rather Scripture and its *BIF* itself makes the preaching to become alive according with God's total speech act in text.

For example, John testified about Jesus' utterance: "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." (John13:34). If we analyse this well-known biblical testimony according to the SAT, we will have:  $F(p)$  where " $F$ " is the illocutionary force (*loving*) and " $P$ " is the proposition (*new command: Love one another*). We symbolize this as  $F(p)$ ; *loving (new command)*. Jesus himself then performed (*I have loved: ἠγάπησα*)<sup>98</sup> the illocutionary action of a new command. Interestingly, John testified about the "new command" in other biblical passages:

Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. Yet I am writing you a new command; its *truth* is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining (1 John 2:7-8; *my emphasis*).

A comparative reading of John13:34 and 1John 2:7-8 shows that one of John's interests concerns the interrelation between a new and old command in which the performative action (*shining*) of "*true light*" leads us to understand the inherent truth in the new and the old command. To put it simply, the "*true light*" illuminates two different propositions (the new and old commands) which have the same illocutionary act (the act of loving; " $L(p)$ "). According to other biblical texts, the "*true light*" metaphorically represents the Holy Spirit while the Spirit also gives us the testimony that this is true (1 John 5:6). The Holy Spirit performs a double action simultaneously - firstly, the Holy Spirit illuminates the preacher in order to find out how the triune God speaks and works through the gospel of Christ in the *BIF*. Secondly, the Holy Spirit empowers the preacher to accomplish the *PHR* according to God's *IPE*. This Triune participation supports the true preaching in which the sermon demonstrates God's promises through Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, thereby, enabling the preacher

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<sup>98</sup> Verb indicative aorist active 1st person singular from ἀγαπάω.

to proclaim the Kingdom of God in a broken world. Therefore, true preaching could be seen as finding the *BIF* and fulfilling the *PHR* by the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

At this point, the theological implication of the role of the Holy Spirit and the illocutionary force in the SAT requires us to keep in mind we are neither to make a new command available nor to make the old command attractive in our lives. Rather, our only responsibility is to produce meaning as *F(p);loving (new and old command)*: “This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another.”(1 John 3:11). Thus, through illumination by the Holy Spirit, the preacher can see the *BIF* and execute its *PHR* effect in contemporary situations. Clearly, Calvin’s emphasis on the guidance of the Holy Spirit in preaching does not contradict the approach of the SAT in homiletics. If preachers witness the illumination by the Holy Spirit, the “being witness” must be humbly re-learned in order to limit the preacher himself to accept being guided by the testimony and application of the Holy Spirit. The success of Calvin’s homiletic confession is important also in SAT as the preaching obviously has a perlocutionary effect when performed according to the illocutionary force in Scripture. Therefore, in the SAT, preaching is basically a process of re-reading and re-performing of Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit within the boundaries of God’s promise.

#### **4.3.3. Revisiting the Witness of Preaching according to the Preached *PHR***

Bearing witness is the preacher’s performative act in order to find the *BIF* and to fulfil the *PHR* by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. This homiletical purpose is developed in the SAT pertaining to the direction of the illocutionary effect in the text. Simply, when in the execution of the *BIF* it becomes the preached text, the *PHR* gives the sermon its inherent validity. The *PHR* centred preaching, furthermore, leads to the sermonic contents as it seeks

to accomplish the response God anticipates in His promise in the text. From this perspective, God's promise is no longer to be viewed as a past event, because what it is expected to say and do in the *BIF* points to the still available energy in God's covenant whereby *promises (covenant)* will continue to agree with the preached *PHR*. In other words, the calendar cannot be turned back, but if an important promise is noted in the old calendar, it remains meaningful until it is accomplished in time. In this way, the preached *PHR* is exactly the assistance to fulfil *God's promising (covenant) as F(ps)* points in a broken world.

Therefore preaching to find the *BIF* and to fulfil the *PHR* must concentrate and focus on building and nurturing the HIS community by God's illocutionary point; "*Pr. (covenant)*." In this case, the rationality of witness of preaching is created according with the relevance the *BIF* and its *PHR*. This relevance does not refer to some or other repetition of an eternal meaning lying hidden in the text, regarded as a somewhat neutral container of gemlike truths to be force open and then applied in its so called meaning for today. Indeed, witnesses in the SAT becomes the creative performer of illocutionary action (Cf. Coady 1992: 25). Their understanding, appropriation and eventually their performance of the illocutionary force is therefore all part of the process and act of imagination, as the re-execution of the *BIF* energy as part of the *PHR*. On this matter, Brueggemann (1993: 13) talks about "re-imagination": It is "simply the human capacity to picture, portray, receive, and practice the world in way other than in appears to be at first glance when seen through a dominant, habitual, unexamined lens." The witness as a performer therefore is required to have creative imagination in order to perform the *PHR* according to its *IPE*.

Thus, the *IPE* can make a rule-governed creative imagination in the preached *PHR*: firstly to what has happened, to the world as it was; secondly, to communal responsibility of what

could be; that is, to the world as it might or ought to be. Therefore, in both ways, preaching in the SAT mode should pay attention to the dual nature as preaching of testimony that God did and will do something in a broken world and we will do something within the “boundaries” of His promises. This dual effect as preaching of testimony is required for a pattern of available meaning and its application in a sermon. On this matter, Watson helpfully writes:

If, as I have argued, the category of the speech act can be extended to include written communications, then current hostility to the concepts of determinate meaning and authorial intention is unjustified. To be understood at all, a series of words must be construed as a communicative action which intends a determinate meaning together with its illocutionary and perlocutionary force (Watson 1997: 103).

From Watson’s understanding of the relationship between illocutionary and perlocutionary force, the preacher can determinate meaning and make available its meaningful application which is not the substitution in metaphorical expression for the Christian witness. If sermonic application in the SAT is understood in terms of life according to the triune God’s sovereign *IPE*, then sermonic application engages with the practical, participatory and faithful condition for becoming a responsible “witness to Jesus Christ” (Neufeld 1994: 76).<sup>99</sup> According to the Bible, Jesus who is the Word (it has *IPE*) becoming the flesh (the life according to the *IPE*) (John 1:14f).

On this way, the seeking *BIF* and the preached *PHR* according to the *IPE* evaluate the extent to which the homiletic attitude approximates and contributes to what Long (2005b) calls “*The witness of preaching.*” According to him, witness is a crucial action in which one reports that a text is about something, which may be performed under certain conditions and with certain

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<sup>99</sup> Neufeld states that the SAT bears witness to Jesus Christ in a confessional formula and especially its function in 1 John. He concludes that the biblical text exercises “power to transform the readers’ expectations, speech and conduct” (Neufeld 1994: 133). This illocutionary force in the text bears witness to Jesus Christ (Neufeld 1994: 76).

intentions (Long 2005b: 47). Thus:

When the preacher makes the turn from the exegesis of the biblical text toward the sermon itself ... the move from text to sermon is a move from beholding to attesting, from seeing to saying, from listening to telling, from perceiving to testifying, from *being* a witness to *bearing* witness (Long 2005b: 100).

This activity is obviously performed with the illocution action in Scripture (see Wolterstorff 2006: 38). If it is true that the preacher's primary role is in the area of performative action, to find the *BIF* and to fulfil the *PHR* according to *IPE*, this will create a connection between what the text said in the past and the way things actually are in the present. It is important to remember that both "what the text meant" and "what the text means" are not isolated in the context of SAT (see, Searle 1969: 29). The image of witness in the preached *PHR* concerns the illocutionary force of the biblical text, and not only the testimony of its original witness is legitimate, but also the testimony of all subsequent contemporary preachers. Furthermore, the *PHR* centred preaching does not only create a bridge between the speaker and the audience in the synchronic dialogue situation, but in certain cases, for particular types of illocutionary force in the text, it continues to play across time here and there (Pratt 1977: 136).<sup>100</sup> This characteristic of the preached *PHR* may be seen by examining the phenomenon of God's presence in the contemporary sermon.

#### **4.4.1. Revisiting God's Presence in the Sermon according to SAT**

Nicholas Wolterstorff has recently applied SAT to promote a better, deeper and more practical understanding of Scripture.<sup>101</sup> His attractive proposal (2006: 36) offers four alternative

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<sup>100</sup> Pratt has made a good start in applying speech act theory to texts. She points out in "*Toward a Speech Act Theory of Literary Discourse*" that the displayed text is really doing something: "verbally *displaying* a state of affairs, inviting his addressee(s) to join him in contemplating it, evaluating it, and responding to it" (Pratt 1977: 136). The text, then, can have genuine illocutionary force.

<sup>101</sup> Wolterstorff, Nicholas. "Why Animals Don't Speak." In *Faith and Philosophy* 4 (1987), pp. 463-485; idem,

viewpoints that describe the characteristics of the “divine discourse” as follows: firstly, we think of the biblical text in terms of speech instead of in terms of revelation; secondly, we give priority to speech as action, as discourse instead of giving propriety to speech as a symbol-system; thirdly, in discourse, we distinguish between locutionary acts and illocutionary acts; and fourthly, we introduce the concept of “double-agency discourse”, which could enable us to understand how God speaks. From his argument, we can distinguish between God’s saying and God’s doing in Scripture in relating the nature of the divine illocutionary acts (Wolterstorff 1995: 13; 1997: 30). Accordingly, it is possible to understand God’s utterance as a complete speech act. Wolterstorff’s (1995: 13) analysis is worth quoting in full:

Once illocutionary acts are thus distinguished from locutionary acts, then it immediately occurs to one that though of course such actions as asking, asserting, commanding, and promising, can be performed by way of uttering or inscribing sentences, they can be performed in many other ways as well. One can say something by producing a blaze, or smoke, or a sequence of light-flashes. Even more interesting: one can tell somebody something by deputizing someone else to speak on one's behalf. In short, contemporary speech-action theory opens up the possibility of a whole new way of thinking about God speaking: perhaps the attribution of speech to God by Jews, Christians... should be understood as the attribution to God of illocutionary actions, leaving it open how God performs those actions.

From this perspective, God can create illocutionary force with or without a linguistic system. In fact, the Bible describes different dynamic media of performing divine illocutionary force such as fire, water, wind, silence and human beings. If it is true, in using a locutionary act to perform an illocutionary act, the biblical text has performed one action by performing another distinct action. Thus, the biblical illocutionary action in the text offers new ways of “thinking

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*Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); idem, “True Words” in: Alan G. Padgett and Patrick R. Keifert (eds.), in *But Is It All True?* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2006), pp. 34-48.

about God speaking.” These *BIF* are the essence of the presence of God in the preaching event, and the illocutionary force of the Scripture may regard the alterative logic of the presence of God as His speech act (Wolterstorff 1995: 19-36). Wolterstorff (Ibid: 38) further remarks:

Actually all of us use conventional gestures of various sorts to say things: winks, nudges, shrugs, nods, and so forth. The media of divine discourse are even more diverse, or so at least the biblical writers claim. Words, yes; but beyond that, happenings of all sorts: dreams, visions, apparitions, burning bushes, illnesses, national calamities, and national deliverances, droughts - on and on. When reflecting on discourse, be it human or divine, it's important to keep in mind this diversity of media - especially important to keep in mind that one doesn't need words to say things.

This diversity of “media of divine discourse” opens up the possibility that Scripture itself is a speech act; that is, God can perform speech acts without having to utter sounds. From this, the preacher can rethink God's presence in the divine performative act as the living voice of God. If God's presence is re-described through the performative action, the reality of the living voice of God in SAT becomes a matter of invitation – giving access to a new social reality and its capacity to empathize with the situation rather than making linguistic declarations.<sup>102</sup> For example, when Peter preached in Act 2:14-39, he appropriated the Old Testament texts of Joel 2:28-32 and Psalms 16:8-11. However, his preaching is not repetition of the biblical texts, but his declaration was a performative illocutionary force of Joel 2:28-32 and Psalms 16:8-11 in the context of Jesus' resurrection. The possibility of adopting a special role in the creation of a new social reality is grounded not in brute facts but in contextual (or institutional) facts which are grounded and guaranteed within the Christian view of communication in the triune God (Vanhoozer 2002: 168). It is driven by the illumination of

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<sup>102</sup> According to Searle (1995: 54), a performative declaration must create the state of affairs described by its illocutionary force, for example, ‘You are fired,’ ‘I divorce you,’ ‘The meeting is adjourned,’ etc. In this way, speech acts play a special role in the creation of a new social reality.

the Holy Spirit producing a miracle to the unexpected amazement of those present and by the understanding of the meaning of Joel 2:28-32 and Psalms 16:8-11 in fulfilling the Trinitarian covenant in the Christ teleological context.

