

The Preacher in the Dialectic between Vulnerability and Authority

*Thesis presented according to the requirements of the degree MTh in the Faculty
of Theology at the University of Stellenbosch*



Sucelle Olivier

Study leader: Prof Johan Cilliers

December 2016

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Name: Sucelle Olivier

Date: December 2016

Opsomming

Die moontlike, waardevolle byvoeging van die navorsing is om die belangrikheid van 'n prediker se welstand en karakter te erken; asook die effek wat dit op haar/sy preek het. Dit is 'n poging om die volgende skuiwe binne prediking te maak: Om te preek vanaf 'n plek van skaamte na vrymoedigheid en vryheid. Individualisme na gemeenskap te verskuiwe. Die ruimte van gedurende jaag na 'n ruimte van dissipline om stil te kan staan en te *sien in die stilte*. Om te preek vanaf 'n titel na prediking vanaf jou karakter. Om die fokus te verskuiwe vanaf die prediker na God.

Die volgende vraag word gevra: Watse resultate sal 'n homiletiese ondersoek hê, wanneer daar gekyk word na die prediker in dialoog tussen kwesbaarheid en outoriteit? Die volgende bekommernisse het opgeduik:

Die gebrek aan duidelike definisies vir terme soos kwesbaarheid en outoriteit lei tot skaamte en onseker predikers. 'n Spanning tussen die twee terme lei tot ongesonde druk wat predikers op hulself plaas. Om outoriteit as prediker te hê binne ons moderne konteks is nie meer so gegewe nie, weens verskeie blootstelling soos byvoorbeeld die internet. Dit laat die prediker binne 'n meer kwesbare spasie as van te vore.

Om te sien hoeveel gebreke daar is rondom geestelike dissiplines en volwassenheid binne 'n narsistiese en individualistiese kultuur is nog 'n bekommernis. Die beperking rondom ons beeld van God het ook 'n effek op die prediker se preek en laat hom of haar weereens kwesbaar. Waar lê 'n prediker se outoriteit binne al die uitdagings?

Abstract

The possible, valuable contribution of this research is the acknowledgement of the importance of a preacher's character and wellbeing and the effect it has on his or her sermon. It is an attempt to move our preaching from: A place of shame to courage and freedom; Individualism to community. Being rushed to creating a space where one can see *in the silence*. Preaching from a title to preaching from within. From trying to be the Saviour to leading them to the One who saves and gave us our *titles*.

Asking the question, "Which results will a homiletically investigation have when one looks at the Preacher in the Dialectic between Vulnerability and Authority?" the following concerns were raised.

A lack of clear definitions and misinterpretations for words like authority and vulnerability leads to shame and insecure preachers. A tension between these two terms leads to unhealthy pressure that preachers put on themselves. A few more concerns are how difficult task it is to really preach from within and not primarily from a title. As well as the realisation that having authority as a preacher is not necessarily a given anymore within a context where people are exposed to so many different opinions, especially through the internet. This leaves us with preachers that find themselves in a more vulnerable space than before.

To see how much lacking there is in areas of spiritual discipline and maturity within a narcissistic and individualistic culture is another concern and the effect which a limited image/perception of God has on preaching. This leaves a preacher yet again vulnerable. How can a preacher gain authority within these challenges?

Acknowledgements

I appreciate every pastor and lecturer who made time to answer an email or said yes to an interview. I would like to thank everyone who revised my research and every conversation and encouraging word from friends who shared my enthusiasm for the theme. I would like to give special thanks to my study leader professor Johan Cilliers for his academically guidance and for being a mentor to me the last two years. Words will never be enough to thank my father who made it financially possible to follow my dream and for my families' prayers and support. Lastly I would like to give all the Glory to my Father in heaven and thank Him for His grace and the absolute privilege to have done my masters this year.

Table of Contents

Introduction	8
A glimpse of my life journey and motivation.....	8
Stating the problem.....	10
Research question.....	13
Research Methodology.....	13
Possible value of the research.....	14
Chapter 1	15
Vulnerability.....	15
Defining vulnerability.....	16
Myths regarding vulnerability.....	21
Vulnerability shields.....	23
Defining vulnerability through the example of a vulnerable God.....	25
Defining vulnerability through preaching.....	26
Chapter 2	28
Authority.....	28
The different roles of authority and what legitimates it.....	28
The role of identity within positions of authority.....	30
The power of the cross.....	31
Liminality.....	33
Church family.....	35
Equipping and submission.....	35
The effect power has on us and how it operates.....	36
A brief Christological and Pneumatological perspective on authority.....	37
Chapter 3	41
Images of God.....	41
God the Creator.....	42
God as Holy and perfect.....	43
Jesus on the cross and the image of a vulnerable God.....	47
God as One who has compassion.....	48
Chapter 4	51
The context of a South African preacher.....	51
Context and culture.....	51
Reconciliation and shame.....	52
Shame in a scarcity culture.....	58

Narcissism	59
Formalism	61
Sexual temptations.....	64
Power vs vulnerability	67
The role of the congregation.....	68
Managing boundaries	69
Loneliness	72
Familiarity and being relevant	73
The preacher as part of the community and an individual	75
Chapter 5	79
Seeing in the silence.....	79
Silence and solitude.....	79
Living, reading and praying with an expectation	80
Scripture.....	83
Prayer.....	85
The importance of Sabbath	89
Moving from loneliness to solitude	90
Evaluating your language as a preacher.....	91
Chapter 6	94
Moving from shame to vulnerability.....	94
Recognizing shame and understanding its triggers.....	95
Reaching out.....	95
Practicing critical awareness	96
Become creative.....	96
Be accountable.....	96
Shame within the framework of an organisation	96
Grace.....	97
Moving from perfectionism to acknowledging our imperfection	100
Moving from unforgiveness to forgiveness.....	101
Moving from false to true humility	101
Preaching from a place of joy.....	102
Chapter 7	104
Leading from a title to leading from within.....	104
Gaining authority as an authorised minister of the Word	104
Leading from within.....	104
The power of self-mastery	105

The power of focus.....	105
Power with people.....	106
The power of persuasive communication.....	107
The power of execution – <i>Intent without action is daydreaming</i>	110
The subversive pastor	112
The apocalyptic pastor	113
Narcissism vs godly leadership.....	114
Bibliography	117

Introduction

A glimpse of my life journey and motivation.

I was raised on a farm in the Free State and born in a fortunate Christian home. I am grateful for my childhood and appreciated the quiet life I was blessed with living on a farm. I started asking questions about Theological matters at the age of eight and had several conversations with ministers and my parents throughout my youth. I struggled to grasp God's grace and tried to earn my salvation. I tried to figure out the God my parents told me about. I didn't understand at the time why theology bothered me so much at such a young age. Advice I received was to act the age that I am and just enjoy my life for now, but the tension within me didn't go away. I believe this tension led me to asking the questions I ask today; questions in regards with spirituality, the silence I experienced on the farm and whether preachers still appreciate and have time for silence.

Shin (2012: 150) states as every dimension of life is interconnected to each other, the healing of a part of life is fragmentary. Healing of the alienated self should thus comprehend psychological, physical, relational and spiritual. We often neglect the spiritual part, because we fear silence. Stepping into this place of silence also leaves us vulnerable.

My parents often found me visiting our workers at their houses and eating "pap" with them. I drove with a school bus to my primary school and often had long conversations with the bus driver after school while we ate together. I was drawn to people who "did not fit the mould" from a very young age. There was and is something in their vulnerability that touches my heart. I love to hear people's stories, especially the ones different than mine and less fortunate according to society. Thinking back, it was through testimonies (hearing someone's heart) where I experienced God's grace the most.

The words, "Don't preach to me" reflect how society thinks about preaching according to Peterson (1993:17). He continues by saying it is often seen as an offensive intrusion into a person's private life. How to gain authority in a culture with this mind set is another question being asked. He describes preaching as a public act being directed to a group and defined as divine communication of God to man. The other side of the coin is how a lifestyle can be seen as a sermon to each individual you meet and that your life might be the only Bible some people read.

Being exposed to different cultures, denominations and religions through my studies, residence and mission trips to Malawi, Botswana and Europe; I have come to believe that no one really fully grasps the mysteries of life except the one prof John de Gruchy refers to as the “ultimate mystery”, we call God. A mystery that keeps on fascinating me and uses broken people, churches and faculties to reach people; A mystery that leaves us vulnerable and even more so when we are expected to preach about Him. There is a great need for community in a human’s heart; a safe space where one can be vulnerable and dialogue about a mysterious God.

Nouwen (1989:35) states that the temptation to be spectacular within an individualistic culture is great. Not too many of us have a vast repertoire of skills to be proud of, but most of us still feel that, if we have anything at all to show, it is something we have to do solo. Stardom and individual heroism, which are such obvious aspects of our competitive society, are not at all alien to the Church. Do preachers and their sermons still encourage community and unity in- and outside the church?

The biggest mystery of all is how God keeps on encouraging us to dare greatly and trusts us with so much. Brene Brown states it so beautifully in her book, Daring Greatly: “To dare greatly is to have the courage to be vulnerable, to show up and to be seen, to ask for what you need, to talk about how you are feeling, to have the hard conversations. You can’t get to courage without walking through vulnerability first.” What will make a preacher courageous?

“The intense following of tradition is no concrete sign of God’s presence. On the contrary! God is greater than tradition, greater than historical phases or centuries-old liturgical formulae. There is no magical or godly power in the mere repetition of liturgical or dogmatic jewels of the past. This does not mean there is no space for it, it has an important role. The irony however is that you can be formally correct, yet not free at all” (Cilliers, 2004:42). Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor 3:17). Freedom is not familiarity but the liberty to approach God with fear, because He allows us to do so. Before a preacher can become courageous he or she needs to walk through vulnerability first. Starting with becoming vulnerable before God and receiving His grace, will give us courage to dare greatly and move beyond our comfort zones.

After my Mdiv thesis on congregational studies in 2014, I came to the conclusion that change needs to start in each individual’s heart, or at least in mine. I had to ask myself the following questions: Do I just criticize or do I actually bring hope? Do I support, honour and pray for preachers? Am I a consumer or do I have a serving heart? Am I open to dialogue

and to challenge my thoughts? What is it about people who dare to be vulnerable that fascinates me so much?

We and our churches are broken, but as Leonard Cohen states in his song: "There's a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." (Brown, 2012:133)

I must confess that deciding to write this thesis as a 25-year-old made me feel a bit vulnerable but somehow this topic challenged me so much personally that I decided to dare greatly... Maybe just maybe we will see the pulpit (or wherever one finds a space to preach) differently if we find the courage to be vulnerable, sharing from the heart and receiving authority as a gift, like never before.

Stating the problem

a) Gaining true authority as a preacher

We live in a context where there are painful realisations we need to face. The secular world says with a loud voice we can take care of ourselves. We don't need church and priests. Everyone wants to be in control, unfortunately it comes with a price, named loneliness, depression, boredom and emptiness (Nouwen, 1989:19).

Like previously stated, the words, "Don't preach to me" reflect how society thinks about preaching according to Peterson (1993:17). It is often seen as an offensive intrusion into a person's private life. How to gain authority in a culture with this mind-set is the question being asked.