Texts are lenses for seeing the saving works of the triune God, who acts in history. This divine reality of continuity will guarantee the identity of the triune God referred to in Peter's sermon, and the discourse of the triune covenant is still speaking through preaching in terms of the diversity of the "media of divine discourse." In this case, the triune covenant is not considered by some to be the "*deus ex machine*." The point is that the Holy Spirit renders God's definitive word in the biblical text (Joel 2:28-32 and Psalm 16:8-11) to be effective by achieving its illocutionary force and the intended perlocutionary effects (preached statement of Joel 2:28-32 and Psalm 16:8-11) in the Jesus centred context in history. To put it simply, the preached text should be one of the diverse "media of divine discourse." In this case, the preached text and its intended perlocutionary effects are not created only by semiotical, grammatical and literature materialism, but by, with, and through the Holy Spirit. This miraculous achievement will make the sermon available and invite one to the new world of God's kingdom in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

God's presence in the sermon in the SAT centred approach builds on the creative and imaginative capacity of the biblical world in the real world when the Holy Spirit performs the *BIF* through the intended perlocutionary effects of the preached word. The preacher cannot present anything about God's presence in preaching until the preacher is aware of God's illocutionary acts. This homiletic reality in the *BIF* is grounded in the authority and power of preaching, because it rests on the active presence of the living God, wherever his Word is proclaimed (see, Müller 2011: 338). In this regard, the homiletical embodiment of the active

presence of the living God is neither an act of producing spiritual experience nor of discovering deep dogmatic principles and moral challenges in the text. Rather, the presence of God can be performed in the sermon to create a new social reality through the performed *BIF* and its *PHR*. In this case, the execution of the *BIF* in fulfilling the *PHR* has to prolong the new world of God's kingdom, which is not limited by the historical words, styles or contexts. According to the SAT, the basic unit of linguistic communication is not the locution level (symbol, word, and sentence) but the performance of speech act.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the *PHR* centred preaching will replace God's presence in preaching in terms of knowing something; that is, the preacher needs to think seriously about God's presence and its performative dimension of creating a new social reality.

In this viewpoint, the preacher can avoid misfiring regarding God's presence in the preaching event as well as in the afterglow of the sermon. In fact, Christian communities read the Bible (locution level) in order to perform the text in their lives and this happens in the pulpit and in the pews.<sup>104</sup> Accordingly, if they really encounter God's presence in preaching, they should perform faithful perlocutionary responses in their lives. In this case, the *PHR* centred preaching is in a practical sense "rule-governed behaviour." This attitude trains us in the way of being *coram deo*. Therefore, the preacher should study how we understand the dynamic *BIF* and its homiletic appropriation servicing the wise performance of God's presence according to both divine and human agencies.

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<sup>103</sup> Searle (1969: 16) clearly says that, "[t]he unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token of the symbol, word or sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act... More precisely, the production or issuance of a sentence token under certain conditions is a speech act, and speech acts... are the basic or minimal units of linguistic communication."

<sup>104</sup> Reading the Scripture in communion must be at least the final stage of the production of the meaning of the text to become the performance of text (see the excellent study on this subject by Fowler & Jones, 1991).

#### 4.4.2. Revisiting the Validity of God's Presence in the Sermon according to the Role of the "Double Agency Discourse"

If the dynamic *BIF* signify and enable us to execute the preached *PHR*, the preached text in SAT emphasizes the role of divine-human agency in the performance of preaching. The preached statement, embodied in Scripture, has a human aspect as well as a divine aspect. Interestingly, in the light of SAT, when preaching depends on the dynamic *BIF*, there is a dual divine-human agency in operation, what Wolterstorff terms the "double agency discourse" (Wolterstorff 1995: 38). This unfamiliar term occurs in ordinary everyday situations everywhere. For example, a CEO (chief executive officer) might order what his or her secretary should say by dictating or indicating the message that should be said, or it might even be said by the secretary knowing the intention of the CEO. In this case, the CEO empowers the secretary to write by signing the text, thereby showing that what the secretary says *counts as* the CEO's illocutionary act. Similarly, the CEO might dispatch the secretary as a negotiator to represent the CEO. The one who is being deputized for does not necessarily receive the exact words to say, but still speaks in the name of the deputy: "the deputy has, as it were, power of attorney" (Wolterstorff 1995: 44). Thus, the buyer encounters not merely the locutionary acts of the negotiator, but more precisely the negotiator's locutionary acts which *count as* the CEO's illocutionary acts performed by the negotiator. However, this leads to an interesting question: given the deputy's locutionary action — the negotiator, the diplomat and the ambassador's locutionary acts — do these deputies themselves perform illocutionary acts by way of their locutionary acts? That is, do they speak discourse in their own voice? Wolterstorff answers thus:

... [I]t might sometimes be the case that the very same utterings [of the deputy] count both as the performance of speech actions by the ambassador and as the performance of speech actions by his head of state; these might be the very same speech actions, or somewhat different. Probably the most common occurrence,

though, is that in the course of issuing the warning, the ambassador moves back and forth between speaking in the name of his head of state and speaking in his own voice; and sometimes part of what he does when speaking in his own voice consists of communicating a message from his head of state (Wolterstorff 1995: 45).

This “double agency discourse” enables us to rethink the reality of the presence of God in biblical preaching. It is often pointed out that accurate biblical preaching depends on “saying the same thing as the text.” However, in SAT, the preached text consists of “doing the same thing in the performance of illocutionary force in the text.” It is a very important issue because there are many boring sermons saying precisely the same thing as the Bible. Moreover, the preacher can easily misunderstand the real issues of biblical reality in preaching, if he/she follows the biblical passages word for word.

Paul stated that he demonstrated his performance of preaching in Corinth: “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power” (1Cor 2:4-5). According to Paul, the basic essence of preaching is demonstrating the power according to the Spirit’s performative action through which everything is done. Precisely, this performative action is the illocutionary force in terms of SAT. It is clear that Paul’s preaching in Corinth pays attention to God’s illocutionary actions. The Spirit’s influence empowered what Paul proclaimed as he preached Jesus Christ and him crucified. Paul’s preaching authorized God’s illocutionary acts in terms of God’s presence. Thus, the Corinthians encountered, not merely the locutionary acts of Paul, but more precisely, Paul’s locutionary acts which *count as* the illocutionary acts performed in God’s presence. In the light of SAT, Paul said “the power of God” in 1 Corinthians is a clear illocutionary act that authorized his preaching and made it the Word of God. The presence of God in the sermon represents the medium of encounter with God’s illocutionary power through the preached Scripture. This

“double agency discourse” in the preaching should aim to encompass a sense, both of the impact of what the text says and of the response to it.

Therefore, true biblical preaching in the light of SAT needs to be evaluated with reference to what Brümmer calls (1981: 11) the non-linguistic states of affairs. The non-linguistic element in the double agency discourse must emphasize a creative and imaginative performative action. In fact, all Christian action has to be based on and activated by the God-performance of the text in the preached *PHR*. The preached *PHR*, therefore, is like the performance of a vocal score; it can be analysed, it can be performed, and sometimes it can be over-performed. If one compares the performance of the vocal score with the biblical text, it would be clear that both have their illocutionary force, which guides a determinate element to be acted, while at the same time leaves certain choices to the performer as the vocalist or preacher. To do this, the Scripture must be interpreted creatively and imaginatively in order to help the preacher and the congregation to perform a new social reality that would fulfil the dynamic divine illocutionary force in a broken world. Therefore, between the text, the study desk of the preacher, and the sermon in the pulpit must stand an act of creative imagination on the part of the interpreter-preacher.

#### **4.4.3. Revisiting the Reality of God’s Presence in Sermons according to the Dynamic *BIF***

The understanding of God’s homiletic presence in the SAT intends more than reorienting exegetical or homiletical abilities. Rather, it is grounded in and guaranteed by the work of the Holy Spirit in which the wise performance of the *PHR* becomes the central issue in the mystery of preaching. If the preached *PHR* signifies and gives access to something, the preacher may rethink the mystery of preaching, and the homiletical execution of the dynamic

*BIF* will serve as the theological support for the Reformed confession. According to the second Helvetic Confession, “the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God,” and this “is” is understood in a more pneumatological way (Immink 2002: 161). Even though, in the Reformed homiletical confession, the performance of the Word of God in preaching is nothing else than a miracle, worked and realized by the Trinitarian God, but this miracle needs to be made true in and through hard and skilful theological work. Müller correctly states in this regard that:

It will be the task of *exegesis* to unlock these secrets of how God worked in history. However, the *additional* task of exegesis is to assist texts to be *performed homiletically* in a way that they open a perspective on what God can still be doing today ( Müller 2011: 342; *his emphasis*).

Obviously, a miracle can be performed in the sermon according to the Reformed homiletical confession; however, preachers should be aware of the underlying risks of over-confidence in preaching. It is too easy to equate automatically the human product of the sermon with the Word of God. In this view, the preacher has in addition a rigorous task of exegesis and its responsibility with regard to his or her sermon. Therefore, if the preacher wishes to have the benefit of the mystery of preaching in SAT, then he/she must learn to faithfully respond to the various *BIF* in the Scripture. The preacher should receive the *Holy Spirit* as the pointer of the *BIF* and its perlocutor’s energy in a responsible way. The Holy Spirit must illumine the preacher to perform the preached *PHR* in the sermon through understanding of the dynamic *BIF*. Thus, the preacher will not to be satisfied until he/she has engaged with the dynamic illocution actions as well as with the suitable perlocutions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Effective preaching therefore depends on the inner testimony of the Spirit (illocutionary force)

and its faithful reception by the preacher. This co-operative action enables the language of preaching to be the preached *PHR* in the sense that the preacher performs dynamic divine illocutionary actions, partaking thereby in God’s total speech acts, rendered in Scripture. The recognition of the *BIF* therefore restates the mystery of preaching in God’s presence in the sermon: the preacher’s statements become the execution of the *BIF* and its effective *PHR* can be regarded God’s presence in the sermon. The strength of the preached *PHR* in God’s effective presence in the sermon is attributed to the dynamic and practical functions of the divine illocutionary force. In this case, the *BIF* can create a new *PHR* that preaching can try out — the creative presence of God in the preached *PHR*. This creative and imaginative approach in the *BIF* builds on the creative and imaginative capacity of congregations to encounter the dynamic and creative functions of the Word of God in the context of homiletics.

If we take for example Jesus’ words at the end of Matthew’s gospel, “I am with you always,” the preacher may simply interpret the *BIF* in this passage as a promise. It is not difficult to classify the *BIF* so as to see the messianic illocutionary point as a promise. However, there are other examples which remain complicated. For instance, Paul said, “Women should remain silent in the churches” (1Cor 14:34). Even though the words of the text are clear, the question is, what *BIF* point is Paul performing? In this case, the preacher should note that a variety of locutionary levels in the biblical texts do not necessarily correspond only with single illocutions. That is, speakers characteristically perform a locutionary act with a single utterance in which they utter words with a certain sense and reference. However, they also mean to perform illocutionary acts with a certain force in acts such as assertions, promises, orders, declarations and apologies:

<b>Wet paint!</b>		
<b>Locutionary act</b>	<b>Illocutionary act</b>	<b>Perlocutionary act</b>
It forms the sentence	It is a warning, command,	It is convincing, persuading,

according to the rules of the English imperative mood.	hint or utterance which has a certain conventional force.	detering, surprising.
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Moreover, when a speaker's utterances have effects on the audience and the audience performs a perlocutionary act, the audience should respond, for example, to show that they are convinced, pleased, influenced, amused or embarrassed. Thus, when a speaker utters a single sentence in English (or any other language), there are at least two, possibly three, things going on. This aspect of SAT unquestionably establishes that the biblical writings perform multiple speech acts (Wolterstorff 1995: 55). Therefore, the preacher must acknowledge that at times the *BIF* itself invites or requires several multi-layered, multi-directional actions. According to Thiselton, the nature of biblical language is generally agreed upon in several biblical case-studies. He notes:

The very same word, however, combines a number of functions - they perform several multi-layered, multi-directional actions: They are sermon, creed, confession, hymn, praise, acclamation, exposition, argument, celebration. Much of the poverty of some preaching today derives from exclusive attention either to 'teaching,' or 'exhortation,' or personal anecdote, in contrast to the richly multi-layered, multi-level model of preaching...(Thiselton 1999: 146).

Interestingly, the criticism about "the poverty of preaching" is not unprecedented. In fact, Craddock had earlier noted that too often today words simply describe; preachers "serve only as signs pointing to the discovered or discoverable data"(Craddock 1979: 33). In order to overcome "the poverty of preaching," one must understand the illocutionary force as the primary biblical interpretive element in preaching. Craddock stresses that, "J.L Austin has reminded us of the creative or performative power of words. Words not only report something; they do something" (Ibid: 34). Craddock advocates that preaching reconceives the biblical language as "an action, something happening" (Ibid: 44) because "words are deeds" (Ibid: 34). His aim is to recover afresh the "dynamistic and creative functions of language" in the

context of homiletics (Ibid: 34).

Nevertheless, recent preaching styles have simply missed the point of Craddock's concern about the carelessness of the *BIF*. Preachers have responded by trying to make use of several preaching styles such as "story preaching, dialogue sermons, and homiletical plot" in terms of the "new homiletic" (Campbell 1997: XI; Thompson 2001: 9-11). These homiletical attempts have misrepresented Craddock's point which regards the dynamic *BIF* as the primary homiletical element. Craddock (1979: 34) argues that, "before they were smothered by a scientific and technological culture, words danced, sang, teased, lured, probed, wept, judged, and transformed." In other words, the *BIF* in the text itself is a divine symphony. As such, it can put fresh energy into our dry sermons. Recognizing the multiple and divine *BIF* in the text can change monotonous preaching and open up a perspective on what God can still say and do in today's sermon. This is how Calvin and the Reformers understood the Spirit's illumination: the Spirit convicts us that the Bible contains God's dynamic illocutions and enables us to respond prayerfully to them as we ought (Vanhoozer 1997: 156). Therefore, if the preacher reconsiders the Spirit's illumination in the light of the *BIF*, the multi-directional *BIF: F(p)* will, through the Spirit's illumination, give us a fresh appreciation of *God's presence in the preached PHR*.

If the preacher reflects on the appropriation of the dynamic *BIF* and its effective preached *PHR*, he/she will clearly discover the homiletical fact that the Reformed confession does not contradict the approach that focuses on God's presence in the SAT. In this regard, the preached *PHR* will serve effectively as a theological support for the mystery of preaching—the dynamic *BIF* performs God's creative presence in the preached *PHR*. This homiletical theology in SAT depends on the inner authority and witness of the Scripture and the

convincing power of the Holy Spirit as the only support necessary. That is, the illumination by the Holy Spirit is not to create or to point out new illocutionary acts but rather its preached *PHR* makes available and enables the preaching to appropriate the *BIF* already inherent in Scripture as  $F(ps)$ . To put it differently, the nature of preaching in the SAT itself could be understood as the perlocutionary action of *the Holy Spirit (biblical content)*. Therefore, the mystery of preaching can be represented as  $F(p)$  —*the Holy Spirit (biblical content)*.

#### 4.5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has explored the interface between SAT and biblical studies by showing how the application of SAT in biblical interpretation may serve to elucidate important homiletical issues such as “Christ teleological preaching,” “the witness of the text as the preacher” and “God’s presence in the sermon.” The application of SAT in biblical interpretation makes three important contributions to each homiletical issue.

Firstly, the “Christ teleological preaching” in SAT can be represented as  $F(ps)$ . This logic of  $F(ps)$  in *BIF* would help the preacher recognize the characteristic of Jesus’ *BIF* and its *IPE* on the preached *PHR*. This means that the preacher should pay attention to seeking the *BIF* and its *IPE* in order to establish the preached *PHR* on Christ centred preaching. Clearly, the directness of the preached *PHR* should be characterized in the form of a promise “ $Pr(p)$ ,” warning “ $W(p)$ ,” blessing “ $B(p)$ ,” etc. In this case, the significance of the preached *PHR* is based on two principles. The preached *PHR* is not simply flat re-descriptions of abstract Christology doctrinal facts or the re-plotting of didactic stories. Rather, the preached *PHR* presents gospel as the Christological *IPE* for the modern church. Therefore the preaching of Jesus is thus the basic response from our responsibility, which stresses the reality of Jesus’ *IPE*. In its most basic form, the intention of Jesus’ *IPE* is: hear my word, believe me and

follow me.

Secondly, “the witness of the text as the preacher” can be characterized in SAT as the preached *PHR* in the public domain. The public domain of Christian life is able to either perform the *BIF* or appropriate its (*p*; biblical proposition) on the theological responsibilities in the public significance. In this case, the preached *PHR* is understood as following the direction of the *IPE* so that the moment of the preaching becomes a “*living testimony of God’s IPE*” in the public domain. This model of the preacher as witness in the preached *PHR* engages with the practical, participatory, and communion nature. The confession of faith on *God’s IPE* allows those undergoing training to recover a responsible “witness to Jesus Christ.”

Thirdly, SAT enables us to understand “God’s presence in the sermon” as operative to the extent that preaching pays attention to Scripture itself as a speech act. This being the case, it is clear that the illocutionary acts of the word authorize the preached text. Thus, the congregation will have an encounter, not merely with the locutionary acts of the sermon, but more precisely, with the locutionary acts which *count as* illocutionary acts performed by God’s power. This “double agency discourse” enables us to rethink the reality of biblical preaching. It is often pointed out that accurate biblical preaching depends on “saying the same thing as the text.” However, in SAT, the preached text consists of “doing the same thing as the performance of illocutionary force in the text.” Therefore, preaching, as a medium of encounter with God’s power through Scripture can definitely aim to include a sense both of the impact of the linguistic levels (what the text says) and the non-linguistic level (of response to what it is).

What would be the corollaries of such a view of SAT in our conception of the interface

between biblical studies and homiletics? The answer is related to the three normative tasks of preaching approach in the light of SAT.

First, the preached text in the SAT is seen not only as an interpretation of Scripture, but as the agent of performance of the *BIF*. The preacher not only preaches what the Scripture “meant (past)” or “means (present),” the preaching emphasizes/points essentially to response(s) of *God’s IPE* on the biblical passages anticipating in the preacher’s life and life of the congregation. Furthermore, the full meaning of the sermon when it is only *God’s IPE* performed by preachers through faithful preaching is not yet complete. Therefore, the preached *BIF* contains the life of the preacher as an essential component.

Second, the nature of the preached *BIF* itself must be understood as the progress of “sanctification.” This on-going progress is not limited for a specific period but it is required throughout the preacher’s life or that of the congregation and calling, in which discipleship is essential. During this training, the illocutionary force of Scripture will teach the hermeneutical imperative to the preacher as the Holy Spirit empowers the preaching material in order to accomplish the *God’s IPE* in modern words, and not only in the application of the sermon. Therefore, the preacher does not modify, but ministers Scripture.

Third, the preached *BIF* pays attention to the impact on both the linguistic level and the non-linguistic level. The Holy Spirit instructs the preacher and the congregation through the Bible so that it is indeed a divine illocution as well as a human locution. This is the so-called “internal witness” of the Spirit, by which the preacher confesses the Bible as the Word of God. The Spirit empowers the locution of the biblical text by impressing its *BIF* on the preacher. The preacher then sees and hears God’s speech act as warnings, commands, invitations,

promises, or pledges, etc. After that, the preacher can stand in the pulpit as well as serve (*under-stand*) the illocutionary force by the Holy Spirit.

These promising interdisciplinary approaches are simply neither utilizing the biblical text as a footnote in the sermon, nor suggesting a magic single homiletical methodology as the praxis of preaching. Rather, the *particular the witness of F(ps)is its re-conception that the preached BIF is the performance of God's Word*. Obviously, the Reformed tradition stresses that the biblical text is the foundation of the Christian life individually and as congregation the *message for the Church*. In this tradition, the text is not only the “written Scripture,” but it is also the living God at work in his word, in reference to Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, biblical texts were an indispensable part of the work of the Holy Spirit. Preaching is nothing more than a strict elaboration of the “acted text” in which Holy Spirit does not come to us as a timeless truth, but to give wisdom as its life giving energy. This wisdom is not only to stress the skill with which a preacher or the faith community gleans meaning from the text or seeks to translate the text in the contemporary world. It is the goal, so that we continuously perform God's intended perlocutionary effect in the modern world under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Being a Christian is nothing more than the performance of this wisdom found in the study of biblical passages under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All Christian action must be based on and activated by such a performance of texts in the preaching event. In this case, the aim of preaching is not only to carry or mention some religious experience or its theological concept in the preaching event; rather, preaching in itself becomes an interpretive performance of Scripture with the help of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, also SAT must re-introduce the sovereignty of God and the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ and thereby make

the homiletic confession give recognition to the fact that the Bible is God's authoritative speech act as *F(p)*; the *Holy Spirit(Jesus)*. Thus, the essence of preaching also in the SAT is basically a process of the movement from *BIF* to the preached *PHR* according to *God's IPE*. This movement is rightly one of production of meaning, leading to an appropriation of the "intended divine perlocutionary effect" (*IDPE*). The *IDPE* has already been appropriated by our Christian ancestors, but it should still be appropriable by appropriable the next generation of Christians. At this point, the SAT will create a new and alternative homiletic performance from text to sermon in the light of a continuous *IDPE* and its teleology. Therefore, preaching follows, in SAT terms the direction of *God's IPE*.

Subsequently, the next chapter will demonstrate an alternative homiletic performance from text to sermon in the light a continuous *IDPE*. The homiletical performance will follow the movement by *F(ps)* where *the Holy Spirit (a biblical content)* enables the Word of God in biblical preaching under particular valid conditions for directing the *IDPE* and its teleology. Furthermore, the chapter will contain a brief comparison of the hermeneutical processes in the biblical world with those of the modern world. It will suggest that an alternative homiletical bridge can be created from the biblical world to the modern world. Since the homiletical application of the SAT is not the only bridge between the speaker and the audience in the synchronic dialogue situation, in certain cases, for particular types of illocutionary force in the homiletical appropriation of Scripture. This homiletical bridge continues to play across time here and there according to the divinity illocutionary force. This role of SAT in preaching will offer new ways of thinking about the movement of the text to the sermon in true preaching in the modern world.

## CHAPTER 5

### ALTERNATIVE LOGIC FOR A HOMILETIC PERFORMANCE FROM TEXT TO SERMON BASED ON THE SEQUENCE OF ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE AND ITS PERLOCUTIONARY EFFECT

#### 5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the interface between SAT and biblical studies by showing how the application of SAT in biblical interpretation serves to elucidate important homiletic issues such as “Christ teleological preaching,” “the witness of the text as the preacher” and “God’s presence in the sermon.” The application of SAT in biblical interpretation allows important contributions to each of these homiletic issues according to the appropriation of the intended divine illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. At this point, the preached *F(ps)* neither simply utilizes the biblical text as a footnote in the sermon, nor suggests a single magical homiletic methodology as the praxis of preaching. Rather, the particular witness of *F(ps)* is basically the re-conception that the preached text is the performance of God’s illocutionary action. The homiletical logic in SAT obviously reiterates the Reformed legacy that the world of the text is not only the appropriable “passive written Scripture,” but rather it is the timeless performative action of the living God at work in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the essence of preaching in the SAT is basically a process of the movement from text to sermon according to God’s illocutionary action and its direction of fit. The movement is practically not only a matter of meaning production, it is also fundamentally a matter of appropriating the intended divine illocutionary action and its teleology.

The present chapter will consider the continuity of God’s illocutionary action and its direction of fit which suggest an alternative homiletic performance from text to sermon in the light of

SAT. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the role of God's illocutionary action and its direction of fit in the text in relation to the homiletic performance of the movement from text to sermon. This homiletic performance is often regarded as "bridging a gap." The gap is generally understood in terms of the so-called "problematic distinction" between what the biblical text "originally meant" and what it "means today" (see, Fowl and Jones 1991: 57). This movement between two worlds is a decisive event, which has been described metaphorically as the homiletic bridge illustrating the reciprocity between the world of the text and the real world (see, Cilliers 2004: 110). However, an alternative view in SAT considers that the act of bridging a gap is not only about the bridge between the biblical world and the modern world but it is also about the explication and the application or the re-plotting of the experience in the sermonic situation. In this regard, this chapter will offer a brief comparison of the concepts of homiletic bridge in the context of "the theme sentence centred homiletic bridge," "the plot-centred homiletic bridge" and "the SAT centred homiletic bridge." In particular, this chapter will examine how the three approaches understand the relationship between the biblical world and modern world in light of the totality of God's speech act. In certain cases of homiletic bridge in line with God's illocutionary force and its direction of fit, God's intended action will continue to play across time here and there according to the biblical illocutionary force and its inherited teleology. This alternative homiletic movement is not so much a case of bridging a theoretical gap between two different worlds, both reaching out with divine action and its outcome to the congregation. At this point, the SAT creates a new and alternative logic and its practical guidance for homiletic performance from text to sermon in the light of a continuous intended divine illocutionary action and its teleology. The study therefore will show how the SAT centred homiletic bridge follows an inherent movement in terms of the unique sequence of divine illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect.

### 5. 2. 1. Logic and the Goal of the Theme Sentence Centred Homiletic Bridge

The theme sentence centred homiletic bridge in biblical preaching traditionally placed a strong emphasis on exegesis as a means to find the original meaning of the text. It was realized that the original meaning of a text is transported by the theme sentence. The theme sentence is regarded to replicate or convey the original meaning of the text. Generally speaking, biblical preaching based on theme sentence was considered a mere repetition of the original meaning of the text. In order to perform the homiletic movement, the preacher's task is (1) to find the original meaning of the biblical text, (2) to apply that meaning to a existential situation, and (3) to identify how the original meaning of the biblical text ought to be understood and preached in relation to other possible homiletic meanings in the world of the congregation (see, Fowl and Jones 1991: 4).