Another challenge in regards with authority is not to manipulate a position given to one by grace. De Klerk, De Wet and Letsosa (2008:48) states the following: "Preachers could easily abuse their power and manipulate their listeners in sermons. Finding themselves in a situation of cultural change with the resulting changes in power structures, they are currently in a vulnerable situation that calls for new possibility to open up new opportunities for finding a legitimate base of authority in making authentic contact with people living vulnerable lives in a vulnerable situation." This calls for preachers who must be willing to spend time with the One who is constant and find their security and authority in a Source bigger than themselves and society.

b) Spiritual disciplines and maturity

Nouwen (1989:29-30) asks: “Are the leaders of the future truly men and women of God, people with an ardent desire to dwell in God’s presence, to listen to God’s voice, to look at God’s beauty, to touch God’s incarnate Word and to taste fully God’s infinite goodness?” He goes on by stating that the original meaning of theology was “union with God in prayer. Today it has become one academic discipline alongside many others and often theologians are finding it hard to pray.

c) Misinterpretation of vulnerability

Vulnerability is such a rich word but in the same breath also continues to be misinterpreted. Brown’s definition for vulnerability, “*To be vulnerable is to show up and be seen, to ask for what you need, to talk about how you are feeling, to have the hard conversations and to dare greatly*” testifies that preachers might have been interpreting it wrong because of the fear to live according to such a definition (Brown, 2012:7). I believe challenges that prevent preachers to be vulnerable according to this definition is as follow:

- A lack of self-worth and constantly trying to be relevant

Brown asks the question whether our self-worth is attached to what we develop or create. If you share a product that you feel good about and people don’t receive it the way you had hoped, are you crushed? Do we believe if what you offer is no good you are no good? She makes the statement that when our self-worth isn’t on the line we are far more willing to be courageous and risk sharing our raw talents and gifts (Brown, 2012:63).

Nouwen (1989:17) states that one of the main sufferings in ministry is that of a low self-esteem that leads to the desire to please men and be relevant. Preachers often try to prove themselves to be worthy of their calling that leads to striving. In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus could have turned the rocks into bread, but why didn’t He? The way Jesus came to show God’s love was through vulnerability.

- Narcissism

We find ourselves in a culture where you seldom feel good enough and might feel trapped in social boundaries where one will not dare to make him or herself vulnerable in. The more we don’t feel good enough, the more our focus turns to ourselves to improve. Romans 2:4: “It is

God's kindness that will lead us to repentance." When we keep on focusing on ourselves, we will just be discouraged and unfulfilled. The more we focus on something the bigger it gets. The choice however is whether we will focus on God or ourselves. Focusing primarily on ourselves will eventually lead to the next problem preachers face called narcissism.

"In a culture of omnivorous need, all-consuming narcissism, clergy who have no more compelling motive for their ministry than "meeting people's needs" are dangerous to themselves and to a church that lacks a clear sense of who it is. It can easily become the relentless scanning and feeding of the ego. We must be called, recalled to the joy of being grasped by something greater than ourselves, namely our vocation to speak and to enact the Word of God among God's people" (Willimon, 2003:24-25).

Peterson states that we have been trained to think of ourselves and then to behave as consumers. I am worth what I spend. It shapes us without us knowing it. We want to find something useful for others' lives. It is like we are saying: "I will help you to be a consumer." Looking has become the new word... not listening to what God's will is but looking for a way to build my own kingdom. The task is to get away from our culture and listen to what God says. The greatest thing going on in history is that God is speaking. The dominical command is *Listen*" (Peterson, 1987:87). The problem however is that preachers seldom make time to *listen* to themselves which makes the task to lead others to listen almost impossible. True listening also means to make yourself vulnerable and willing to be transformed.

- Shame

Living in a shame-based culture preachers find it hard to step out and be courageous. The definition of shame that emerged from Brown's research states that shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging. There is a universal fear to talk about shame and the less we talk about it the more control it has over us (Brown, 2012:68-69).

Bradshaw refers to toxic shame as the shame that binds you. It is no longer an emotion that signals our limits but stage of being and a core identity. It gives you a sense of worthlessness. It is like internal bleeding and exposure to oneself lies at the heart of toxic shame. This will guard a person against exposing his inner-self to others and also to him or herself. Shame is the fear of disconnection. We are cognitively, physically, spiritually, emotionally created with the need of love and belonging (Bradshaw, 1988: 10). It removes someone from reality and prevents us from daring greatly.

The three main problems that I have identified in my findings: a lack of true authority, mature spirituality and a willingness to be vulnerable.

Research question

Which results will a homiletically investigation have when one looks at the Preacher in the Dialectic between Vulnerability and Authority?

Research Methodology

A literature review according to Leedy and Ormrod (2014: 45) will be used where theoretical perspectives and previous research findings related to the problem at hand will be compared and investigated. In order to formulate an accurate homiletically investigation into the spirituality of the preacher through the lens of vulnerability, the following four-phrased methodology derives from Osmer's book, 'Practical Theology: An Introduction, will be followed in this study.

The four tasks of practical Theological Interpretation according to Osmer (2008:4) are as follow:

- The descriptive-empirical task (What is going on?)
- The interpretive task (Why is it going on?)
- The normative task (What ought to be going on?)
- The pragmatic task (How might we respond?)

For the purpose of this study I will start with the interpretive and normative task, creating a lens to look at the rest of the chapters.

- Chapter one: A theological and theoretical investigation regarding the term vulnerability.
- Chapter two: An attempt to define authority through the lens of vulnerability.
- Chapter three: The role that our image of God plays when it comes to vulnerability and authority on the pulpit

The descriptive task will be seen in chapter four where a brief overview of the context and challenges the South African preacher finds him- or herself in, will be investigated.

Chapter six will be the pragmatic task and divided in three main sections:

- Moving from shame to vulnerability. *Can vulnerability be a key to praxis with new possibilities regarding sermons?*
- Making oneself vulnerable before God - An attempt to *see in the silence*.
- Moving from hiding behind a title to true authority on the pulpit.

Possible value of the research

Acknowledging the importance of a preacher's character and the effect it has on his or her sermon. An attempt to move our preaching from a:

Place of shame to courage and freedom, individualism to community. Being rushed to creating a space where one can *see in the silence*. An issue based, exclusive sermon to acknowledging and focusing on the needs around us.

Using the past as a lens to look at the present, Bate (1991: 102-103) encouraged the following wishes to be priority in regards with Evangelisation in South Africa, 1991. I would like my studies to contribute to his request within a time like apartheid to our context today, where we still face the same challenges in different and similar forms.

- Proclaiming and actualising the dignity and value of each person and culture within the society.
- Healing the victims of the crises they found themselves involved in by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Actively working to build community amongst all Christians and within the society.
- Naming and confronting the evil existing within the structures of society and indicating the presence of structures of sin which trace their roots to the action of men.
- Proclaiming and actualising a Salvation understood in terms of a liberation from the structures already specified by means of the commitment and involvement of the Community of Faith within the society.
- Adopting a modality of service towards the society in which we live.
- Moving towards a new Culture in South Africa transformed by the Gospel. A Gospel where all people and groups are respected.

Chapter 1

Vulnerability

*Am I willing to be “weak” and trust that You are strong within me?
It is times like these when I just want to flee
I am “safe” behind these walls
I am “strong” behind these walls
I am what people want me to be behind these masks...*

*I’m in control
I’m okay
I’m fine, really...
Focus on someone else*

*What shapes this thinking of mine?
Culture, self-worth, my past, family, religion?
I don’t really want to dig deep right now
but what if God called and created us for something outside of these walls
Might we be missing out?*

*“Be still and know that I am God”
“I am clothed with strength and dignity”
“I know the plans I have for you”
“Trust in Me with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding”
“I planned you when I planned creation”
“My grace is sufficient for you”*

*Do I believe these words above?
Am I free? Do I really love?*

*Is the unknown a fear or an adventure?
Is faith that which I can see or that which I hope for?
Is the Father’s heart to condemn or to set me free?
Am I created to hide or to dance?
Do I walk as if I see the God given crown on my head?
Am I willing to be vulnerable before men because I’m steadfast in You?*

*What if I fall?
But, oh my darling what if you fly?*

Sucelle Olivier

Before one can speak about vulnerability, a clear definition for the term is needed. Asking the question, why is it going on? The first chapter will focus on the interpretive task. (Osmer, 2012:1-11).

Vulnerability is such a rich word but in the same breath also continues to be misinterpreted. This misinterpretation leads to challenges a preacher face that will be further explained in chapter four. I would like to repeat Brene Brown's definition for vulnerability: "To be vulnerable is to show up and be seen, to ask for what you need, to talk about how you are feeling, to have the hard conversations and to dare greatly." By the looks of that definition, the word vulnerability has never been something one would naturally run towards and scream: "Come at me!" Still there is a beautiful mystery hidden within it which gives enough motivation to dig deeper into the term.

Defining vulnerability

Vulnerability is to connect and be open to:

- Love and being loved

To love is to be vulnerable. It will always be a leap of faith that we take, with the possibility to get hurt. Nouwen (1989:14) defines vulnerability as the way Jesus came to show God's love. Defining vulnerability through giving and receiving love is to acknowledge that it is the one thing we need the most but also makes us feel the most exposed.

Love and belonging are two universal needs. We are worthy to be loved but this worthiness does not "just happen", it is part of our daily choices. Whole hearted living is about engaging with life from a place of worthiness. Vulnerability lies at the centre of the family story. It defines our moments of greatest joy, fear, sorrow, shame, disappointment, love, belonging, gratitude, creativity and everyday wonder. Vulnerability shapes who we are. Thinking patterns like, "I will be worthy when..." often cross our minds. How we think about ourselves and our sense of self-worth already starts at childhood experiences of shame (Brown, 2012: 216-232).

Scroggins and Stanley (2008) distinguish in their sermon series between being great at something and being great in character. We want to be respected for our great intellect, pursued for our great abilities or perhaps admired for our great looks. But when asked,

“Who’s great?” few of us would point to people who are merely great *at* something. Intuitively, we know that true greatness goes beyond skill, talent, intellect or looks.

Vulnerability: To believe and accept your worth by receiving unconditional love and grace so that you can have true love and grace to share with no guarantees of not being rejected.

- Listening

Cilliers (2012:140) writes about four aesthetic movements in a liturgical context: observation, interpretation, anticipation and transformation. Reading this through the lens of ‘listening’, one can come to the following conclusions:

To observe is to become aware of what you see or hear. The challenge is not to jump to conclusions. Interpretation: The art of interpretation is born from God’s approach, revelation and interpretation to us. It is about gaining a better insight into the many faces of Christ. It is also a phase where you find tension between God’s being and God’s revelation which leads to anticipation. In the case of listening to someone it is the tension between preconceived ideas and what the person is actually saying now. To anticipate is to create a space for new revelation. This is the space which can leave us quite vulnerable and we tend to skip, because of the possibility to be transformed.

The story about a surgeon that was so occupied, telling a few people around him what he was busy doing, that he lost his patient, can be used as an example of not listening. He was not listening to the facial expressions around him but only focused on what he can teach people around him. Never mind that he used his patient as an object to portray and explain something without dignity. Exegesis is a lot like surgery: We need to be equipped but we mustn't be so busy explaining that people around us die spiritually. We don't need to cut a person open to know what is inside...we just need to really listen (Peterson, 1987:107).

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Heb 11:1

Not “seeing” and being uncertain leaves us vulnerable. Human beings love to make a rule or put something or someone in a box. It is like we feel “safe” within the framework of understanding. Scriptures like Prov 3:5, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding”, leaves us at a vulnerable but exciting place. The challenge

however is to surrender and be aware of what is happening around you without jumping to conclusions.

Vulnerability is to listen with a willingness to be transformed and trust and believe in that which you cannot see at the moment but experience through hope.