The hermeneutic and homiletic solution of the movement from text to sermon was advocated by the proponents of this tradition in order to bridge the so-called gap between the ancient text and the sermonic content. The central task of the homiletic bridge was then to close the gap between the "biblical world" and the "contemporary world." It was argued that firstly, some central or main idea, some truth or moral principle in the text, should be determined exegetically. Secondly, the themes should be stated in a single sentence and the single sentence should be developed logically into a sermon.<sup>105</sup> Obviously, most preachers continue to use the *explication-application* model in their preaching. Miller (1957: 51-52), one of the advocates of this model, used the *explication-application* model in his proposal of the use of the homiletic bridge plea in biblical preaching. According to the author, preachers have to make a list of all the truths discovered in the exegetical process and finally distil from them

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<sup>105</sup> According to Rose (1997: 136), the conviction that the gist of every sermon should be stated in a single theme sentence is not restricted to traditional theory. It was an important component of the homiletical theory and remains one of the legacies of traditional homiletics that is hardest to break. For a critical analysis of this approach, see Long (2005b: 100-108).

the “topic” or content of the text. Ideally speaking, these biblical truths become a topical sermon of the homiletic reality (Ibid: 27). The textual content is represented by a single theme of the sermon. Therefore, it is argued that every sermon should have such a theme that is congruent with the theme of the text.

### **5. 2. 2. Illocutionary Stance of the Theme Sentence and its Limited Appropriation**

According to Broadus’ initial definition the theme sentence plays a major role in the textual “the proposition.” This propositional sentence “is a statement of the subject as the preacher proposes to develop it (1944: 54).” Thus, the theme sentence consists of a subject and a predicate used to explain the biblical truth (Cox 1985: 79). Once discovered, this truth is propositional; that is, the preacher can state it as a single theme sentence and then use it to develop the content of the sermon. From this, the process of developing the theme sentence into a sermon seems to be a performative event.

Even though Miller (1954: 21) followed Broadus’ initial emphasis on theme sentence preaching as one of the traditional expository preaching methods, he also focused on biblical preaching as an event. In his words, “Preaching is not mere speech; it is an event. In true preaching, *something happens*. Preacher and people are brought together by the living flame of truth, as oxygen and matter are joined in living encounter” (Miller 1957: 13). By and large, Miller’s understanding of preaching could imply a distinction between speech (locution level) and event (illocutionary level). Consequently, the preacher can develop a theme sentence for the content of the sermon so that the congregation could accept its message. He further developed this point in his book, “*Way to Biblical Preaching*” as follows:

Expository preaching is an act wherein *the living truth of some portion of Holy*

*Scripture*, understood *in the light of solid exegetical and historical study* and made a living reality to the preacher by the Holy Spirit, *come alive to the hearer* as he is confronted by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit in judgment and redemption (Miller 1957: 26; *my emphasis*).

If Miller regards expository preaching as a performative action, then it implies that preacher performs expository preaching according to “the *living truth of some portion of Holy Scripture*” through “*the light of solid exegetical and historical study*” in order to make its living reality “*come alive to the hearer*.” In other words, the preacher begins to develop the sermon, becoming the *living truth* of the biblical text as it intends to say and do, which becomes what expository preaching does. Even though Miller’s reference to “the *living truth of some portion of Holy Scripture*” is confirmed by solid exegetical and historical study, but this permanent truth is *living* and obviously it instructs both the constraints and guidance of expository preaching. Here, the motives that underlie Miller’s expository preaching suggest that in reading and preaching of Scripture, the role of the living element in parts of the text is one of the most important keys empowering expository preaching to become real biblical preaching.

Thus, “*solid exegetical and historical study*” involves the discernment of this living element. Whatever the living truth in the part of a text may be, it can be fixed with textual illocution in the SAT. This illocutionary stance of the *living truth* enables the preacher to perform expository preaching more biblically. Furthermore, we can find epistemological and practical similarities between the elements of expository preaching and elements of performative action in the totality of SAT: “*The living truth of some portion of Holy Scripture*” and the characteristic illocutionary action could be a matter of functional similarity; “*solid exegetical and historical study*” and locutionary action could exhibit similar content; “*come alive [its living reality] to the hearer*” and characteristic of the perlocutionary action could be similarly

matter of responsibility. In this case, ideal expository preaching could be related to all of these performative actions in terms of the total speech act.

Interestingly, this underplayed aspect of total speech act and its uncompleted performance of a theme sentence centred homiletic bridge have surfaced in recent issues in the so-called “double barrelled way.” According to Wilson (2004: 14-16), many homileticians continue to use the theme sentence in a “double barrelled way” when moving from text to sermon. His remark in this regard is noteworthy:

Many other homileticians speak of a theme sentence in double-barrelled ways. Harold T. Bryson and James C. Taylor wrote of paired terms, the “essence of the text in a sentence” and the “essence of the sermon in a sentence.” John Killinger, in 1985, the same year as Craddock’s *Preaching*, spoke of both an idea around which the sermon is composed and a separate “statement of purpose” about what he wants to happen in people’s minds. This contrasts with Craddock’s and Long’s emphasis on what they want people to do - a nonetheless related rhetorical thrust. Also in the same year, James Cox devoted separate chapter to the “central idea” and to the “aim” of the sermon. Concerning black preaching, Henry Mitchell spoke about a “controlling idea” and “behavioural purpose,” which sounds more socially directed than Craddock’s notion. Stephen Farris advocated a summary of the biblical text in one sentence that combines Long’s focus and function statements... More than that, these double-barrelled approaches to a theme sentence build into the theme sentence a hermeneutical transition between then and now; they are concerned with both saying and doing what the biblical text says and does, or what God in the biblical text says and does.

Even though most of their homiletic views about the theme sentence are conventionally understood as the description of a flat two-dimensional statement, if the preacher uses SAT, it more clearly serves their method, among others, albeit with variation and adaptation according to the total speech act. For example, each of these homileticians describes the movement from text to sermon as discerning “the major concern of the text” to be transported homiletically into “the concern of the sermon” (Wilson 1988: 86-90,112-127; 1995: 164-171);

the “essence of the text in a sentence” to be transported homiletically into the “essence of the sermon in a sentence” (Bryson and Taylor 1980: 52-68); the “central idea” to be transported homiletically into the “aim of sermon” (Cox 1985: 77-88); the “controlling idea” to be transported homiletically into the “behavioural purpose” (Mitchell 1990: 50).

The roles of the theme sentence in biblical texts are viewed as important ideas or propositions contained by them, waiting to be exposed and to be applied in a way that “the concern of the sermon” should emerge out of or supervene from the “the major concern of the text.” There is a characteristic relationship between illocutionary action and locution action in the SAT whereby the preacher can distinguish between different textual information and the inherent *theological* energy driving the sermon. This homiletic goal involves developing a sermon content that is proposed for not only the transported context of the text but also to transform our context according to the judgment and redemption of the Holy Spirit. The homiletical logic in the SAT would help the preacher to recognize that the biblical text itself is an illocutionary one. In fact, the biblical text in the SAT is a meaningful action before it is exposed and applied through an expert exposition. It is precisely the aspect of the total speech act and its force, what is done in saying or writing something, that the theme sentence centred bridge paradigm overlooks.

### **5.2.3 Assessment of the Theme Sentence Paradigm in the Homiletic Bridge According to the Total Speech Act**

If the SAT is true, the bridge paradigm of the theme sentence is possible and available to execute the biblical illocutionary force in the movement from text to sermon. We have pointed out that proponents of the theme sentence used as a homiletic bridge have overlooked the performative dimension of language or more accurately, its illocutionary action. Their

exegetical task in preaching usually concentrates on the locution level in the text. In this case firstly, the preacher has to look at the ancient text to find its “true” meaning, “unearthed” in the exegetical task. Then their major implication of a deductive movement begins with general propositions and moves to particular applications of general conclusions.

Therefore, the beginning part of the sermon usually explains what the ancient text meant and then the preacher swivels 180 degrees towards the congregation, asking the question: “Now, what does this mean for us today?” The paradigms of bridging a gap in the theme sentence thus struggle to describe a deep relationship in the sermon between the different stories, worlds and meanings. This thin and monotonous homiletic and hermeneutic description of moving from text to sermon allows the preached text implies to reduce the significance of the living voice of God. This major insensibility to the biblical and theological meaning in the SAT causes confusion between the textual illocutionary force and the empirical linguistic descriptions. This implies that preachers can say of the sermon what has been said of their theme sentence: “Jesus healed the haemorrhaging woman” becomes “Jesus heals us” or “Christ heals people today.”

However, this information about the theme sentence itself does not heal or save anyone; indeed, the Gnostics erred precisely on this point. If that were the case, the matter of knowledge alone could heal or save, but in the SAT, our physical and spiritual healing is only a matter of Jesus’ illocutionary force and its Messianic teleology. This impact of homiletic movement can be expressed in  $F(ps)$ : a warning “ $W(p)$ ,” a command “ $Com(p)$ ,” and a promise “ $Pr.(p)$ .” The homiletic bridge in the SAT, therefore, is not merely the act of changing a few words in order to determine sermonic statements, much less the old-fashioned idea that the sleeping text that must be redecored as a passing fad in a modern situation, but

the re-activation of an intended divine illocutionary action. The homiletic reception will be the basis for the biblical preaching and it can become perhaps the basis for homiletic communion; it is over space and time.

For example, we can consider the biblical passage, “Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” (Joshua 1:8). The conceptual approach in the Torah is not so much that you should merely read or study the Torah. Rather, its emphasis is that all of the generations of Israel should respond by engaging in God’s intended action (e.g., *assertive, directive, expressive*, etc.) according to the hope. This performative concept of the Torah is directly related to the purpose of God’s illocutionary action in which the priest makes a proclamation and the people respond. It especially requires not only a matter of locutionary description but rather of an illocutionary force as well.

In this regard, the preacher must infer or determine what illocutionary act has been performed in a particular biblical passage. The advantage is that the act enables better homiletic bridges. The homiletic movement based on the illocutionary action is not the only bridge between the ancient text and the modern congregation in the synchronic dialogue situation, but in certain cases, and for particular types of illocutionary force in the text, it continues to play across time here and there. Hence, a restatement of the “theme sentence” in SAT should be replaced within the reactivation of its illocutionary stance, enabling the preacher to move from text to sermon according to its original purpose. The characteristics of the illocutionary action could provide an alternative account of the appropriation of Scripture in preaching. Despite the importance of this matter, there has been too little careful discussion about how moving from text (biblical world) to sermon (contemporary worlds) is clearly understood based on the

biblical illocutionary action and its divine intention.

Therefore, if the preacher stresses the totality of the function of the SAT in the movement from text to sermon, it would primarily focus on how we can preach the living voice of God in the modern world. The case of bridging a gap in SAT is not merely a matter of unravelling a code, but rather a matter of re-enacting the intended divine action. This is a performance based on the inherent intended force of the text and its outcome. The homiletic and hermeneutic assumption in SAT is that the text is not any more passive as it contains a gem-like truth, a nugget of gold hidden in the barren earth of the text. Rather, the SAT centred movement from text to sermon is the best view of homiletic bridge as actions performed on a variety of levels for our contemplation.

### **5.3.1. Conviction of Plot and its Effect on the Plot-centred Homiletic Bridge**

An important conviction of a plot-centred homiletic bridge is reflected in the following critical comment on a sermon: “It wrestled tolerably well with the idea of transparency but conveyed the experience of transparency less ably” (Sider and King 1987: 16). Whatever else a sermon does, its primary purpose and advantage in homiletic re-plotting are not to explain the biblical text as part of the homiletic plot which serves to promote an experience, an event, a meeting, or a happening for the congregation (Rose 1997: 60). The goal of the homiletic plot movement from text to sermon “should seek to enlarge upon a series of events rather than to draw out ideas or build up a system of dogma and morality” (Randolph 1969: 234). In short, if the paradigm of plot-centred homiletic bridge works very well, its sermonic content can help the congregation not only to “hear about forgiveness” but also “feel forgiven” (Salmon 1988: 96).

In order to achieve this type of homiletic goal, preachers should re-shape their sermon form according to a single sequence. In this regard, Lowry identifies the function of this sequence in homiletic plotting in his recent work:

Sometimes I have employed the term plotted preaching. Other writers have differing terminology for similar commitments. Fred Craddock once spoke of “inductive preaching,” Lucy Rose moved toward “conversational preaching,” David Buttrick preferred “plotted mobility,” Charles Rice focused on “story preaching” and Henry Mitchell spoke of the sermonic route toward “celebration”... So at the heart of the matter, what is it precisely that in spite of several key differences joins these similar theorists together? Clearly, I believe, it is that all of us have focused on the crucial concern about *sequence*. Whether Mitchell is moving toward the sermonic celebration, Buttrick pressing toward a new corporate consciousness, Rose putting matters into an ongoing conversation, Rice telling a story, or Craddock talking about the necessity of anticipation within the sermon—all are talking about *temporal sequence* as basic to the preaching event. I call it *narrativity* –not an optional choice for the sermon, but the central thread, the formative principle of what the sermon is (Lowry 2012:5-6; *his emphasis*).

Especially interesting in the above quotation is Lowry’s claim that the preaching event is basically a process movement according to time sequence in which the preaching event itself becomes a single temporal sequence. This type of homiletic consideration shares with narratology the emphasis on the identification of sequence in the narrative text as an important contribution to the reading experience and the enjoyable reading process.<sup>106</sup> According to Russian formalists, plot (*sujet*) is called the “narrative structure” or “narrative logic” which is considered as a simple synopsis of the temporal-causal sequence in a narrative text (see, Abrahams 1993: 137).<sup>107</sup> Since the characteristic narrative logic applies in

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<sup>106</sup> Since the 1960s, leading scholars in philosophical theology have argued that human existence is experienced in terms of plot. The same is true of philosophers of cognitive science, who progressively design the plot as the fundamental organisational principle of the mind. For further information on the nature of plot, see G.W. Stroup, *The promise of Narrative Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1987); M. Turner, *The Literary Mind: The Origins of Thought and Language* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); D. Cupitt, *What is a Story?* (London: SCM Press, 1991).