Vulnerability is to have courage and face reality through:

- Tears

Why is it that hearts naturally open towards someone who starts to cry in a sincere way? Cilliers (2016: 53) demonstrates the power of tears in his article, *The Homiletics of Hagar*, in an astonishing way by looking through the lens of Hagar (Gen 16): *“This, slave woman, neglected, chased away twice, ending up with a dying child in the desert, excommunicated, marginalised to a place of death and desolation. She represents the ultimate collateral damage of other people’s agendas.*

In the desert, Hagar does what seems to be the only remaining thing to do – she lifts up her voice, and cries, but there are more to these tears than meet the eye... Her tears reverberate throughout history, gathering momentum, forming part of a tsunami of tears that floods the earth: those of Israel, crying out by mouth of the psalmists: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1) Or: “How long, Lord; how long must we wait?” (Psalm 13:1) Or: “My tears have been my food, day and night...” (Psalm 42:3)

She groans with creation, she sobs for salvation; she weeps with those who live in expectation of the revelation of the glory of God (Rom 8) – even if she knows nothing of this at this point in her life, sitting there on the sands of the desert, weeping into the wind...

Without her knowing it, Hagar’s tears mingle with those of the mothers of all ages, weeping like Rachel, and not to be comforted (Jeremiah 31:15-17); with the tears of the mothers of the abducted daughters in Nigeria, of the abducted sons in Israel and Palestine, of the bereaved ones after the missile strikes have left their carnage. Hagar’s tears are added, drop after drop, to those of the mothers of the fallen sons in all the senseless wars of centuries; to the tears of the fathers whose daughters have become bomb-victims, offered up in the never-ending religious struggles on so many continents; to the tears of the parents of the hungry children of Sudan, because they do not even have one grain of rice to feed them with; to the tears of the families of the teenagers dying in the cross-fire of the gang-wars on the Cape Flats in South Africa; to the tears of the disempowered and displaced; of

the vulnerable and marginalized. Drop after drop, giving volume to the force of the tsunami of tears that floods this earth.

Hagar cries, but she does not cry alone. She cries in the desert, but she cries coram deo, before and with God. Hagar cries, yes, but she does not cry alone, and she does not cry in vain. Her tears do not evaporate into the warm air of the desert. On the contrary: her tears move realities; express more than a thousand tongues. Her sobs say more than a series of serious sermons; her weeping weighs more than a myriad of words. She sees her son, lying dying under the bush; and she sighs, and her sigh becomes a sign of protesting hope, and of hopeful protest.

Why? Because Hagar believes that God does in fact hear, as already suggested in the name of her son, Ishmael (cf. Gen 16:15). It is because she believes that Hagar calls upon God to hear, to grant the grace of a new beginning. It is out of faith in the hearing God, that she weeps against all odds; protests against so-called "reality"; against so-called "destiny". Her tears, in fact, bring heaven into motion, for we hear: God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a great nation of him." (17, 18)

Truly, the power of tears must not be underestimated. The Great Wall of China cannot choke or chain it, and the desolation of the desert cannot dampen or deter it. Someone like Jean Paul Sartre even suggested that tears represent the "magical transformation" of this world. Why?"

After reading this article the following question can be raised: How many opportunities have gone passed, where you could have reached people, through identifying with their hurt and could have come to terms with your own hurt much sooner? Sometimes or rather most of the times it seems like people really don't need advice but just someone who could cry with them.

Vulnerability is to be willing to cry things out and sit with someone without giving advice and be content enough to just be there for the other person.

-
- Asking what is left when the title is gone?

“God wants us to care, not as “professionals” who know their client’s problems and take care of them, but as vulnerable brothers and sisters who know and are known, who care and are cared for, who forgive and are being forgiven, who love and are being loved. Somehow we have come to believe that good leadership requires a safe distance from those we are called to lead. Medicine, psychiatry and social work all offer us models in which “service” takes place in a one-way direction. But how can anyone lay down his life for those with whom he is not even allowed to enter into a deep personal relationship? Laying down your life means making your own faith and doubt, hope and despair, joy and sadness, courage and fear available to others as ways of getting in touch with the Lord of life. We are not the healers, we are not the reconcilers, and we are not the givers of life. We are sinful, broken, vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for.” (Nouwen, 1989:43).

Vulnerability is to have enough courage not to ‘hide’ behind your title.

- Making choices and setting boundaries.

Peterson (1993:17-49) states that the essence of being a pastor begs for redefinition and he offer three adjectives to clarify the noun: unbusy, subversive and apocalyptic.

The unbusy pastor: *“How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit into place?”*

There is a great stigma that pastors need to be busy all the time. Peterson states two reasons he and other pastors believe that they should be busy.

1. *I am busy because I am vain* (We all have a need to be needed).
2. *I am busy because I am lazy* (I let others decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself.) We fall in the trap of filling our day with demands from people instead of having time to obey God and to do the things He called us to do (Peterson.1993 17-18).

“Community is a great virtue but in order for there to be community, there must be limits upon the community. A community with no boundaries for appropriate community behaviour is no community. We cannot create reconciliation, cannot demand it. We are not giving up on them, we are giving them over to God, giving them and the injustice over to God who is more

resourceful and inventive in working reconciliation than we can ever hope to be” (Willimon, 2003:73).

Vulnerability is to have the courage to make decisions and set boundaries that would often be rejected by some.

Myths regarding vulnerability

There is a few myths when it comes to vulnerability. These myths are used to justify our actions or to run away from facing the real issues at hand. Sometimes we won't even realise that we lie to ourselves.

Myth 1: Vulnerability is weakness

“Yes, we are totally exposed when we are vulnerable. Yes, we are in the torture chamber that we call uncertainty and, yes, we're taking a huge emotional risk when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable. But there's no equation where taking risks, braving uncertainty and opening ourselves up to emotional exposure equals weakness” (Brown, 2012:32).

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 12:9: “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” What the world portrays as weakness, God sees as an opportunity for His perfect love to be manifested. Personally I have been challenged with the question whether I am willing to be vulnerable before men because my identity is steadfast in Him? It is much easier to share from a place where you feel completely in control, than to show your brokenness and vulnerability to listeners.

Two years ago I was asked to share a message on a challenging topic where I felt quite vulnerable. I already had everything planned to play a DVD so that I wouldn't have to risk people discovering that I hadn't figured it out for myself yet. A few days before the event (time came to share), they informed me that there would be load shedding during the time that I was scheduled to share. In that moment the following thoughts came to mind: “Don't you get it? When you are weak, you are strong? A lot of people are willing to share from behind their walls, but only a few are willing to show up and be seen in their brokenness so that the glory can truly come to Me.” I cried in the worship after my own sermon that day.

People started testifying spontaneously, finding the courage to show up and be seen. They felt that they could also contribute, without needing to be “perfect”.

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy and creativity. It is the source of hope, empathy, accountability and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purposes or deeper and more meaningful spiritual lives, vulnerability is the path” (Brown, 2012:36).

Myth 2: I don't do vulnerability

“Far from being an effective shield, the illusion of invulnerability undermines the very response that would have supplied genuine protection” (Brown, 2012: 40).

She suggests three questions that you can ask yourself to see if you really ‘don't do vulnerability’

- What do I do when I am emotionally exposed?
- How do I behave when I am feeling very uncomfortable?
- How willing am I to take emotional risks?

Vulnerability is not a choice, the only choice we have is how we are going to respond when we are confronted with it (Brown, 2012:44-45).

Myth 3: Vulnerability is letting it all hang out.

Brown states that vulnerability requires boundaries and trust. Trust is a product of vulnerability that grows over time and requires work, attention, and full engagement. Trust isn't a grand gesture but a growing marble collection. It is to share your stories with people who had earn your trust (Brown, 2012:45).

Brown's definition above is based on relationships, but in a preaching context one will often have to, not letting it all hang out, but be vulnerable to people who did not earn your trust already. The definition around this myth is still not to share out of an emotional place without any boundaries.

Myth 4: We can go it alone...

- We need support.

-
- Until you can receive with an open heart you can't really give with an open heart.
 - We need unconditional love and grace.
 - We have the need to belong (Brown, 2012:54).

“Belonging is being somewhere you want to be and they want you. Fitting in is being somewhere, where you really want to be but they don’t care one way or the other? Belonging is being accepted for you. Fitting in is being accepted for being like someone else” (Brown, 2012: 232).

Nouwen (1989:17) states that the secular world says with a loud voice that we can take care of ourselves. We don’t need church and priests. Everyone wants to be in control; unfortunately, it comes with a price named loneliness, depression, boredom and emptiness.

Belonging also means to be exposed to a culture which shapes us either positively or negatively.

Vulnerability is to acknowledge our longing for love and community and being aware of the world outside our frame of reference.

Vulnerability shields

Brown (2012: 119-120) identifies common vulnerability shields which can guide us into a closer definition of vulnerability.

- Foreboding joy

“When we lose the ability or willingness to be vulnerable, joy, becomes something we approach with deep foreboding...disaster must be around the corner. We're always waiting for the other shoe to drop. People are most vulnerable when they get engaged, promoted, being happy or fall in love. Participants described happiness as an emotion that is connected to circumstances and they described joy as a spiritual way of engaging with the world that's connected to practicing gratitude.”

Vulnerability is to be able to receive, have gratitude and celebrate special seasons in your life. With that said we also risk missing out on joy when we get too busy chasing down the extraordinary. Joy comes to us in moments – ordinary moments as well.

- Perfectionism

“The most valuable and important things in my life came to me when I cultivated the courage to be vulnerable, imperfect and self-compassionate. Perfectionism is not the path that leads us to our gifts and to our sense of purpose, it’s the hazardous detour. Perfectionism is not the same as striving for excellence, not self-improvement, not the key to success. Perfectionism is self-destructive simply because perfection doesn’t exist. It’s an unattainable goal” (Brown, 2012:128-129).

Brown (2012:1) begins her book with the speech, sometimes referred to as “The Man in the Arena,” delivered on April 23, 1910 in Paris, France. It is a speech where perfectionism is addressed and challenged me to question whether I am able to live whole-heartedly or not.

*“It is not the critic who counts; not the
man who points out how the strong man
stumbles or where the doer of deeds could
have done them better.*

*The credit belongs to the man who is actually
In the arena, whose face is marred by dust
And sweat and blood; who strives valiantly;
who errs, who comes short again and again,*

*because there is no effort without error
and shortcoming; but who does actually
strive to do the deeds; who knows great
enthusiasms, the great devotions;
who spends himself in a worthy cause;*

*who at the best knows in the end the triumph
of high achievement and who at the worst, if
he fails, at least fails while daring greatly...”*

Vulnerability is to dare greatly, being able to appreciate the beauty of cracks.

- Numbing

We think that if we are busy enough, the truth of our lives won’t catch up with us. It is when we try to convince ourselves that we have enough Facebook friends but we are actually alone (Brown, 2012: 140).

Vulnerability is to be able to take time and come to terms with your own thoughts and the truth.

The smash and grab shield: “If floodlighting is about *misusing* vulnerability, a form of over sharing is all about using vulnerability as a manipulation tool. A smash-and-grab job is where a burglar smashes in a door or a store window and grabs what she/he can; it’s sloppy unplanned and desperate. The smash and grab used as vulnerability armour is about smashing through people’s social boundaries with intimate information, then grabbing whatever attention and energy you can get your hands on” (Brown, 2012: 163).

Vulnerability is honesty but within the borders of self-control and patience.

- Serpentine

Brown (2012:164) describes serpentine as the perfect metaphor for how we spend an enormous amount of energy trying to dodge vulnerability when it would take less effort to face it straight on. “Serpentine” means trying to control a situation, backing out of it, pretending it’s not happening or maybe even pretending that you don’t care. We use it to dodge conflict, discomfort and possible confrontation, the potential for shame or hurt and/or criticism.

Vulnerability is not trying to laugh your way past something which is actually not really funny.

Defining vulnerability through the example of a vulnerable God

Exodus 3:7-8: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings and have come down to deliver them.”

As Israel stumbles and the covenant is ignored or distorted, God is pained and angered, reproaching wrongdoing and the broken relationships it fosters. When suffering occurs and injustice gains sway, God empathizes and mourns. God has compassion and gives of the divine self. God’s creative and providential presence is vulnerable. Vulnerability, the capacity to undergo and suffer the other, is an inescapable part of giving. As God becomes relationally open to God’s gift of creation and lovingly embraces creatures as distinct and valuable beings, God shows vulnerability. The centre of the Christian witness radiates with an inclusive and vulnerable love that is Christological shaped (Reynolds, 2008: 165-198).

“Only a God “weak in power but strong in love” can be strong enough to take on the entire world’s pain and die on a cross. Trust in such a God can give human beings the strength to

risk following on the path of compassion and vulnerability, to think what it means to live lives whose first priority is love. In a broken and complex world, we Christians may sometimes find ourselves driven to force and even violence in spite of our best intentions, but we need to acknowledge that to choose such alternatives is always to admit a failure of imagination, a concession to weakness, always to have betrayed the image of the power of love we have encountered in the powerless Jesus on the cross" (Placher, 1994:21).

Vulnerability is Jesus on the cross.

Defining vulnerability through preaching

"Preaching that sees (and reframes), that names (and renames), that sighs (but also signs), that faces life's realities (and seeks the face of God), remains vulnerable in its deepest core, but is simultaneously drenched with hope. It remains a sign, not a final truth or "arrival" after being on route; rather an invitation to be led into mystery, into the "God dimension" of life. It remains a sign; never becoming a (new) status quo remains a glimpse of God's face, not a glorious vision; remains a lingering sense of the footsteps of God, not a full stop. Preaching invites, us into a world of *alternative imagination*" (Cilliers, 2016:53-56).

Before concluding this chapter, an American theologian, Ryan (2016) defines vulnerability in both a negative and positive form that brings more clarity in regards to the term when we look through the lens of a preacher.

According to Ryan *vulnerability is not:*

- *Me confessing all my sins to the congregation*
- *Me using my life in every illustration; God is on display, not me.*

It is:

- *Me making sure to shine light on darkness in my life with trusted men, mature enough to handle it.*
- *Spending ample time in preparation confessing and applying the passage I am about to preach on; being vulnerable before God.*
- *Martyn Lloyd Jones defines preaching as "Logic on Fire". For me, I am being vulnerable when I am preaching "on fire".*

Conclusion

The hope of this chapter was to realise the richness of the word vulnerability. To summarize the chapter one can say, vulnerability is:

- To believe and accept your worth by receiving unconditional love and grace so that you can have true love and grace to share.
- To listen with a willingness to be transformed and trust and believe in that which you cannot see at the moment but experience through hope.
- To be willing to “cry things out” and sit with someone without giving advice and be content enough to just be there for the other person.
- To have enough courage not to ‘hide’ behind your title.
- To have the courage to make decisions and set boundaries that would often be rejected by some.
- To acknowledge our longing for love and community and be aware of the world outside our frame of reference.
- To be able to receive, have gratitude and celebrate special seasons in your life.
- To dare greatly and being able to appreciate the beauty of cracks.
- To be able to take time and come to terms with your own thoughts and the truth.
- To be honest but within the borders of self-control and patience.
- Jesus on the cross.

Chapter 2

Authority

We often focus on the issues at hand with regards to the preaching but not so much on the root causing it. Our image of God and definitions for terms like vulnerability, power, submission and authority, play a tremendous role in how one will approach life and share the Gospel. Placher (1994:3) states that the assumption that God means, first of all, power, runs throughout much of history with accompanying baggage. “God can do anything to anyone but no one can cause pain to God – such an account of omnipotence often seems central to the very definition of deity. God is perfect and if we want to be perfect, it follows that we ought to try to be as powerful as possible”.

In the previous chapter an attempt to find a deeper understanding for vulnerability was made. By looking through the lens of vulnerability and theology, a deeper understanding for ‘power’ and ‘authority’ will now be investigated.

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines authority as follow:

- The power to give orders or make decisions: the power or right to direct or control someone or something.
- The confident quality of someone who knows a lot about something or who is respected or obeyed by other people
- A quality that makes something seems true or real.

The different roles of authority and what legitimates it

I believe van Niekerk (2016) gives a great summary with regards to this question: “*Authority is delegated as stewardship for a task; authority has to do with the right and power to fulfil a function. There is therefore lawful and unlawful authority– think of a rebel leader or mugger.*

There is also functional authority within any sphere. Consider the president whose passport has to be stamped at a border by customs officer, or the corporal who searches the vehicle of the general at the gate.

There is also real and perceived authority – just because one has the right to lead does not mean people will automatically follow. Consider a pastor called by God and commissioned

by elders to lead a congregation, yet the right to speak into their lives are earned through trust. This is gained through a leader's character (notably integrity), perceived skill and in our day especially relationship.

One's call by God and commissioning by elders/leaders gives legitimacy to your authority (i.e. you have the right to wield authority) but one's character, skill and relationship with someone lends perceived authority (i.e. you have the power to influence through your earned authority). Good examples are Paul's instructions to young Timothy to grow in character (1 Tim 4:12-16), as also his requirements of eldership for both character and skills (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

Therefore, pastors in the pulpit may speak and lead with legitimate authority fuelled by conviction knowing they are called by God and commissioned by elders. Yet the pastor's integrity, relational proximity and degree of identification will increase their influence to move the congregation to follow their lead. The integrity, relational proximity and the member's ability to identify with the leader require vulnerability of the pastor – in his life and in the pulpit.”

The church has never been without leaders and responsibilities. Jesus chose his disciples (Matt 10:1-8) and called them to be representatives of Israel. Just like then, Jesus still chooses people and sends them out. We are called to be ambassadors for Christ on earth (WCC.1982:17-18).

Authority comes with great responsibility which can either be abused or used responsibly by the power invested in you. Words most commonly associated together are authority, obedience, submission and honour. The problem is how to get to the last three terms.

We find ourselves in a post-modern, narcissistic and liberal context where “assumed authority” just doesn't happen anymore. De Klerk and de Wet's research shows the diminishing modes of authority and the accompanying loss of power currently taking place in Western societies. With authoritarianism being threatened, the preacher is left with the reality of his/her vulnerability being exposed. This reality can either be side stepped or used to build on relational authority.

Power and authority are integral factors of any functioning group, society or organization. “Either the church will embrace the responsibility for using power and authority wisely or it

will be on the receiving end of internal and external forces that may use power and authority for less than noble purposes” (Kraybill, 2010:18).

“Every authority is instituted by God to represent Him and serve him; he also governs and upholds it and judges rebellion (Rom 12:1-7). Jesus made it clear he was sent with this authority [Col 1:15-16] as demonstrated in his teachings [matt 7:28-29], to forgive sins [matt 9:6-8], over evil spirits [mark 3:15], over sicknesses [Luke 9:1], over natural elements [mark 4:41] and to mete out eternal judgment [john 5:27]. Spheres of authority include civil government [Rom 13:1; 1pet 2:13], social (or family) [1pet 3:1-7], work place [Col 3:22-25] and the church [Heb 13:17] one's relation to authority include obedience to instructions [Col 3:20, 22], an attitude of submission [1pet 2:13] and expression of honour [1 timothy 6:1]” (Van Niekerk, 2016).

The role of identity within positions of authority

Paul writes in Ephesians: 4:11-12, “...and He gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some, pastors and teachers ¹²For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:” This is known as the fivefold ministry.

“Aristotle stressed self-knowledge as the most important virtue for a teacher. Whenever someone is in a position of power over another person, the person in power must be deeply aware of his or her inclinations, dispositions, strengths and weaknesses or else power may be abused” (Willimon, 2003:37). Functional authority for example can be found within a specific gifting of a preacher that has been acknowledged and respected. This is not a title given by the world, but a gift from God.

Long (2005:36) identifies 4 types of preachers: the pastor, the herald, the storyteller and the witness. Each one of these styles has strong and weak points one needs to be aware of.

The herald/teacher can be seen as the one who proclaims. The image contains a very high theological view of preaching since it emphasizes quite strongly the connection between preaching and the direct address to God. A weakness is that people often will experience them to be boring because of how they proclaim their literary interpretation of the Bible.

Where the herald image focused on the biblical text, the pastor's focus will be more on the listener. They are aware of the congregation's personal concerns. A weakness that often

occurs is their lack of boundaries and the tendency to try to solve problems by themselves rather than directing the congregation primarily to God.

The storyteller is a very creative preacher; he actually blends the best traits of both the herald and the pastor without bringing along their most serious faults. The warning for this type of preacher is to stick to what God says rather than being too imaginative and adapting things to what you actually want to say.

The preacher as a witness: This is important for any type of preacher. It gives a preacher authority in a new way. The preacher is not authoritative because of rank or power but because of what the preacher has seen and heard. The Word being preached is now revelation knowledge and not just head knowledge for the preacher (Long, 2005:36).

Peterson (1993:79) sees John the Baptist as the premier Biblical witness: "He must increase but I must decrease." The witness points to someone more important than him/herself.

It is important to know the different styles because of how they complement each other and emphasize the importance of teamwork. The great irony of power and authority is portrayed at the cross. Paul's image of the preacher here is not that of the herald, the pastor, the storyteller or witness as Long describes it. "The Gospel is foolishness. Preaching is folly. The preacher is a fool. Paul's words have haunted us over the past few years. They have haunted us as we teach preaching in the midst of a world shaped by almost overwhelming powers of domination and violence and death. Up against all of that, preachers speak for a few minutes from the pulpit. It seems like foolishness" (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012:18).

Peterson (1993:90) writes about the challenges of going into the ministry after many years of studying. Possessing a lot of head knowledge, but still left wondering what the most effective way to reach your congregation is. What gives you the authority to really speak into their lives?

The power of the cross

Louis Giglio mentioned (Passion, 2016) that authority lies in the middle of the Gospel at the foot of the cross. Throughout the ages no political power or any other authority figure (or figure of authority) could have brought complete reconciliation. The biggest hope for reconciliation and equality lies at the foot of the cross - the cross where Jesus' blood was poured out for every race, gender and age group without any exceptions. The cross has the

power to heal, reconcile and bring new life when we believe and accept the words Jesus spoke on the cross: “*Tetelestai*” the Greek word for – it is finished (John 19:13). This being said, the irony of the the cross can sometimes be described as foolishness.

Cilliers and Cambell (2012:17) mentions the foolishness at the heart of preaching by looking at, 1 Corinthians 1:17-25: “*For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.*

¹⁸ *For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* ¹⁹ *For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”* ²⁰ *Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* ²¹ *For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.* ²² *For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom,* ²³ *but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,* ²⁴ *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* ²⁵ *For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”*

In the midst of all this foolishness we still find ourselves desperate to understand more and keep stepping onto the pulpit with a supernatural hope in our hearts. Where does this hope and authority come from and what makes it legitimate?

Within the historical context crucifixion was one of the most shameful ways to die, but Jesus came to give a new definition to the cross. Within the culture of shame and honour, a man was willing to empty himself in obedience before God. “Paul understands that to take up your cross and follow Jesus (Mark 8:34) necessarily involves becoming a fool for the sake of Christ (1 Cor 4:10). This way does not involve a passive glorification of suffering but is rather the way of resistance and interruption, which creates the space for new perception and further resistance. It is the foolish way of love that challenges and parodies the world’s understanding of power and wisdom, refusing to play by the worlds standards even if that way leads to suffering and death” (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012:27).