<sup>107</sup> After Aristotle, scholars have understood that every plot must have a beginning, middle, and an end, which

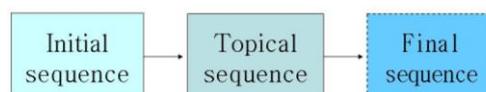
homiletic theory, the preacher constructs the preaching content in sequence, and then, the contribution of the plotted sequence on the sermon to help the congregation to experience the preaching theme in the preaching event.<sup>108</sup> The purpose of plotted preaching and its utility value are to promote a sermonic event that changes the congregation's values, worldviews, or reality. As a result, the congregation can experience and find sermon coherence and its effect in a single plotted sequence.

### 5.3.2. Illocutionary Stance of a Plotted Sequence and its Role in the Homiletic Experience

In practical terms, three contemporary homileticians namely Davis, Craddock, and Lowry recognize that continuity of the temporal-causal sequence is necessary to promote an effective sermon form in order to create a homiletic experience. Among their legacies are three particular forms namely the story-sermon (Davis 1958: 157), the inductive sermon (Craddock 1979: 79), and the narrative sermon (Lowry 1980: 15). First of all, Davis's primary legacies in the homiletic appropriation of temporal-causal sequence and its illocutionary stance are his findings regarding "an audible movement in time" (1958: 22).

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form a logical connection with one another. This conventional understanding has influenced Greimas, who claims that the fundamental narrative structure is composed of three "sequences," which he designates as the "initial sequence," the "topical sequence," and the "final sequence." Thus structure of the narrative sequence can be described in the simple diagram below (Hays 2002: 85):



These initial and final sequences are called "correlated sequences," because they are related to one another in a very specific way: the final sequence represents the completion of a task that was somehow stymied in the initial sequence or the re-establishing of an order that was disrupted in the initial sequence. The "topical" sequence is so called because it forms the centre of attention ("topic") of the story. A single story may have several topical sequences (the more complex the story, the more of these are likely to appear), but it need have only one. For more information on narrative sequence, see Greimas, Algirdas Julien. "Narrative grammar: units and levels." *MLN*, 86/6 (1971), pp. 793-806.

<sup>108</sup> For this homiletical development and its theoretical application, see especially Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form* (1978). Lowry (1978:25) suggests five stages in the homiletical plot which show a temporal-causal sequence of events: "1) upsetting the equilibrium, 2) analyzing the discrepancy, 3) disclosing the clue to resolution, 4) experiencing the gospel, and 5) anticipating the consequence."

This sequence centred homiletic bridge does not first discern the sermon's message and then design a sermon's form to communicate its content (Ibid: 21). Instead, Davis's approach to the sermon's form grows organically out of "the inherent force of the narrative" (Ibid: 161). This continuity from text to sermon in the plotted preaching in Davis's opinion is "the power of a narrative to communicate meaning and influence the lives of our people" (Ibid: 158). In this case, we recognize that the illocutionary stance of a narrative can communicate to the preacher to join in contemplating it, evaluating it, and responding to it in order to design a sermon form. Similarly, Craddock's (1985: 122-123) remark in this regard is noteworthy:

What is the text doing? Because a text is a communication from one person to another or to others, the text is doing as well as saying. A mother talking to a child is not just saying; she is doing, as is a physician at a bedside, a comedian before an audience, a politician before a crowd, friends over dinner, and a preacher in the pulpit. As things are being said, persons are *informing, correcting, encouraging, confessing, celebrating, covenanting, punishing, confirming, debating, or persuading*. Here, then, one is simply asking what the text is doing. This question is not only identifying the nature and function of the text but is also providing an early guideline for the sermon to come. After all, the preacher will want to be clear not only about what is being said in the sermon but also about what is being done in the sermon [*my emphasis*].

Especially interesting in the above quotation is Craddock's identification of several actions such as *informing, correcting, encouraging, confessing, celebrating, covenanting, punishing, confirming, debating, or persuading*. All the verbs are classified in the SAT as illocutionary actions. Furthermore, Lowry (1985: 49) describes the communicative process within the illocutionary stance of the narrative hypothetically as follows:

You begin sermon preparation on an Old Testament narrative. You already know what you're going to say—sort of. But then the passage begins leading you down a new road. Perhaps you are paraphrasing a scene out loud to yourself, and then you begin saying things and seeing things you'd never thought before.

This inherent force for example of the Old Testament narrative can entertain and engender preacher involvement. In this case, the illocutionary stance of the narrative text is not only a repetition of sermonic material but also a particular force through which the preacher interacts with the text and then performs the meaning of the text for the congregation according to its illocutionary stance. On this point, Lowry and Craddock seem to be interested in the sermon basically as an experience for the congregation. They both advocate a sermonic form that aims to shape an experience for the congregation by recreating the preacher's interaction with the inherent force of the text. The inherent force is clearly the illocutionary stance in the relationship between the biblical narrative and the plotted preaching. Arguably, they can confront the illocutionary stance in their reading and preaching of the text. In other words, the illocutionary stance of the sermonic types bore fruit in the work of Craddock whose inductive method is similar to Davis' (1958:175-77) inductive continuity, and of Lowry, whose narrative method is similar to Davis' (1958:180-84) chronological and narrative continuity. Obviously, each of their progress from text to sermon could be designed based directly on the illocutionary stance in the context of the communicative effect. The appropriation of the illocutionary stance concerns the reason behind the preacher's reading experience which becomes the foundation of the congregation's homiletic experience according to their homiletic legacies.

### **5.3.3. Assessment of the Plot-centred Homiletic Bridge and its Sequence according to the Total Speech Act**

It is clear that the illocutionary stance promotes an effective interaction between the biblical text and the preacher's reading experience whereby the preacher can re-plot the sermon form in order to re-enact the same experience for the congregation. There are two kinds of continuity in this re-plotted preaching: first, with regard to the synchronic sequence in the sermon form; and second, with regard to the diachronic sequence between the biblical

illocutionary action and its homiletical response. Theoretically, in SAT, even though sequence is produced and is available in both ways, the sequence generative energy is completely different. First, the role of homiletical experience in the preacher's reading experience in designed plotting is: To preach that the preacher's reading experience designed by the sermonic sequence means something to the sermon form is to say that a particularly preacher's reading experience intended the utterance of sermon content to produce some effect in the congregation by means of the recognition of this sequence in the sermonic content. This view shows clearly that the preacher's reading experience produces an effect of sequence on the congregation. The definition seems plausible, yet it requires further examination, because it confuses illocutionary with perlocutionary acts when they overemphasize the homiletic experience as the goal of preaching. Simply put, whatever the preacher experienced in reading is clearly part of the perlocutionary act.

In other words, the illocutionary action in the biblical text through the sequence in the sermon succeeds in doing what the biblical text attempts to do, getting the congregation to recognize what the sermon content is trying to get across. Consequently, the preacher can never abide by the "Thank you for the nice sermon!" comment of the members of the congregation at the end of the sermon. Sermons are never "nice." Besides, the sermonic effect on the congregation in SAT is not based solely on the sermonic form which is designed by preacher's experience and its purpose. It consists simply in the congregation and preacher's understanding of the illocutionary action in the biblical text.

In order to avoid error in the homiletical experience, the SAT proposes an alternative definition of the homiletical experience in terms of sequence, namely, that the preacher intends to produce the homiletic sequence according to the illocutionary effect on the

congregation. The preacher does this by getting the congregation to recognize the intention of the illocutionary effect to produce a sequence from the biblical text to the preaching event not only in the sermon form. According to this definition, the homiletic experience is specifically a matter of illocution, not perlocution. Ideally, a complete understanding of the temporal-causal sequence in the homiletic bridge according to SAT involves an agreement on all the three levels of action (locution, illocution and perlocution) between the world of the text and the preached text. According to SAT, the purpose of the homiletic experience is to try and accomplish the illocutionary action. In this case, the successful preaching event occurs only when there is a response to the illocutionary force within an apparent sequence of the illocutionary stance.

At this point, we may conclude that the ideal homiletical experience in SAT as an event is the outcome of illocutionary actions. To summarize, if the preacher proclaims the biblical text (locution level), the preacher can perform the “preachable” event according to the textual illocutionary action. This illocutionary action has a particular force, which suggests an alternative goal of the homiletic experience in communication, that is, the illocutionary force creates the homiletic response in the context of the homiletic experience. Thus, the preacher brings about an apparent homiletic perlocutionary action. It is possible to distinguish between the illocutionary action created by the homiletic event and the preacher designed homiletic event. This homiletical difference is creating and available as being confronted by an illocutionary effect.

In this regard, the homiletic sequence in SAT is not so much about re-plotting what the preacher intends to happen by way of the sermonic design. When the preacher prepares a sermon using the illocutionary action of the text, the preacher does not merely design an

attractive sermonic structure using a sensorial experience. The preacher tries to demonstrate how the biblical illocutionary force works together as its continuity is simultaneously performed through the sequence of illocutionary direction in the text. This homiletic reality is created by the illocutionary continuity performed by the divine action. It is one continuous act, not created by an individual stance. Therefore, there is nothing in sermonic plot designed by preachers until they recognize the illocutionary stance in God's living language by which their sermon performs the sequence of God's living illocutionary voice on a broken world.

#### **5.4.1. Alternative Logic of the SAT Centred Homiletic Bridge in Term of the Continuous Divine Illocutionary Action**

The movement from text to sermon according to SAT suggests an alternative logic in such a way as to avoid the familiar standoff between "what the text meant" and "what the text means" in a homiletic context. Perhaps this is the most important point about the homiletic movement in which the continuous divine illocutionary action offers an integrative and balanced account of all the many factors that go into a biblical text's encounter by a preacher and the congregation. In fact, the continuity of *God's illocutionary force and its intended perlocutionary effect* in the Scripture *move* the preacher and congregation towards a transforming life experience. This of course is exactly what was proclaimed by the prophet in Isaiah 55:11; "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." Something about this biblical text is encountered as being transformative, and yet the nature of the transformation in God's word does not depend on the degree of the understanding or response of the receiver. The nature of God's word is already some of the characteristics of a continuous divine illocutionary force. This continuous act can be expressed in  $F(ps)$ : a command " $Com(p)$ ," a promise " $Pr.(p)$ " and a warning " $W(p)$ ." Specifically, in the force of a divine illocutionary action with reference to a canonical content in the appropriation of God's

covenant, the proposition of His covenant counts as a promise “*Pr.(covenant)*.”

In other words, the movement from text to sermon is a process of re-enacting His covenant or reclaiming of His promise in the modern world. In God’s total speech acts in keeping with His promise, there are no locutionary acts in a propositional-historical format (what the text meant; canonical covenant) with a meaning that shows completely a “past-event.” Rather, the propositional content of His covenant is expressed as it is always accomplished within the performance of the divine continuous illocutionary action and its outcome in the present. This is the effect it is designed to achieve.

Similarly, Calvin’s exposition of 2 Corinthians 3:6 (“for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”) is also germane to his understanding of Scripture in terms of God’s total speech acts between the illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. His remark in this regard is as follows:

This passage has been distorted and wrongly interpreted first by Origen and then by others, and they have given rise to the most disastrous error that Scripture is not only useless but actually harmful unless it is allegorized. This error has been the source of many evils... The terms ‘letter’ and ‘Spirit’ have nothing to do with methods of expounding Scripture but with *its force and fruit* (Calvin and Smal 1964: 43; *my emphasis*).

This quote clearly shows, what Calvin meant by the *force* and *fruit* of Scripture according to the “letter” and “Spirit” in 2 Corinthians 3:6 depends, in Calvin’s view, on the broader narrative, indeed the canonical context. Calvin, acquainted as he was with the scholarship of Renaissance humanism, was well-versed in rhetoric and had no difficulty understanding that texts do not merely say something, but do something. Indeed, Calvin probably knew that it was important to distinguish between the illocutionary force (the act performed in saying the

words) and the outcome of its perlocutionary effect (the act of using words to do something) on reading and preaching the text.

Homiletically, Long (2005b: 106) emphasizes the importance of the movement from text to sermon based on the understanding that texts do not merely say something, but do something:

The bridge must be able to bear *the traffic of both word and event*. The preacher should bring to the sermon both what the text says and what the text does; or, to put it another way, what the text does by its saying [*my emphasis*].

Restated in terms of the present argument, Long's movement from text to sermon seems to avoid the compelling account more than a false polarization between words to say something intelligible and the act performed in saying the words. In fact, Long proposes a kind of homiletic bridge that moves neither deductively from abstract, cognitive propositions nor inductively from human experience, but rather operates as an act that is performed in the exposition of the text itself. He suggests that the preacher should carefully distinguish the biblical illocutionary action (event in his words) from the propositional content of Scripture (as word). In his view this is precise, the homiletic bridge expressed in the SAT as a matter of continuous divine illocutionary action: both the "doing" and the resultant "deed."