Deciding to become a “fool” for Christ leaves us both vulnerable and powerful. Swart (2016) defines vulnerability as the opposite of defensiveness. To be willing not to pretend to be any stronger or weaker than what you really are; to be open both physically and emotionally to getting hurt and not necessarily be too concerned with pleasing men. This might sound foolish, but the real question is do we rather want to be seen as foolish by God or the world?

In the previous chapter was found that one of the most common definitions for vulnerability is the feeling of being exposed, but it is often within those moments where people can identify most with us. Jesus, naked and surrendered on the cross is a perfect example of this.

May (2016) states that one of the biggest challenges as a preacher was to try to prevent people from putting you on a pedestal. To be vulnerable is to have courage to be seen, which leads to trust and then to respect and relational authority in someone's life. Building relationship leads to an open heart which will be more likely to receive your message from the pulpit.

Foucault describes truth as liberating and power as repressive. Truth, the voice of reason and knowledge are all formulated as ineluctable opposed to power (Pasewark, 1993: 8). What legitimizes authority is reason and truth, but what makes it foolish is that a human being finds him/herself within a space of liminality, where we only see and know in part (1Cor 13:12).

Liminality

Campbell and Cilliers (2012:40-41) use several metaphors from (Tournier, 1968: 163), (Peterson, 2000: 20), Van Gennep (1960: 192-193) and (Franks and Meteyard, 2007: 216) to describe liminality. Tournier compares the term to the experience of being *on route*: having left your home but not yet having arrived at your destination.

Peterson uses the metaphor of a trapeze artist swirling through space in transit through mid-air, having been released from the arms of fellow trapeze artists and expecting to be caught in the firm and faithful grip of those waiting. Frank implies that liminality is an ambiguous phase between two situations or statuses. This space is filled with either potential or danger. Van Gennep notes that the liminal space can be that of uncertainty and instability, but it is exactly this phase which is critical to the regeneration accomplished in the social world through rites of passage, particularly those of death and rebirth.

Liminality will either be a space for a fear factor or creativity. This is a fear that often drives us to seek security (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012: 42). We often try to find this security in 'power' or a 'title'. You try to step on others to feel better about yourself.

This "fear factor" however should not be confused with the authority given to us by God through grace in which we can walk confidently. The difference between power being abused

and true authority is that the authority in God will not come out of our own strength but from being *plugged in* to a bigger Source. What really legitimizes our authority is the One who really has it and decided to share it with us.

If we want to boast it should be by boasting in what the Lord has done (2 Cor 10:17). Jeremiah states in chapter 9:24 that those who wish to boast must boast about this: “that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord, who exercise kindness, justice and righteousness to the earth and that I delight in these things.”

The New Testament does not use the word “authority” (*exousia*) when referring to God or Jesus. When the word refers to others like for example Paul or the disciples, some phrases are typically included that remind the reader that such authority is simply derived from God (Kraybill, 2010:19).

Authority doesn’t lie in being perfect, but in acknowledging our brokenness and receiving the power of the cross as a gift. We can only be righteous because He is righteous. The basic meaning of ‘righteousness’ and its cognates in the Bible derives from the Hebrew word *sedeg*, which can be translated as, *in right standing with God* or *just/justification*. (Wright, 1988: 590). “We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ and this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are” Romans 3:22 (NLV).

“The liminal space can truly also be a highly creative one, where the combinations of new forms and relations is possible” (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012: 42). Preachers often feel obligated to give advice out of a fear of not knowing. But this liminal/awkward space they might find themselves in while counselling is an ideal opportunity for the Holy Spirit to come and give answers. It is a space where two people will really be able to relate as fellow human beings searching together.

It is quite clear that it doesn’t matter so much who we are, but what or who we decide to receive. Sanborn (2006: 3) quotes an anonymous famous politician who said: “The longer the title, the less important the job”. Working at a church which is also an organisation can definitely be described as a job, which it also is, but the element of being called by God and the church as a family, must not be lost in the process.

Church family

The church loves to describe themselves as family. In family systems therapy the criterion of whom to counsel is no longer who has the symptom, but who has the greatest capacity to bring change to the system (Kaybrill, 2010: 25). We often focus so much on the issues at hand and forget the grace to overcome it. Compassion is very important, but the way we show it is as well. Blessed fellowship will come from a place of fullness so that you can overflow. The discipline to spend time with God must also be a priority. Jones (2008: 2) states that both what we know and who we are is important.

Comparing the church with a healthy family, it must be a safe space to voice your concerns, be yourself, where you accept one another and where there is grace for one another. Family is the one place where you are most often more likely to be 'grumpy' because you know they will/must still love you. This is unfortunately not always the case in a church context. The church wants to be known by their love, but unfortunately it's also a space where judgement and certain requirements to fit into a certain box often get the upper hand. Rules and disciplines are crucial, but enough space to grow into that place and to really be where you are and not where you feel you are supposed to be, as well. It is the truth that will set people free, not striving to fit in. The preacher has the authority as the leader of a church to create a safe space within healthy boundaries and disciplines.

If preachers want people to follow them, he/she must also know how to follow. If a leader longs for submission and respect, he/she must know how to submit and respect. If a preacher wants people to trust him/her, they must be trustworthy and also be willing to trust primarily in God as well as the people around them. This brings us yet again to a place of vulnerability and courage.

Equipping and submission

"Every leader needs a spiritual director. The doctor who is his own doctor has a fool for a doctor. When you exercise authority all the time when do you have a chance to practise obedience?" (Peterson, 1987: 165)

In the natural, it makes perfect sense that a team needs a coach and to win the team needs to abide by the rules. Members of the team must hold each other accountable and every action holds serious consequences regarding the team's success. When we draw a parallel to the spiritual realm, it becomes more difficult for our minds to grasp. We get offended,

every man is for him/herself and we are living for our own glory. The heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9) and every leader needs a mentor and accountability.

We are an army for God that needs to work together within a certain structure. If I have to go to war I will join the army and not an individual. To be effective, we need community and people around us that can cover our weaknesses.

Jacobs (2016) states that we are moving into a time where the congregation also has a more realistic view on what the preacher can and cannot do. One can clearly feel the tension when you walk into a congregation where the preacher tries to be a winner in everything. Disappointment and offence follows from the congregation's side.

The portrayal of the preacher as "Superman" and someone who needs to be perfect before anyone can submit under his leadership is unrealistic. Authority does not lie in being perfect but in God. If leaders were in fact perfect, the temptation to worship them instead of God would be a big temptation. One might go so far to say, the preacher's brokenness, glorifies God's name, because of the realisation that He stays God and that we all really need His grace.

From the listeners' side: *The reason for our submission to a leader must not be in the fact that the preacher is perfect but because we fear God and want to build His Kingdom in an effective way. This however does not mean that we should not question and just follow someone like headless chickens. Phillipians 2:12: "...we should work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" It does however mean that we should ask ourselves whether our questioning comes from a pure or offended place and whether we are still focusing on His Kingdom and building it.*

The effect power has on us and how it operates

Basil Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster states the following: "Leaders want to achieve great things for God, rather than to respond first to a love which Jesus has first given to us; 'to be spectacular' rather than humble because conscious of our frailty and limitations; 'to be powerful' rather than just to be loving and serving and at great personal cost" (Nouwen.1989:29).

Although power can make leaders more confident, which we need in leaders, the danger is also there that the more power a person possesses the more self-focused one can become.

Having a right to a lot of things can easily be manipulated and might start out as “innocent” but could soon develop into abusing your position. With regards to a preacher and the pulpit, this platform can be abused by voicing hurt and personal issues from it.

On the other side having power within an authoritative position is also a privilege and can change society. We are still on a great commission with the Holy Spirit as our Source, to be able to do exceedingly more than we could ever think.

A brief Christological and Pneumatological perspective on authority

A theme on authority runs throughout the New Testament, encouraging believers to adopt attitudes toward power and servant hood that mirror the life of Jesus. There is a great paradox of power and authority captured in Jesus. Jesus the *kurios* (“Lord” the same title commonly given to the emperor) washes his disciples’ feet and encourages them to go out and do the same (John 13:15) (Kaybril, 2010: 20).

As proclaimed in the Gospels, Jesus challenged beliefs, identities, and ways of perceiving. He crossed boundaries and transgressed religious and social conventions. Through both His deeds and words He invites us into a community of being and becoming (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012: 104).

Jesus was and is the perfect role model, a perfect preacher. Looking at the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) Campbell and Cilliers (2012:118) describes it as *foolish*. Preaching that we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us after an event like the attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11, sounds like folly. Still at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matt 7:24-27 Jesus challenges us to reconsider wisdom and folly: *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”*

The encouragement toward servant hood continues in Phil 2:5-7 where Paul writes, “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who emptied himself, taking the form of a slave.” The emphasis on servant hood in the early church is striking because the dominant

(Roman empirical) culture was highly stratified and class- conscious. Slaves was right at the bottom in terms of status (Kaybril, 2010: 20).

A good leader is one who is affirming of others and not threatened by their accomplishments and gifts, a team player and inspirational. We do not need more glorified managers but Spirit anointed leaders who understand, embody and employ New Testament Christianity in their teaching and by their example (Dodd, 2001: 150).

Within the context of church leadership, with servant hood and humility also comes great authority. We see a lot of evidence that both Jesus and church leaders were vested with power, especially in the context of a mission. Jesus acted and spoke as one having authority (Mark 1:22), granted to Him by God (John 12:49). Jesus sent His followers out and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out and to cure every disease (Matt. 10:1) in the great commission (Matt 28:18-19) Jesus states: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Luke begins his narrative in Acts 1:8 with Jesus' assurance to his followers that they will receive power (*dunamis*) when the Holy Spirit has come upon them and that they will be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. These power and authority references within a musicological context suggest that by the power and authority invested in us, enables the church to cross barriers of taboo, class, race and nations to reconcile people with God (Kaybril, 2010: 23).

What the world and even sometimes the church, calls *foolish*, Jesus sees as wise and powerful. This is the *foolish* Word that we are called to preach today (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012: 123). I just hope there are enough *foolish*, courageous preachers out there that are willing to do so. Jesus didn't need a title or men's approval to get people to follow Him. His perfect love and courageous and obedient heart that went beyond human understanding convinced people.

Do we need a title to be powerful?

Sanborn (2016:1-18) states that leadership is influence, the simple fact of having a title won't make you a leader. He asks whether we are driven by the need to contribute or to gain and states that true leadership and greatness lies in character. He touches on some key characteristics of titled and untitled leaders. They:

- Believe they can positively shape their lives and careers.
- Lead through their relationships with people, as opposed to their control over people.

-
- Collaborate rather than control.
 - Persuade others to contribute, rather than order them to.
 - Get others to follow them out of respect and commitment rather than fear and compliance.

The real test for great leadership according to Sanborn is: If you had no title or ability to reward or penalize others, could you still get them to follow you? Little actual power exists in a title alone (Sanborn, 2016:5).

Using these questions as a lens to look at a preacher, a lot of the preacher's character can be analysed through his/her life's sermon. Before people will follow you without a title, they need to trust you. With a title, people easily place their trust/distrust in the title of "preacher" because of their preconceived ideas, not even knowing the person which can be dangerous or unfair. Listeners often put too much trust in the title of a preacher which often leads to idolizing and great disappointment when the preacher doesn't meet their expectations. The other side of the coin is that listeners are completely closed because of offence in the past. Although the listener also has a responsibility to work through their own offence and idolizing, the preacher as the leader of the church can either contribute positively or negatively to the process.

Counting the numbers in your congregation also doesn't necessarily reflect the number of people following you. The reality is that a lot of people just go to church out of a bad conscience and the church they chose is the most convenient and closest to home they could find.

Sanborn (2006: 7-9) leads us into considering a figure who was highly educated and born into a family of influence and still it wasn't until he gave up his social position that he gained power. He was both a highly religious person and one of the most feared religious persecutors of his day. He wanted to identify and punish all the followers of Jesus. This religious leader was first known as Saul who was convinced that this new group who followed Jesus were a threat to society and traditional religion. After hearing a voice saying, "Saul, why do you persecute me?" and being struck blind (Acts 9:4) he converted and accepted Jesus as his Saviour. Saul gave up much and became a new person, even his name changed to Paul. He went from a life of privilege to a life of ministry and suffered for his faith. His aim was to build up and glorify Jesus. He had no personal agenda for recognition or gain. Paul led the early church and his impact continues to be felt 2000 years later.

Conclusion

A willingness to be vulnerable will lead to courage, trust and in the end authority to really speak into people's life. We live in a time where building relationships is the key to open doors for impartation in people's lives. We find ourselves within a space of liminality where we receive authority by grace for certain situations, times, roles and opportunities but this leaves us vulnerable and dependent on God within the unknown. Authority is a gift from God in which we cannot boast because it was not ours to begin with. The power of the cross brings change, not a title, and gives us the ability to inspire and love.

One of the biggest reasons for our struggle to be vulnerable is because we are scared that we might look like a fool. 1 Cor 4:9 *"For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, like men sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men."*¹⁰ *We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honour, but we in disrepute."*¹¹ *To the present hour we hunger and thirst, we are poorly dressed and buffeted and homeless,"*¹² *and we labour, working with our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; "*¹³ *when slandered, we entreat. We have become, and are still, like the scum of the world, the refuse of all things"*

I would rather ask myself whether I am willing to be a fool for Christ? Is it not exactly the place where I realise my dependence on Christ and my need for a Saviour and His grace where I will have the *power* to overcome and the *authority* to share like never before?

Chapter 3

Images of God

We already touched on liminality and these theological tensions between form and reform, fragment and identity and being and becoming has consequences for our images of God (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012:52). As we continue to explore our view on power, authority and vulnerability, we will briefly zoom in on the images we have of God within the liminal space we find ourselves.

The previous chapter, regarding our view of authority, ended with 1 Cor 4:9. I would like to start chapter 3 by using the same *pericope*. 1 Cor 4:1-5: *"This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.² Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself.⁴ For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.*

The ultimate mystery of God and lack of control or complete understanding leaves one vulnerable. In this space there are usually two possibilities of *what comes next*, you can either appreciate the beauty of the unexplainable or you are going to try and find absolutes. This does not however mean that one must not have strong beliefs and speak with the authority given to us by grace. However, what it does mean is that one should be open to have the hard conversations and be willing to be transformed and to expand your image of God. You must be willing to step out of a comfort zone and search not just inside but also outside your frame of reference. The quest to learn more about God, will never stop (that is what makes Him God).

Everyone wants to provide an explanation about God and although we can learn a lot from each other, God still goes beyond modernity. There is a confidence in the power of reason, but it will always be challenged by a mystery which championed clarity. Modern research has yet again become aware of the limitations of human reason. Moral responsibility and action in the world is dependent on transcendent critique and empowerment beyond itself. Knowledge about ourselves is inseparable from our knowledge about God and other (De Gruchy, 2013:111).

Campbell and Cilliers (2012:55-56) states that many God-images tend to smack of power and become reduced to human agendas. There is a big temptation to create a type of theology that promises control and power, one that is directly opposite to that of God's power in weakness. We always try to put a *handle* on the cross so that theologies of power create an image that is comfortable to work with. God will continuously surprise the church like He did by sending Jesus as the Messiah to die on a cross to demonstrate His power. The mystery is in the attempt to continuously try to unlock the Bible with keys entrusted by God.

Do preachers still share from a place where they stand in awe of who God is? Where and how does that leave us with regards to vulnerability and empowerment on the pulpit?

God the Creator

Barron (2007) states that the primary image of God in the Old Testament is that of the Creator. Everything around us speaks of God, but is still not God Himself. When we make something on earth God, it clearly states that it is idolatry (anything that takes the place of God in your life). This however does not mean we can't sense God through His creation. It speaks of God, but is not God.

Imago Dei

Genesis 1:26-27 *"Then God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."*²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them".

There are already countless books written on Gen 1: 26-27, the question asked a lot is why God created us in His image? Piper (2011) states that images are made to *image*, to set forth reality and to represent. We are representatives of God and to be a representative of something you need to know who or what you represent.

Being created in the image of God and thus representatives of God Wright (2010) explains through using an angled mirror as a metaphor. It enables you to see in both directions. First you need to know God to be able to reflect that which you know. We see God (although it is still only in part) and the world at the same time. Our reflection of God must be in such a way that it will attract the world to see what is on the other side of the mirror.

The irony is that we have just said that God will always stay a mystery. We find ourselves yet again in a liminal and vulnerable space. How can one represent something you will never be able to fully know? The challenge is to keep on searching and get to know God better. To continually grow so that you can represent God to the best of our human ability and by His grace. To confidently speak about the glimpses God gave you about Himself, but to stay humble and hungry for more, knowing that it still only a glimpse. *The only reason one can relate, create, worship, communicate, reason and love is because you are created in the image of God.*

God as Holy and perfect

There is a need for an awakening of who God is. It is only when you taste His perfect love that it can drive out all fear. When you see how almighty He is, you will be able to see your troubles in a new perspective in comparison to Him. It is a glimpse of His holiness that leaves us in awe and with open hearts at His throne.

Piper (2012) gives an exegesis on Isaiah 6 which reflects 7 glimpses of God:

Isaiah's Vision of the Lord

Isaiah 6:1-4: *"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!' ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke."*

God is alive: "In the year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord..." God is the everlasting Ruler. Kings will come and go but God has been and will be the One who reigns forever. "From everlasting to everlasting, you are God" (Psalm 90:2). He had no beginning and therefore depends on nothing for his existence. He always has been and always will be alive.

God is authoritative: "...sitting upon the throne..." He is the One who has absolute authority over the whole universe. "God is never at wits' end with his heavenly realm. He sits. And he sits on a *throne*. All is at peace and he has control. The throne is his right to rule the world. We do not give God authority over our lives. He has it whether we like it or not." Piper quotes Virginia Stem Owens who wrote in *Reformed Journal* some years ago:

*"Let us get this one thing straight. God can do anything
he damn well pleases, including damn well.
And if it pleases him to damn, then it is done, ipso facto, well.
God's activity is what it is. There isn't anything else.
Without it there would be no being, including human
beings presuming to judge the Creator of everything that is."*

God is omnipotent: "...sitting on the throne, *high and lifted up*..." God is superior. He is over all authorities. His throne is not one among many. Isaiah 46:10 "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose". Daniel 4:35: "He does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand". It is within this omnipotent authority of the living God where we can find refuge, full of joy and power if we keep His covenant.

God is Resplendent: "...sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, *and His train filled the temple*..." Piper uses the metaphor of a picture of a bride's dress, covering up the stairs she walks on. God's robe fills the entire heavenly temple. No one or nothing can compare. The fullness of God can be shown in a thousand ways.

God is revered: "Above him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew." No one really knows what these creatures were, but even they could not look at the Lord. They did not even feel worthy enough to expose their feet in His presence.

God is Holy: "And one called to another, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!'"

Language is reaching its limits with the word Holy. The root of holiness means to be cut off or separated from something. After being separated from something the next step will be devotion to something. The word holy can be used as: holy ground, holy Sabbath, holy city, holy promises, holy men and women, holy kiss etc. Almost anything can be holy when it is separated from the common and devoted to God.

What happens when one applies this definition to God? What is the difference between God and everything else? God is holy means God is God. What can we separate God from to make Him God? God is God because He is separated from anything that is not God.

Exodus 3:13-14: *Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"* ¹⁴ *God said to Moses, "I am who I am"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I am has sent me to you.'"* God is not dependent on anything or anyone.

The second part of holiness is to be devoted to... God does not need to be devoted to anyone but Himself. "His being and his character are utterly undetermined by anything outside himself. He is not holy because he keeps the rules. He wrote the rules! God is not holy because he keeps the law. The law is holy because it reveals God. God is absolute. Everything else is derivative."

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him" (Habakkuk 2:20). Language runs out when it comes to the word, holiness.

God is glorious: *"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory."*

Why does this verse end with "glory" and not "holiness"? When God shows his holiness you see glory. Leviticus 10:3: "I will show myself *holy* among those who are near me, and before all the people I will be *glorified*." God's glory is a manifestation of His holiness.

He ends by questioning what this has to do with Jesus incarnate as the God-man, crucified and raised from the dead, at the centre of history.

Isaiah 6 portrays God as high, majestic, holy, sovereign, resplendent and authoritative. In verse 10 God says that this message will harden the people. They will reject such a picture of God but in verse 13 the chapter ends with a reference to a stump of faithfulness that remains and Isaiah speaks of a "holy seed".

Isaiah 53:2-3: *"Who hath believed our report? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? ² For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."*

Isaiah 53 describes this seed as the suffering servant who had “no majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire Him. It is the opposite picture portrayed in Isaiah 6. In John 12:38 and 40, one sees that these are the two texts that John quotes in reference to the rejection of Jesus. Jesus was the fulfilment of both the majesty of Isaiah 6 and the suffering servant of Isaiah 53. Yet the people still rejected Him. John 12:43: “The people loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.”

Humans love their own glory more than anything. Both the pictures of a suffering Messiah and a glorious God take our own glory away. To serve like Jesus did, is not always very glorifying and when all the glory goes to God and? His greatness there is also little left for us. Still God did not abandon his people, Israel. Romans 11:25-26 and 31: ““A partial hardening has come upon Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And in this way all Israel will be saved. ³¹ So Israel too has been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you Gentiles they also may now receive mercy”

What a testimony that God is in control. When Paul stands back and looks at the plan, he worships: “Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33–36).

Reflecting on the sermon above, trying to be a perfect and holy preacher does not mean you fear God. The only way we can be righteous is because He is righteous. Psalm 18:30: “As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord’s Word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.” The only way to Holiness is through a graceful, perfect God. Peter 1:15-16: “But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.” Leviticus 11:44: “For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.”

Jesus on the cross and the image of a vulnerable God

Most people today will primarily think of God as a powerful, Almighty and Sovereign God. We long for this powerful God to do something about all the wars, poverty, violence and injustice in the world. There is almost a longing for the “great, mighty, Messiah” to strike people dead and bring justice, like in the ancient world. We are still just as surprised as the audience in the Gospels, about the idea of a vulnerable God on the cross. It is hard to get our minds around such a God.

“Those of us who suffer from the perpetual urge for power protest when “our” God becomes powerless. Such a thought drives us into uncomfortable zones and theological uncertainty. For us, this lack of control is the true scandal. We would prefer certainties, systems, eternal myths, monuments and solidified “securocracy”, which we can then use to salvage God’s power. We suffer from the illusion that we need to keep God upright and intact. We think that we need power to be able to keep God in business. We empower ourselves to empower God. In effect, we suffer from the illusion that we can take the place of God. It is therefore also for our own sake – our own salvation – that we need a God whose power comes through weakness, which suggest many surprising and, for some, disturbing images and faces of God” (Campbell and Cilliers, 2012: 56).

One often focuses on the victory of the cross and the power of the resurrection, but forget the significance of the cross and the way Jesus died. The way He was willing to suffer. How much He must have loved us and God to be obedient to the end. How exposed He must have felt naked on the cross.