This divine illocutionary action model of the homiletic bridge provides the best account both of the possibility of stable biblical meaning and of the possibility of the transformative capacity of the preached text. This has been a problem ever since Dodd's "*The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*." According to Dodd (1936: 7-8), the apostolic preaching has been commonly used to draw a heavy distinction between teaching (*didache*) and the powerful summons of preaching (*kerygma*). In this case, the distinction between teaching and

preaching according to “what the text meant” and “what the text means” is an oversimplification but an alternative view in terms of the total SAT as a transformation of spirit and attitude that allows us to receive the text as the living voice of God. As a result of this action, the distinction between teaching and preaching should be taken more seriously than the our outcome after teaching as well as preaching according to the driving force in the divine illocutionary action of the text or some other thing.

Furthermore, this alternative logic of the continuous divine illocutionary action centred on the homiletic bridge might not be so much a matter of only bridging the gap between two worlds, but rather of a continuous illocutionary force (e.g. *assertive, directive, expressive*, etc.), and how it produces fruit in the real world. Thus, there can be continuity between the “biblical world” and the “contemporary world” in terms of the continuous divine illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. Within this homiletic understanding of SAT, the issue of a continuous divine illocutionary action from the biblical text to sermon can be, at least in some cases, organic rather than artificial. This is not principally a statement about method in exegesis or homiletical theory; rather, it is an essential aspect of the Christian faith as *God’s performative action* in human history according to His promise.

This continuous divine illocutionary action is an alternative framework to read the locutionary action in Scripture, which construes our lives, and so challenges those who would be Christians by calling for a creative reformation in Christ within the perlocutionary action as the confession of their faith. At this point, the reality of moving from text to sermon in SAT consists of its “objective content” (*viz., matter*), “illocutionary force” (*viz. energy*) and “perlocutionary effect” (*viz. responsibility*). The goal of building the homiletic bridge by using the three elements is not, in any case, to demonstrate the superiority of any method to

obtain a satisfactory homiletic movement, but it is to facilitate the evaluation of public criteria for whichever hermeneutical and homiletic method is useful in achieving the goal of preaching as a nutritionally balanced meal for the modern church. Brümmer (1981: 11) has suggested the concept of “per-illocution”, that is, “evoking an intended response in a hearer by performing an illocution.”<sup>109</sup> A paraphrase of Brümmer’s concept of “per-illocution” in our homiletic goal of the SAT would be *evoking an intended homiletic response in the preached text by performing a biblical illocutionary action on the text*. This is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for explaining that preaching is biblically the Word of God in the modern world. Furthermore, it facilitates the evaluation of the difference between preaching the word of God and preaching other things.

#### **5.4.2. Practical Guidelines for the Performance of the Movement from Text to Sermon in SAT**

The SAT takes place in a practical social context and according to the use of a specific linguistic convention (see, Searle 1969: 37). This not only means that certain grammatical rules are relevant to the speech act, but that “the way people produce and understand literary works [or nay other specific mode of language use] depends enormously on unspoken culturally shared knowledge of the rules, convention and expectation that are in play when language is used in that context” (Pratt 1977: 86). These non-linguistic and un-displayed elements can be assumed to provide appropriate conditions for a better understanding of the speech acts of the biblical characters. As Botha (1991: 88) notes in his SAT centred reading of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42, “aspects such as the social status of women and men, use of vocatives, forms of address, relationships between Jews and Samaritans, religious practices, morality concerning marriage, and so on are

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<sup>109</sup>Brümmer’s (1981: 11) “per-illocution” or Brown’s (2007: 111) “perlocutionary intention” is largely undeveloped in the study by Austin and Searle as well as in homiletic theory.

relevant here.”<sup>110</sup>

The reality of the culturally shared knowledge of the rules, conventions and religious practices offers us certain practical guidelines for a better understanding of the speech acts of the characters in biblical narratives. The guidelines create the so-called “institutional facts” in the SAT (Searle 1969: 51). In particular, one of the religious institutional facts was produced when Jesus used the term *ἐγὼ εἶμι* in John 4:26; the *ἐγὼ εἶμι* form was usually ascribed to God (Botha 1991: 159). Furthermore, this conventional and religious context recognizes the following three aspects of Jesus’ speech act in John 4:26:

- (1) Jesus *utters* a specific sentence, “I who speak to you am he” (locution action).
- (2) Jesus *asserts* (his statement) to the Samaritan woman (illocution action).
- (3) Jesus performs an assertive action which *causes* a specific response in the Samaritan woman; for example, Jesus’ assertive action *causes* the Samaritan woman to believe him as Messiah (perlocution action).

From the above, in a certain sense Jesus’ utterance is the basis for the performance of an illocution and perlocution action: the speech is a clear illocutionary action and is a separate issue from the perlocutionary one. It does not matter whether the Samaritan woman believed Jesus as the divine Messiah or not, nothing could change the fact of Jesus’ Messianic

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<sup>110</sup> Botha (1991: 87) stresses the unspoken culturally shared knowledge of the rules of conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4:1-42 thus:

- “\*Jesus and the woman meet as complete strangers.
- \*They encounter each other in a ‘foreign’ country; that is Samaria.
- \*There are allusions to the patriarchs and worship—shared knowledge between them.
- \*Jesus is a *male Jew*—she is a *female Samaritan*. An impossible conversation in terms of the socio-historical context.
- \*They are alone, which is also socially unacceptable.
- \*Jews and Samaritans do not share cooking or eating utensils” (*his italics*).

illocutionary action and its intended effect. On this point, Jesus' Messianic illocution action triggers a specific utterance in the biblical text, just as any preaching of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman in the SAT is a creative and imaginative re-enactment of the biblical illocutionary action of the text. From this, the preached text becomes a perlocutionary action, that is, when biblical illocutionary forces cause a specific response in the preached text. According to this reality, the homiletic movement in SAT may be defined as the designation of the desired consequence or outcome of a certain divine intended perlocutionary effect.

The point is clear that the preached text in the homiletic perlocution action does not depend so much on the sermonic design or the different abilities of the preacher to entertain in the attempt to fabricate or manipulate the living voice of God. Rather, the homiletic perlocution action is the process of conjecturing the intended outcome of the divine perlocution action as sequence of divine illocutionary act. The homiletic perlocutionary effect is demonstrated clearly in Hebrews 1:1: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at *many times* and in *various ways*." Surprisingly, this point is in a sense made by linguistic philosophers with no avowed interest in biblical interpretation or homiletical theory who claim that:

[A]ny verb at all that names an intentional action could be uttered performatively. All depends on facts about how the world works and not on the meaning of action verbs. Because of His supernatural power, God can use performatively many more verbs than we can (Vanderveken and Kubo 2001:8).

Both the biblical authors and modern linguistic philosophers seem to agree that the divine performative dimension the of Word of God is clear and is a primitive concept that cannot be explained by something more basic that could show how God speaks to people today in the

context of preaching. The illocutionary stance in the divine discourse, also in the Bible has a kind of causality; a power to actualize the homiletic practice. This homiletic belief in the divine illocutionary action rests on the claim that God acts in the world in a variety of ways in order to realize his purpose (Brümmer 1992: 108). It is simply the illocutionary stance taken toward whatever be the content of the illocutionary element which dramatically increases our biblical imagination (Wolterstorff 1995: 243). The capacity of the illocutionary stance of the biblical text invites the preacher to see reading and preaching as an imaginative process. Simply put, the illocutionary stance offers the preacher an imaginative approach and a guideline to the homiletic appropriation of the biblical text.

This, of course, is exactly what happened in Jonah 3-4, where the prophet preached God's message to the great city of Nineveh. Even though the locutionary level of God's message of judgment is clear, it was not achieved because the result was to be mercy and not judgment. The change of plan upset Jonah and he became very angry. However, if Jonah prepared his message of God's judgment in an imaginative and creative way depending on its illocutionary stance, he would have performed God's message with a flexible heart. The imaginative thinking would have overcome his ethnocentrism. Although Jonah's locution centred preaching probably lacked imaginative power, Jonah understood and performed his mission in an imaginative way that enabled the congregation to enter into a creative and imaginative new reality. This creative approach enabled Jonah's congregation to dream that the children of Israel and the children of Nineveh could pray and worship together before God. The imaginative process from text to sermon in the SAT does not give a final preachable meaning to appropriate a closed text at the locutionary level, but it is a case of finding meaning and possibilities of appropriation inside the opened text at the illocutionary level.

The homiletic imaginative movement according to the divine performative action could help the preacher to recognize the characteristics of the continuous divine illocutionary action as well as its purpose in a new, imaginative and creative way. The particular homiletic interest in the desired consequence or outcome of God's perlocutionary effect of Scripture is accelerated in the preaching of particular biblical passages, for example: "Son, your sins are forgiven." (Mark 2:5); "Don't be afraid; just believe." (Mark 5:36); "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5). These biblical passages do not only describe biblical realities, they could equally have to do with reconstructing biblical reality in the modern world as the preacher and the congregation both arrive at a major passageway to bridge gaps between the ancient text and the modern world.

To put it simply, Scripture has its *illocutionary force* in which a revealed written text is part of a past event but its energy and theological purpose are continuously being echoed through the unique *sequence* of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect which is a created alternative reality in the modern world. It is like the utterance, "You are fired" in the SAT example. The continued illocutionary energy and its teleology in the Scripture offer an alternative methodological appropriation of the homiletic movement in terms of the sequence of the illocutionary point. This homiletic movement is not a repetition of the biblical text but a re-performance of the desired consequence, outcome or expectation of the intended perlocutionary effect on the preacher and the congregation. It is like "You are on fire" (Act 2:3). The homiletic reality is thus not so much in the reading of texts; that is not where the magic lies – it is in the re-reading driven by the Holy Spirit that a magic emerges to the unexpected amazement of the preacher and the congregation.

#### **5.4.3. Types of Homiletic Bridge in Terms of the Direction of Fit and its Canonical**

## Reflection

The SAT points out that the illocutionary action could create a reality in the real world in which some illocutionary actions are designed to show a particular direction (Searle 1976: 3). The “illocution point” determines the kind of direction between the propositional content and the world in order to represent place of the object in the world. This has to do with how the propositional contents match the world through the purpose of the illocutionary point. Whenever an elementary illocutionary act is performed in an actual context of utterance, a successful fit between language and the world is required (Vanderveken 2001: 32). This necessity is called the “direction of fit,” and it plays a key role in understanding the logic of the sequence of the illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect (Searle 1979: 3-4).

In this regard, the SAT suggests that there are basically five types of speech act namely *assertives*, *directives*, *commissives*, *expressives* and *declarations* (Searle 1979: 10-16). Often, the speaker does more than one of these at once in the same utterance.

The *assertives*: utterances which say how things are

The *directives*: utterances which try to get others to do things

The *commissives*: utterances which commit us to doing things

The *expressives*: utterances which express our feelings and attitudes

The *declarations*: utterances which bring about changes

Therefore, the classification of illocutionary acts is precisely the distinction between different illocutionary points. The distinction shows how the textual intentionality enables the same proposition to count as illocutionary acts such as a warning “*W(p)*,” blessing “*B(p)*,” promise “*Pr(p)*” etc. Regarding biblical examples, the utterance “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased” (Mark 1:11) would be characterized as *assertive*; “How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD Almighty!” (Psalm 84:1) would be characterized as *expressive*;

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20) would be characterized as *commissive*; while “And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” (Genesis 1:3) would be characterized as *declaration*. Presumably, this characteristic of illocutionary points and its “direction of fit” in the biblical text cannot stand as an analogy but as a paradigm for certain types of homiletic movement from text to sermon. Its certain homiletic state can enable one to specify which “direction of fit” these biblical texts fall. However, the sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect, the category of “direction of fit,” suggest different types of homiletic bridge in terms of performative action, not mechanical decoding.

The point behind these differences of intentionality in the “direction of fit” between words and the world of the homiletic bridge is that once the preacher has correctly identified or decoded a homiletic idea (propositional content), the performance from text to sermon is not yet complete. Equally important is it to determine that the biblical illocutionary act can create potential preaching contents as the outcome of the sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. For this hermeneutical and homiletic similarity between the direction of fit and the homiletic bridge is simply not a matter of conveying information but of conveying God’s very person – a conveying of communicative as well as informative intentions.

This of course is exactly what Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.” The most important contribution of reading 2 Timothy 3:16 in the light of SAT is that it helps the preacher to break free of the tendency to either reduce the homiletic goal to individual experience or attend only to the propositional content of Scripture. In both, the unsuitable homiletic appropriation of the biblical text, homiletic movements are only concerned with *F*

or  $(p)$ ; however the homiletic movement in the SAT should pay further attention to the outcome of the homiletic goal in the “direction of fit” from the biblical text to the sermon as  $F(p)$ . In other words, the preacher must ask the question: “Is the illocutionary force  $F$  of this propositional content  $(p)$  really intended to be the outcome of this intended perlocutionary effect?”