The image of God as a powerful warrior is sometimes much easier to focus on, because you can still run away from the truth, and just fight, fight, fight. There is no time to sit at our Father’s feet, we are in a war. It is like fighting with a blunt sword and never taking the time to go and sit at your Father’s feet to sharpen your sword. What you might see as wasting time, will actually make you a lot more effective. With a sharp sword, you will do a lot more in a shorter amount of time, rather than fighting years with a blunt sword seeing little results.

To see God, just as a Mighty Warrior, leads to an impersonal relationship with God. Matt 7:21-23: *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”²² On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do*

many mighty works in your name?’²³ And then will I declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’

The Greek word for knew is *ginosko*, which can be translated in other passages as *intercourse between a man and a woman*. The meaning of this word speaks of an intimacy that God longs for. One tends to run from people and God when you feel vulnerable or exposed. Adam and Eve realised they were naked in the garden (Gen 2-3) and hid from God. God’s reaction was still to seek them even when He knew exactly where they were. Would we not have more courage to trust God and speak to Him as a son and daughter if we had an intimate relationship with Him?

True hurt and the roots of issues are exposed when you take time to sit at the Father’s feet. Perfect love casts out all fear (1 John 4:18). It is God’s kindness that will lead us to repentance (Rom 2:4). He is the One you can relate with in any area of your life, if you get to know Him and make yourself vulnerable (leaving the handle of control), you will realise it more. This does not however mean that you should become self-focused and never serve because we are continually trying to get over our own issues. (Through serving and seeing a bigger need outside of your own, one tends to get over your own issues much faster.) It does however mean that we need to have something to give, before we just give out of an unhealthy and striving place.

God as One who has compassion

Exodus 3:7-8: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings and have come down to deliver them.”

As Israel stumbles and the covenant is ignored or distorted, God is pained and angered, reproaching wrongdoing and the broken relationships it fosters. When suffering occurs and injustice gains sway, God empathizes and mourns. God has compassion and gives of the divine self. God’s creative and providential presence is vulnerable. Vulnerability, the capacity to undergo and suffer the other, is an inescapable part of giving. As God becomes relationally open to God’s gift of creation and lovingly embraces creatures as distinct and valuable beings, God shows vulnerability. The centre of the Christian witness radiates with an inclusive and vulnerable love that is Christological shaped (Reynolds, 2008: 165 and 198).

“Within the image of a Messiah who would shout out an order and the universe would tremble, I had waited for a mighty revelation of God. But my epiphany bore little resemblance to the God I was expecting or the God of my dreams. I saw a God in a sip-puff wheelchair, that is, by blowing and sucking on a straw like device. Not an omnipotent, self-sufficient God, but neither a pitiable, suffering servant. In this moment I beheld God as a survivor, un pitying and forthright. I recognized the incarnate Christ in the image of those judged, “not feasible,” “unemployable” with “questionable quality of life. Here was God for me” (Eiesland, 1994: 89).

Yet God is love (1John 4:7-21) and to love is to be vulnerable. God cannot change, so throughout the Old and New Testament, God is love. To love will always be a leap of faith that we take, with the possibility of getting hurt. Nouwen (1989:14) defines vulnerability as the way Jesus came to show God’s love.

Barron (2007) states that the *invisible* God in the Old Testament becomes visible through Jesus in the New Testament. That which was hidden is now *available*. Placher (1994: 7-16) identifies love as a willingness to take risks, to care for the other in a way that causes the other’s fate to affect one’s own, to give to the other at real cost to oneself, to chance rejection. He also states that an honest reader will wrestle hard to fit the pieces of this seemingly violent God and God of love, encountered in different parts but actually the same story, together. What a mystery.

Before you can really have power, you need to receive grace. You can only truly be powerful and holy by the grace of God. When you think of God just as a King, Almighty and powerful you will fear and obey Him much easier, but will you really be free? 2 Corinthians 3:17: “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

Jesus becomes more and more identified in God, in obediently surrendering His freedom to the One who has complete freedom. Within this freedom He took all the risks of vulnerability. The obedience Jesus portrayed turned out to be the truest kind of freedom, in which one has chosen the life that meaningfully fulfils one’s destiny (Placher, 1994:15).

In the end God stays a mystery, but we should not stop seeking different perspectives of God and stop to broaden our understanding. It seems like the more we get to know God and the different images of Him, more people will feel welcome in church. Our knowledge of God will always stay liminal and our dependence on Him great. This must only make us more

grateful that He came to make Himself vulnerable on the cross so that one can have the liberty to share the good news and dare to be creative.

He is both the Lion and the Lamb. He is the perfect preacher...

*With feet full of dust, you kneeled down to wash others
You reached out to the outcast and called them sisters and brothers
You entered Jerusalem on a donkey
You humbled yourself onto death*

*You came to be the difference
You preached the unexpected
You encouraged others to be who You know they can be,
You walked the talk
You are the truth, the way and the life
You are love*

*You saw greatness where others saw weakness
You turned the other cheek where others wanted to fight
You saw a daughter of God where others saw a prostitute
You saw richness where others saw poverty*

*You knew everything still you answered with questions...
You are our powerful God yet you died on a cross
You resisted the proud and showed mercy to a murderer on the cross*

*Your obedience is our salvation
Your vulnerability on a cross gave us authority, freedom and courage
Your life is our example*

*What do we do with this?
What do we tell others about You?
What is the image my life portrays of You?*

*Might I be the only Bible some people around me read?
Am I trying to be You in others' lives or do I simply lead them to You?
Am I willing to have the hard conversations, show up and be seen because I know You are
with me?*

*Have mercy on us
Show us how to love like you did
and let that be our sermon....*

Sucelle Olivier

Chapter 4

The context of a South African preacher

Asking the question, 'why is it going on?' (Osmer, 2012:1-11), a reality check with regards to the ideal portrayed in chapter 1-3 will be investigated. We live in a context where there are painful realisations we need to face. The secular world says with a loud voice that we can take care of ourselves. We don't need church and priests. Everyone wants to be in control; unfortunately, it comes with a price, named loneliness, depression, boredom and emptiness (Nouwen, 1989:19). Followers of Christ become fewer as the "fans" of Jesus increase. To be a fan requires much less loyalty than to be a follower.

Context and culture

Context and culture play a tremendous role in how a preacher approaches the pulpit. A South African preacher finds him/herself in one of the most diverse countries globally. A rainbow nation, where everyone has a right and eleven different languages can be found. A country that faced challenges like the apartheid system and is still carrying some of the consequences. A nation where you will find different cultures, racism, crime, violence, extreme poverty and protesting, but also role models, love, church communities, friendly and welcoming faces and social workers. You will find a nation coming together to watch rugby or soccer, a Sunday barbecue and one of the most beautiful landscapes on earth.

This being said hopelessness often occurs in South Africa. We find it in our view of politics, a drought, violence, crime, racism, church politics, etc. If we look at the current state of South Africa you will find many reasons to lose hope, but also many to still have hope. The choice is in each individual's hands. One must however face reality and be honest about our hopelessness, to really be able to gain hope again. The preacher within this context finds him or herself with an impossible task, humanly speaking; to keep hope alive in times of hopelessness. With this task is also the quest to fight for justice and reconciliation.

Fawcett highlights the fact that, that which we see in the public isn't always the whole truth. The media likes drama and sensation. We don't see a lot of news about the positive things that happened or is busy happening. We see the hate between the black and white people on television, but don't know about the stories at home of reconciliation (Fawcett, L. 2000:142).

It is important to realise the facts about the reality which you find yourself in, but also to focus on the positive things as well. The aim is to have a mind-set of overcoming rather than trying to survive and to speak life, God's Word and promises into situations and stop moaning.

Reconciliation and shame

"The definition of reconciliation seems so obvious to us until we really get into serious discussions alienated from us." John de Gruchy. Reconciliation can't happen before repentance. Repentance cannot happen without humility. You must realize that true reconciliation doesn't just happen as easy as you say the word. It is not difficult to discern that the gospel is about overcoming alienation and estrangement between God and us, between us and others and between human beings and the creation, but where do you start to actually get this right?

The covenantal relationships in our life are very important when it comes to the issue being addressed. The relationship you have with God affects the relationship you have with the people around you and your environment. There will always be conflict and suffering around us but how we see and response to it is going to make the change.

Shame in our personal life and country affect this lens that we look through. When we deny the shame we have about our country or ourselves, it leads to addictions and false imaginations. Branshaw (1988:67-97) writes how shame manifests itself through addictions like alcoholism, drug abuse, eating disorders, perfectionism, compulsive lifestyles, over activism, striving for power and control, arrogance, depression, people-pleasing, envy, criticism and blame, patronizing, to name a few. Our toxic shame won't let us go inward; it is just too painful and hopeless to go there.

Something that brought a lot of shame in our South African context is apartheid. It can be seen as the root cause of different manifestations of shame, but also as the root of great fruits. Within the time of apartheid De Gruchy (1987:168) ends his book 'Theology and Ministry in Context and Crises' with the following statement: "It is not for nothing that worship and spirituality have been discovered anew by those engaged in the struggle for justice in the world. This has been as true in Latin America as it is true in South Africa. Of course, many have been so alienated from the life of the church that they have rejected not only the church and worship, but also belief and hope in God. Indeed, political atheism, which is sometimes the product of false religion and a reaction to the attempt to give Christian

legitimacy to oppression, is rife within our context and understandably so. But it is also true that many who are militant for justice have discovered the reality of worship and prayer in a new way.”

Reflecting on this statement and comparing it with our modern context, the struggle is still real, maybe just in different forms. There is something beautiful that can be found in an ‘imperfect’ context. It is in times of struggle that people need each other and are forced to become vulnerable. It is precious to see how persecuted countries forget about secondary issues and take hands to pray together while being persecuted. By looking through the lens of the preacher, the context we find ourselves in plays a definite role on how we share the gospel.

Using the past as a lens to look at the present, Bate (1991: 102-103) encouraged the following wishes to be priority in regards with Evangelisation in South Africa, 1991.

- Proclaiming and actualising the dignity and value of each person and culture within the society.
- Healing the victims of the crises they found themselves involved in by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Actively working to build community amongst all Christians and within the society.
- Naming and confronting the evil existing within the structures of society and indicating the presence of structures of sin which trace their roots to the action of men.
- Proclaiming and actualising a Salvation understood in terms of a liberation from the structures already specified by means of the commitment and involvement of the Community of Faith within the society.
- Adopting a modality of service towards the society in which we live.
- Moving towards a new Culture in South Africa transformed by the Gospel. A Gospel where all people and groups are respected.
- Living in an attitude of hope that the Lord is determined to build His Kingdom among us.

This was written in a time where people longed for freedom within the context of apartheid. It is still however very applicable to our country twenty-two years later. There are many victims of racism and violence that still need healing for all that it took from them. Some people feel like hostages in their own homes because of the security systems they depend on while others are dying of hunger because no one cares.

Looking at the brief background of the geographical context we find ourselves in, we definitely need courageous preachers and leaders to share good news from a place of good character, vulnerability and authority. There are however various obstacles on the way to the pulpit. The root cause of these obstacles can be seen as being the culture of shame we find ourselves in.

An attempt to define shame and different manifestations of it, within the parish will follow where the focus will mainly be on the challenges preachers face which prevent them from sharing from a place of vulnerability, authority and free of toxic shame.

Identifying shame:

Bradshaw (1988:3) mentions two forms of shame namely, nourishing shame and toxic shame.

Nourishing shame: Broadway explains this through a story about a sports caster who spoke candidly about his failure to be used by a major network that had hired him. His openness and honesty was beautiful. His voice carried his disappointment and he seemed totally aware that despite all his achievements, he had some real limitations. This was an expression of healthy shame that moves us to get our basic needs met. "Healthy shame is the basic metaphysical boundary for human beings. It is the emotional energy which signals us that we are not God and that we have made and will make mistakes that we need help" (Bradshaw, 1988:3 and 4).