The biblical text inherently does not only display worlds but in displaying them also takes up some normative stance toward these worlds. This inherent biblical reality will surface through the sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. The inherent character of Scripture affirms that biblical language is transformative as well as informative. Hence, the performance of the homiletic movement from text to sermon is interested in the pragmatics as well as the semantics of language. That is, any homiletic movement in SAT is neither simply  $p$  nor simply  $F$  but  $F(p)$  in which this propositional subject cannot stand on its own. Therefore, the homiletic movement in the SAT should pay attention to the dual nature of the sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect. The homiletic bridge is the operative concept, for it has to do with both the capacity to act and the related notion of responsibility for action. This is a rejection of a bad homiletic practice in which preachers are free to fabricate or manipulate the Word of God to serve their own purpose and the congregation’s interests. The movement from text to sermon is the result of homiletic purity according to God’s total speech act, of what a textual illocutionary action has done in tending to its direction of fit at a particular time and in a specific manner.

In order to achieve this process, the homiletic bridge should imitate the biblical author’s attention as  $F(p)$  in the context of different biblical genres. If the purpose of Scripture is most often not merely to inform, but to do something else such as asserting God’s promise,

comfort, warning, etc. These dynamic divine illocutionary actions produce a diversity of generic illocution and its diversity of canonical illocutionary acts. Vanhoozer's (2002: 193) remark in this regard is noteworthy:

In other words, each of the major forms of biblical literature has its own characteristic illocutionary forces: wisdom ("commending a way"), apocalyptic ("encouraging endurance"), prophecy ("recalling covenant promises and obligations") and so on. To describe and ascribe generic illocutionary acts, then, is to say what an author is doing in his text considered as a whole.

Therefore, the assigned "generic illocutionary acts" are very important in the homiletic movement with its close affinity to the values of the biblical author performance in relation to God's illocutionary acts on their generic style. This means we can read and study also elements of non-biblical origin an Ugarit treaty, letter, parable and poetry in each of the biblical genres from different perspectives such as the historical background, grammatical rules, author's style and cultural importance. However, all must take into account what God is doing at the canonical level, that is, "instructing the believing community; testifying to Christ; and perhaps most obviously, covenanting" (Vanhoozer 2002: 195). This is a key aspect in answering the question of how the preacher can use literary forms of the Bible to preach biblically.

The point is that some biblical illocutionary acts may be associated with the canonical level rather than with the revealed forms. Put simply, an emphasis on speech acts invites an alternative canonical understanding of Scripture in terms of "Scripture Acts." Vanhoozer (2002: 192) gives the example of the book of Jonah in this regard:

I believe the author to be satirizing religious complacency and criticizing ethnocentrism. The illocutionary act of "satirizing" emerges only at the literary level, that is, at the level of the text considered as a completed communicative act.

Note that to describe this generic illocution is to describe the communicative act that structures the whole text.

The issue at stake in reading and preaching of the Scripture for its illocutionary point is not merely linked to the level of meaning or content and its rhetorical effect on particular areas of the selected biblical passage. Rather, the homiletic movement in SAT asks about the act that is performed in its canonical context. The homiletic task should pay attention to classifying illocutionary acts in the genre of a selected biblical passage as well as to classify the canonical illocutionary action in its canonical context. True preaching therefore endeavours neither to retell the same propositional content nor to redesign the same experience of depending on manipulative aesthetic elements. But rather, it aims at obtaining the same response for a canonical action. The homiletic bridge in SAT is thus largely a matter of following directions: the performance from text to sermon in SAT is not working out what the individual interests or even the generic differences are, but performing the biblical illocutionary action on a canonical level renders preaching as the Word of God.

## **5. 5. Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter has investigated an alternative framework for the homiletic bridge on the basis of the sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect using the SAT. In order to understand the role of the unique sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect, we have compared two types of existing homiletic movements from text to sermon namely, in the context of the “theme sentence centred homiletic bridge” and “plot-centred homiletic bridge” according to a total speech act. Even though the homiletical epistemology in moving from text to sermon appears to utilize the SAT in parts, especially at the locution and the perlocution levels. But there are two significant homiletic errors in this performance of homiletic movement from text to sermon.

Firstly, most cases of “theme sentence centred homiletic bridges” merely concentrate on the locution level in a biblical passage. The major role of the deductive movement starts with general propositions and progresses to particular applications of general conclusions. Therefore, the performance from text to sermon in theme sentence centred homiletic bridges is not good enough in using the biblical illocutionary force to make a satisfactory homiletic bridge. Secondly, most attempts of “plot-centred homiletic bridges” place too much stress on the homiletic experience as the goal of preaching in which the preacher confuses the illocutionary action with the perlocutionary action. This confusion comes from a lack of homiletic sensitivity regarding how to recognize a preaching event produced from the preacher’s reading experience or a preaching event produced from the word of God.

Consequently, the current homiletical epistemology in moving from text to sermon not only eclipses the living voice of God, it fatally distorts His intended action in the modern world. The underplayed sequence of illocutionary force and its perlocutionary effect on the movement from text to sermon constrain both the “theme sentence centred homiletic bridge” and “plot-centred homiletic bridge” to offer only a thin description of the performance of the movement from text to sermon. Therefore, the preacher becomes a literalist or aestheticist. It goes from bad to worse through these filtering systems as the preached text too easily becomes the word of God with a thin description of empirical referents, while the mysterious living voice of God is silenced in the preaching process. Consequently, the case of bridging the gap in the movement from text to sermon is insufficient to propose a comprehensive efficacy of the world of biblical text and its divine illocutionary action as well as its force.

In order to rethink the homiletic bridge in light of SAT, the following three questions provide a framework for our approach:

- (1) *Which unspoken culturally shared knowledge of the rules, convention and expectation governs the character's speech act in a selected biblical passage?*
- (2) *What kind of illocutionary action is being performed in the character's speech act in a selected biblical passage?*
- (3) *How does  $F(p)$  in the text determine the kind of direction of fit for opening up alternative perlocutionary effects in the context of the canonical illocutionary action ?*

Even though each question is distinct, they are connected through the interdependence of our interpretative methodology. In this sense, preaching can be understood metaphorically as surfing. Even though a surfer looks like he/she is standing on the surface of the water, the performance completely responds with total force to the direction from an ocean current. However, before enjoying surfing, the surfer should first learn to swim.

Similarly, when applying the SAT to the performance of homiletic movements from text to sermon, the homiletics bridge in the SAT will not only engage with the superficial level of the grammatical or historical meaning of the text (propositional content), but it will also assess the deeper level of continued illocutionary energy and its teleology in the context of the direction of fit. At this stage, the preacher is able to identify the differences in intentionality in the direction of fit between words and the world. This distinction can produce a particular reality of the preached text according to the re-performance of its illocutionary point. Moreover, the distinction between the different illocutionary points refreshes the relationship between the propositional content of the biblical text and its place in the preached text because the illocutionary point determines the direction of the propositional content and the world in order to determine the place of the object in the world.

In addition, preaching is part of the worship of the church by which the sermon also engages

with the institutional convention *inter alia* through the confession of the Scripture on the canonical level. As already shown, the illocutionary act of the biblical text should be to engage in “a rule-governed form of behavior.” This constitutive rule concretizes a particular identity that focuses on a communal confession by which everyone must take into account what God is doing at the canonical level. In this way, the direction of fit is fruitful in the sense that the preacher and congregation gain new practice in Christian faith and life.

We can consider for example a possible exposition of John 2:1-12, “The Wedding at Cana.” The preacher could take as primary propositional information the fact that this is the first public miraculous sign Jesus performed, and then continue to construct a sermon plan with this proposition. The goal of this sermon may be to explain how “obedience creates a miracle” or “how we should expect the miraculous in ordinary life.” The preacher may then use illustrations to elucidate certain recent understandings of “Christian obedience.” By the end, the congregation already knows what this sermon tells them, but they still struggle to apply it in their complex lives. However, the preacher who applies SAT to build a homiletic bridge in light of the three aforementioned questions will arrive at a different sermon goal as shown below.

(1) *Which unspoken culturally shared knowledge of the rules, convention and expectation governs the character’s speech act in a selected biblical passage?*

The character’s speech act of “The Wedding at Cana,” of course, should encounter a totally different world that becomes manifest firstly in the cultural differences between ancient and modern weddings. The preacher should be asking questions such as whose responsibility was it to provide wine in this context, the bridegroom or the bride’s family? In addition, the Jews used six stone water jars for ceremonial washing. Therefore, the water could signify a special

role of the purification law in religious practices. These culturally or religiously shared rules would help the preacher to identify the illocutionary action, and to ask what kind of intended action is performed on the character's speech act in the selected biblical passage.

*(2) What kind of illocutionary action does it perform in the character's speech act in a selected biblical passage?*

According to the passage, the wine supply ran out during the wedding festivities and the mother of Jesus spoke to him about the problem. Jesus replied: "My time has not yet come" (John 2:4). In order to clarify Jesus' utterance in terms of SAT, the preacher must pay attention to how the intentionality of the text makes the proposition ("Jesus' time") count as an illocutionary act such as a warning " $W(p)$ ," blessing " $B(p)$ ," and promise " $Pr.(p)$ ." More specifically, the proposition, Jesus' time, counts as a promise " $Pr.(Jesus' time)$ ." These dynamic illocutionary points invite us to imagine. Therefore, every potential aspect of the illocutionary act is eventually allowed to open up different possible ways of appropriating and performing the text. Furthermore, its advantage is that it helps to distinguish between the preacher's intended homiletic experience and the outcome of the intended homiletic perlocutionary effect on the text.

*(3) How does  $F(p)$  in the text determine the kind of direction of fit for opening up an alternative homiletic perlocutionary effect in the context of the canonical illocutionary action?*

The preacher has identified a homiletical idea (propositional content) – "obedience creates the miracle" – in this particular biblical passage. However, the preacher should pay attention to the direction of fit when he/she preaches on the subject of Christian obedience from the passage. The preacher must ask with all seriousness whether the illocutionary point really

counts as (*p*: plot, content, and character) obedience message? It is often pointed out that the very term homiletics suggests “saying the same thing as the text.” However, in SAT, homiletics suggests “doing the same thing as the directedness of the text.” Therefore, the homiletic movement in SAT as an imitation of the direction of fit should pay attention to the classification of the illocutionary acts based on the genre of the selected biblical passage as well as to classification of the illocutionary action in its canonical context. The “*Pr.(p)*” highlights an important biblical theme in the canonical context namely that God/Jesus is the bridegroom of his people and that Jesus is indeed the fountainhead of his brides’ purity. The preacher should therefore preach God’s promise in Jesus Christ. This continuous divine illocutionary action is present as an alternative framework to the preached “*Pr.(The Wedding at Cana)*.” The illocutionary point in Jesus’ utterance will serve to create different effects of comfort (*directives*), alarm (*assertives*), hope (*declarations*) and self-confident (*commissives*) on the congregation within the sequence of the illocutionary points and its direction of fit. The preached *F(ps)* seeks the intentionality of God’s total speech act in which the homiletical purpose pertains to the directedness of the illocutionary effect in the canonical context. This association points to what preaching seeks to accomplish and what response the divine perlocutionary effect anticipates in the passage in response to the testimony of faith by the people.

From this brief example, it is clear that SAT does serve as an alternative framework for a homiletic bridge on the basis of the biblical illocutionary action and its direction of fit. That is, the homiletic bridge in light of SAT allows us not only to reflect the same ideas as the text, but also to aim faithfully at the same goal and to seek to elicit the same response as that illocutionary force intended by the Scripture. To put it simply, it is the Scripture that uses the preacher rather than the preacher using Scripture. It becomes clear therefore that the

homiletic bridge requires a response that will show a suitable and responsible appreciation of the Scripture. The essence of the homiletic movement is therefore to recognize the illocutionary act in the Bible. This is because the illocutionary act creates both the meaning and the perlocutionary action. This living resource has to become the dynamic epicentre in the movement from text to sermon. It is not so much a case of bridging a theoretical gap, but of the living voice of God reaching out with its force and impact on the congregation in the pew.

## CHAPTER 6

### GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 6.1. Introduction

This research began with the question of how the preacher could perform a more satisfactory homiletical appropriation of biblical passages by appreciating the essence of the SAT. It has offered practical guidelines on the hermeneutical and homiletical reality for the application or performance of the biblical illocutionary action in the text and its perlocutionary action in the preached text, that is, an event performed as the living Word of God for a modern audience. The research therefore endeavored to investigate the issue of its practical application in two ways. Firstly, it examined how the SAT helps us to create biblically an alternative pneumatological reality in the task of exegesis that would place the process of re-reading Scriptures under the guidance of the totality of the triune God's authoritative speech act. Secondly, it paid attention to the role of the continued illocutionary force in Scripture and the role of the "direction of fit" in the preached text to help us understand the mystery of preaching the Word of God based on the Trinitarian archetype in the SAT.

#### 6.2. Hypothesis Revisited

The Reformed tradition views the biblical text as the foundation of the life and message of the church. It can be argued however that the foundation stone of the life and mission of the church is not the text but the living God at work in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:20ff). According to the Reformed confession, the preached text is the living Word of God and the foundation stone of the church through all ages and in all situations. However, in a very real sense, modern preaching does not seem to rely basically on this foundation stone. For Calvin, the biblical text is an indispensable part of the school of the

Holy Spirit. The task of preaching is nothing more than a strict elaboration of the movement from text to sermon by the help of the Holy Spirit who speaks in the Scriptural text. This dynamic intended action is only available and acceptable when based on the illumination by Holy Spirit. God's life-giving revelation does not come to us as a general truth, but in the shape and form of a concrete biblical text.

Biblical texts are not mere containers of everlasting, binding biblical truths or of dogmatic principles. Rather, texts are linguistic announcements, invitations and keys more than giving access to different worlds of available meaning, and they have an "*inherent purpose and driving force*" (2 Timothy 3:16). Biblical texts therefore announce, making available and inviting to the new world of God's kingdom, which was near or "at hand" in the words and work of Christ (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14-15). In fact, the word text (*texere*) means "to weave"; a text weaves the content, the signified worlds of the text, into a profound and meaning-driven literary structure in such a way that it not only announces but also gives access to the new world it signifies or describes. The text is purpose-driven, and aims to be heard and believed as the basis of affirming trust. In this sense, biblical texts are carriers not only of understanding but of faith!

Thus, preaching is *basically a process of re-reading and re-performing of Scriptures* through the dramatic sequence of the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture and especially in the preached text continuously performs meaningful and miraculous acts in the midst of the congregation. Subsequently, the preaching event is governed by a final movement – the congregation meets the living and gracious God who speaks and acts through HIS Word.

### **6.3. Summary of Methodology**

From the hypothesis above, it is clear that the reading and preaching of Scriptures in the Reformed tradition do not contradict the use of the SAT in homiletics theory. Applying the SAT to the biblical text could help the preacher to reach out to modern people. The key logic in the SAT obviously reiterates the Reformed view that the world of the text is not only confined to the appropriable “passive written Scripture,” but to the word as the timeless performative action of the living God at work in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. In particular, the performative aspect of biblical language usage in the SAT sharply distinguishes among three categories of meaningful actions thus:

- (1) The locutions are subjected to the rules of the verbal and grammatical content of what is being said (e.g. “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,” in Matthew 28:20);
- (2) The illocutions are subjected to the rules of the activities of the faithful community, that is, of what is being done when something is said (e.g. greeting, warning, promise, command, etc.);
- (3) The perlocutions are subjected to the rules of the reasonable responsibility involved in saying something (e.g. deterring, persuading, surprising, etc.).

With the focus on the above considerations of the totality of the speech acts in the biblical text, the study has proposed a tentative Trinitarian basis for communication with the hermeneutical and homiletical possibility of a Christian adaptation of the SAT. The Trinitarian approach recognizes that the communicative agent is God (locution level); the communicative action is by the Son (illocution level); and the communicated result by the dynamic action of the Holy Spirit (perlocutionary level). In this approach, the role of the

Holy Spirit in the reading and preaching of Scripture is to enable the preacher to recognize the continuity of the illocution force in the text and the presence of the preached text on the perlocutionary level. This continuity of the illocution force and its homiletical performance is effectively useful to explain the God-breathed Scripture and its continuity of God's voice with the essential human dimension of the Word of God (see, Berkouwer 1975:170-194). Therefore, the key hermeneutical and homiletical question in the performance of the movement from text to sermon is to understand how the preacher should explain the intended divine illocutionary action in the text in performing its perlocutionary action in the preached text. This is a clear methodological point in this study; the Holy Spirit works in the movement from the text to the preached text with HIS preacher in the role of the "double agency discourse" (see, chapter 4). In the light of the "double agency discourse," the preached text in the SAT is productively available, reinforcing the central issue of divine-human work according to Calvin's conception of divine epiphany in the preaching of the gospel (see, Beach 1999:92-100).

#### **6.4. Contribution of This Study**

From a methodological point of view, this study has argued that the potential contributions of the SAT lie in the new directions regarding the task of exegesis that will make the homiletical performance of the texts possible in the contemporary world (see chapter 3). It is clear that the exegetical aim of the SAT serves to refresh both the preaching material as well as the preaching praxis as *biblical illocutionary forces (BIF)* and *perlocutionary homiletical response (PHR)*. Thus, in the light of SAT, the homiletic theory not only aims to reflect the same ideas or the same form as the biblical text, but it also aims at being faithful to the same purpose as well as seeking to elicit the same response as that of the illocutionary force of the text. It becomes important therefore that the homiletical exegesis expounded in the SAT

requires a response that shows a proper and responsible appreciation of the Scripture. The essence of the task of exegesis with regard to the SAT is to recognize the *BIF* in the Bible because the *BIF* creates the *PHR*. The exegetical contribution embedded in the SAT is that the embodiment of the text becomes possible in the life of the church. It is nothing else than a re-performance of the *biblical illocutionary forces (BIF)* in order to execute the *perlocutionary homiletical response (PHR)*. This alternative homiletical task in the SAT takes the linguistic mode of God's Word serious by exploring the totality of its speech act (its locutionary action, its illocutionary action and its perlocutionary action).

Furthermore, this study has shown that in the homiletical contributions of the SAT, the preacher has to revisit the role of the Holy Spirit in terms of the continuous divine illocutionary action and its "direction of fit." Regarding the continued illocutionary energy and its teleology in the Scripture, it is assumed that the illumination by the Holy Spirit is not contrary to the approach of the SAT. The SAT is a new avenue for the Holy Spirit to work in and through the movement from text to sermon— the Holy Spirit speaking in and through Scripture precisely by causing the illocution action in the text to become a perlocutionary action in the preached text (see, chapter 5).

The Holy Spirit therefore prepares preachers and congregations to respond to what is needed to raise awareness of the illocutionary points in biblical passages. The particular type of illocutionary points and their force in Scripture are based on the illumination by the Holy Spirit, acting not only as a bridge between the ancient text and the modern congregation in a synchronic dialogue situation, but in certain cases, continue to play across time from the past to the present. This pneumatological implication of the SAT helps to distinguish between the illocutionary force (energy and trajectory) and the perlocutionary effect (teleology or final

purpose). When the preacher is aware of the differences between the role of the illocutionary force and of the perlocutionary effect, it is possible to distinguish the authors' intended meaning from the preacher-made meaning as well as between the production of meaning and the appropriation of meaning in the text. The SAT-centred exegetical reality in the movement from text to sermon is thus largely a matter of following the implied directions – from the performance of text to sermon. In the SAT, it does not work out what the individual interests or even the generic differences are, but performs the biblical illocutionary action on a canonical level, rendering the sovereignty of God and the necessary role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus Christ in preaching as the Word of God. The directedness of the illocutionary effect in the Trinitarian context describes the core of all biblical preaching in an alternative way and is therefore open to different possible ways to appropriate the text biblically.

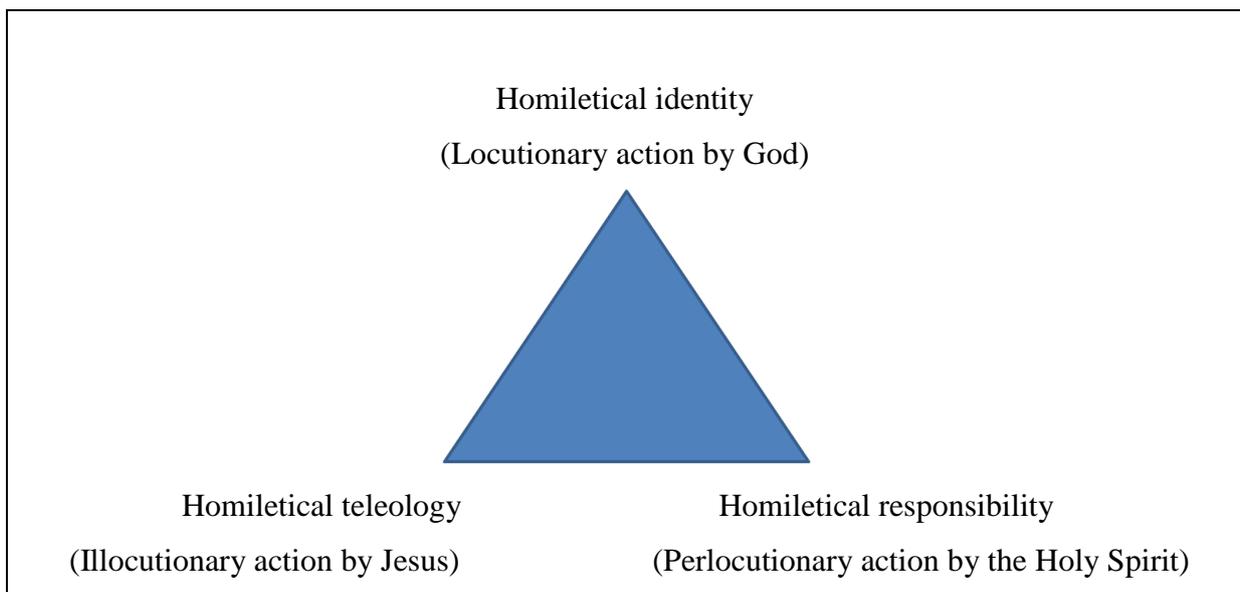
## **6.6. Final Remark**

At the heart of this pneumatological reality which is based on the SAT, preaching is basically not only a matter of meaning production but more than that the homiletic performance from text to sermon as fundamentally a matter of appropriating the intended divine illocutionary action and its teleology through the Holy Spirit. In this view, the performative dimension from Scriptural text to sermon will imply that insights from the SAT can form the basis of the homiletic theory in the Reformed tradition. The preached text using the SAT does not refer to some or other repletion of an eternal meaning lying hidden in the text, regarding the text as a somewhat neutral container of gemlike truths to be forced open and then applied in its so-called meaning for today. Biblical texts are not to be regarded as passive jars and containers, full of theological truths.

Furthermore, the *inherent theological movement* in the SAT (that is, *the logic of the divine*

*speech act level in Scripture*) is not constative (stating something), but rather the totality of its speech act is continuously performative (doing something other than stating). In this case, the homiletical appropriation of biblical texts in the SAT is part of a hermeneutical process, which prolongs the itinerary of the biblical illocutionary force available in the task of exegesis as a possibility for understanding and taking responsibility for faith in the present broken world. The preached text in the SAT becomes therefore an interpretive performance of Scripture in the art of living faithfully before God as an integral part of being actively incorporated in the *mission Dei*.

Thus, the total characteristics of the preached text in the SAT can be described by the homiletical triad of identity, teleology and responsibility as the simple diagram below shows:



The performative dimension on the part of the Triune God and the appropriation of the homiletical triad by appreciating the essence of SAT might lead to the rethinking of a regulative role in the context of theological discernment and its responsibility. Preaching as performance of the biblical illocutionary action is more fundamental than preaching that only refers to the question of meaning or relevance. The homiletical triad of identity, teleology and

responsibility does not lie in the repetition of eternal truths contained in them, but in the continual re-performance of the perlocutionary realities and its theological responsibility to a broken world. Therefore, the aim of the homiletical triad of identity, teleology and responsibility based in the SAT “cannot be limited to the way a preacher gleams meaning from the text or seek to ‘translate’ the text in the modern world” (Campbell 1997: 211). The preached text based in the SAT “has as its goal... a performance of Scripture” (see, Fowl and Jones 1991: 62). All Christian action and further has to be based on and activated by such performance of texts in the preaching event. “Christian practice, as interpretive action, consists in the *performance* of text” (Lash 1986: 42; on performance, see 37-46). To do this, the preached text in line with the homiletical triad of identity, teleology and responsibility in the SAT must have moved from text to sermon according to Scriptures’ “*inherent purpose and driving force*” in order to help congregation members to reach out to the signified total Word-world event, and take hold of this new world. To accomplish this, the illumination of the Holy Spirit is required. The homiletical triad of identity, teleology and responsibility is not only to appreciate the hermeneutic of wisdom in the preached texts, but more than that it has also to perform wise actions through faithful discernment, in order to make these preached texts available in real 3-D to His people, living in a broken world: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14).

On this regard, I believe that a rediscovery of God’s performative action in the language of Scripture will serve to promote human dignity in the modern world. The Reformed tradition stresses that God was creating humanity in His image by His word. Indeed, if God himself continues to address people today through the biblical text and being preached, this divine-human work encounter will provide fresh motivation in the task of the promotion of human dignity in **God’s creative action of humanity in His image**. Surprisingly, this point is in a

sense made by linguistic philosophers with their avowed interest in biblical hermeneutics and homiletical theory. Both Reformed homiletics and modern linguistic philosophy seem to agree on the divine performative dimension of the Word of God. They argue that this is a primitive concept that cannot be explained by something more basic. God speaks to people today by means of a performative action of the biblical text itself. This illocutionary force in the preached text has a kind of causality. That is to say, the homiletical triad of identity, teleology and responsibility in the SAT has a power to actualize homiletic practice and produce a theologically responsible moral vision in the modern world. Furthermore, this moral vision will be accomplished through the re-performance of His Word to recreate human beings in the image of perfect humanity in Jesus Christ.

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