Toxic shame: The shame that binds you. It is no longer an emotion that signals our limits but stage of being and a core identity. It gives you a sense of worthlessness. It is like internal bleeding and exposure to oneself lies at the heart of toxic shame. This will guard a person against exposing his inner-self to others and also to him or herself. Shame is the fear of disconnection. We are cognitively, physically, spiritually, emotionally created with the need of love and belonging (Bradshaw, 1988 10). It removes someone from reality and prevents us from daring greatly.

"Shame derives its power from being unspeakable. That's why it loves perfectionists – it's so easy to keep us quiet. If we cultivate enough awareness about shame to name it and speak to it, we've basically cut it off at the knees. Shame hates having words wrapped around it. If we speak shame it begins to wither. (Brown, 2012: 58 and 68). To summarise: Shame

derives power through not speaking about it. It loves perfectionism and will prevent creativity and daring to think out of the box.

Bradshaw (1988:61) defines perfectionism as follows: "Perfectionism denies healthy shame. It does so by assuming we can be perfect. Such an assumption denies our human finitude because it denies the fact that we are essentially limited. Perfectionism is involved whenever we take a negative norm or standard and makes it an absolute. Once an absolute, the norm becomes the measure of everything else. We compare and judge according to that standard."

To be a perfectionist will also then entail that you won't be able to receive grace easily, which means that you will not have a lot of grace for others. Being a perfectionist as a preacher, your sermons will most probably be great and well prepared, but the goal will be unrealistic and people might feel discouraged and condemned.

Bradshaw (1988:66) states that perfectionism in a religious context has been a major source of shaming. We use the Bible to justify all sorts of blaming and judgement. An example of this in our South African context is how we interpreted the Bible to justify apartheid. In Africa the Bible is often misinterpreted to abuse women where a negative norm or standard is seen as an absolute. Mouton (2012, 115) focuses on the consequences that a lack of education has when it comes to interpreting the Bible in Africa. Connections between culture and belief are made without enough context and knowledge of how to use the Bible as a hermeneutical lens. The preacher is seen as infallible and women end up viewing themselves based on his misinterpretation of scripture, believing his judgment to be absolute.

In Africa the perfect woman is the one who is submissive even up to the point of being abused, willing to turn the other cheek and the one who knows her place. In an American context the perfect woman will be described as a "perfect 10" according to Bradshaw (1988:69). This judgement is mainly focused on outward appearance, which leads to eating disorders. Perfectionism and forms of success manifest themselves differently in different contexts, but to really understand one's context and identify false absolutes, a broader perspective must be implemented in our investigation, especially when it comes to the preacher.

Important differences one should recognise when it comes to shame:

- The difference between shame and guilt

“The feeling of shame is about our very selves, not about some bad thing we did or said but about what we are” (Smedes, 1993: 6).

The difference between shame and guilt: Guilt will be when you say, “I did something wrong/bad”. Shame is when you say, “I am bad”. Shame is directed at the person whereas guilt is directed at what the person did. It is important to know the difference between these two terms. Brown’s research shows that a lot of people find it easier to deal with shame than vulnerability. She questions whether it is necessary to pass shame to get to vulnerability. It is only when we are brave enough to explore the darkness that we will find the power of light. Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging. We are universally afraid to talk about it and the less we talk about it, the more control it has (Brown, 2012: 60 -69).

How do you know when you experience the feeling of shame? Or when one preaches from a place of shame? Smedes (1993:6) gives some shame-toned feelings that will be an indication of shame in your life.

- *I feel like I am a fake*
- *I feel that if people who admire me really knew me they might have contempt for me.*
- *I feel inadequate*
- *When I look inside of myself, I seldom feel any joy at what I am.*
- *I constantly feel inferior to the “really” good people around me or out there.*
- *I feel as if God must be disgusted with me.*
- *I feel dirty inside.*
- *I feel like I will never be acceptable.*

With regards to preaching, one often struggles to feel good enough to deliver God’s Word because it is so perfect and we are not. This doesn’t necessarily come from a place of shame, but can also come from acknowledging our dependence on God. The danger of shame appears when the preacher only focuses on his/her brokenness and not on God the Healer, who gives us a new identity in Him.

The other side of the coin is of course spiritual pride or false humility. One can become arrogant. Coming back to what Paul writes in 1 Cor 1: 27-31, *“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, and not many were of noble birth.”* ²⁸*God chose what is low and despised in the world, even*

things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹*so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.* ³⁰*And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,* ³¹*so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

God put to shame the wise according to worldly standards (v27). He chose what is “weak” to “shame” the strong. The moment we start to preach out of a place of shame, self-worth is often attached to (the success of) what we develop or create. The focus will be more on the congregation’s reactions or how many are still awake than the Word needed to be shared. Smedes (1993: 6) writes that shame can come over you even when a person just stares at you or when you think everyone is clucking at how skinny or how fat or clumsy you are.

Shame keeps you from living. It is that moment when you realise you won’t share something, just because there is too much on the line. It is when you share a product you feel good about and others don’t receive it the way that you had hoped and are crushed by it. It is when you think that if what you offer is no good, you are no good. You have basically allowed your self-worth to rest on what people think. When our self-worth isn’t on the line, we are much more courageous. We take risks and share our raw talents and gifts (Brown, 2012: 63-64).

Smedes (1993:11-15) states the difference between:

- Feeling shame and embarrassed. (We feel embarrassed because we might have *looked* bad and we feel shame because we think we *are* bad.)

Bradshaw (1988, 7) suggests that embarrassment is one of many faces for healthy shame. The definition Smedes use for shame will be defined as “toxic shame” according to Bradshaw which explains the necessity to distinguish between shame and embarrassment.

To define embarrassment according to healthy shame Bradshaw explains it as a situation you find yourself in where you feel exposed and caught off guard. This can either be in the form of clumsiness, a breach of etiquette or interpersonal sensitivity. It is the manifestation of our human limits.

- Feeling shame and being depressed. (Depression is worse and deeper than shame. It goes beyond a feeling and will be diagnosed as an illness).

-
- Feeling shame and discouraged. (When one feels discouraged, you feel for a while that you are not up to *doing* the job that needs to be done. When you feel shame, you feel like the job self that will never be where it is supposed to be).
 - Feeling shame and feeling frustrated. (We get frustrated by our limits. To be frustrated by our limits is our destiny and our discomfort and a challenge to reach beyond them. This however is not our shame, but our glory.

Moving to honour, Neyrey (1991: 25) defines honour as the positive value of a person in his or her own eyes plus the positive appreciation of that person in the eyes of his or her social group. It serves as a register of social rating which entitles a person to interact in specific ways with superiors, equals and subordinates according to the specific culture one finds him/herself in.

We live in a world where we think shame is good and helps to keep people in line. This is not just wrong but dangerous and is highly associated with addiction, violence, aggression, depression, eating disorder and bullying. Research that involves an attempt to keep people inline through shame shows no positive outcome at all (Brown, 2012: 73).

Neyrey (1991:44-45) however says that by defining shame through the lens of honour, it can be seen as a positive symbol, meaning sensitivity for one's own reputation and sensitivity to the opinion of others. In this sense a positive value for shame can be found. Any human being worthy of the title "human" needs to have shame that is to be sensitive to its honour rating and to be perceptive of the opinion of others. It helps with social boundaries.

A sense of shame is also needed to remind us of our limits and that we need help and community. Without healthy signals of shame, we will not be in touch with our core dependency needs (Bradshaw, 1988:8).

Shame in a scarcity culture

A scarcity culture is one where you never feel good enough and might feel trapped within social boundaries. The more we don't feel good enough, the more our focus turns to ourselves to improve. Romans 2:4: "It is God's kindness that will lead us to repentance." When we only focus on ourselves, we end up being discouraged and feeling unfulfilled. The

more we focus on something, the bigger it gets. This will eventually lead to narcissism which is one of the biggest challenges preachers face.

Narcissism

“In a culture of omnivorous need, all-consuming narcissism, clergy who have no more compelling motive for their ministry than “meeting people’s needs” are dangerous to themselves and to a church that lacks a clear sense of who it is. It can easily become the relentless scanning and feeding of the ego. We must be called, recalled to the joy of being grasped by something greater than ourselves, namely our vocation to speak and to enact the Word of God among God’s people. Morality is a matter not of being unattached to any external determination, free to think and act on the basis of our personal feelings of what’s right. Contrary to the beliefs of liberalism, morality comes as a gracious by-product of being attached to something greater than ourselves, of being owned, claimed, commandeered for larger purposes” (Willimon, 2003: 24-25).

“You can have the biggest calling on your life, if you don’t have the character to carry it, it won’t last...” Anonymous

Jones (2012) compares leadership from 1950-1980 with modern leadership. Leaders were much more conscious about what they said in public and the media was a lot less involved. These days we look for every opportunity to involve the media and leaders have a much higher profile than before. I would like to summarise Jones’s view on narcissism according to his writings in the Church Order of 2012.

What are characteristics of a narcissist? They are usually good motivators, inspirational, creative, strategic, and have a broad perspective on things. They are often the ones who are determined to leave a legacy. They take risks, are very good with words, ask critical questions and know a lot about their specific field. They love to be admired and their “super ego” does not bother them that much. These are all good qualities; the question is how one will use these gifts.

Narcissists are usually also bad listeners, jealous, suspicious, easy to anger, have enemies. When they succeed in something it leads to self-importance. According to this Freud describe narcissist as one of the most difficult personality types to analyse. They become arrogant when they succeed and are not influenced easily. They like to force their vision on

others although it might be in a very subtle way; they are not very teachable. Colleagues that disagree with them struggle a lot and emotionally destroyed eventually.

As they get more self-assured, they also develop more courage to dare greatly and don't like to be limited at all. They start to believe that nothing can beat them and this self-assured energy often impresses people. They love to deliver speeches, dominate meetings, they give instructions easier than empathy, and they like to be in control. They are competitive and scared to be pushed aside and lose their authority or power. They see themselves as special, the difference and very unique. It is hard for them to look into their own soul and don't have a lot of self-insight. They will write beautiful things but their actions will often portray the opposite, without them realizing it. They are good actors, they like to be in times of uncertainty because of the dependency and need around them. They want to be the cure. Although there is a lot of good qualities one can find in a narcissistic leadership style, it is quite obvious that it is not equal to a good and healthy leadership style.

Preachers are exposed to a lot of opportunities and platforms where they can easily take the role of a narcissistic leader, without even realising it. Willimon (2004:75) describes the Christian ordained ministry as a call to priesthood of the community, not to the performance or magic. The priest lives to serve, not to be served.

The temptation to be spectacular within an individualistic culture is great. "Not too many of us have a vast repertoire of skills to be proud of, but most of us still feel that, if we have anything at all to show, it is something we have to do solo. Stardom and individual heroism, which are such obvious aspects of our competitive society are not at all alien to the Church" (Nouwen, 1989:35).

When we look at narcissism through the lens of vulnerability, there is a shame-based fear of being ordinary when you let your masks down. We believe we are only as good as the number of likes we get on Facebook or the number of "well done's" we get after a sermon, leading to self-obsession. Bradshaw (1988:12): "Our identity demands a significant other whose eyes see us pretty much as we see ourselves. Since the earliest period of our life was preverbal, everything depended on emotional interaction. Without someone to reflect on, we had no way of knowing who we are".

Bradshaw (1988:19) places narcissism under a character disorder syndrome of shame. The narcissist is continually motivated to seek perfection in everything he or she does. This type of personality is driven by the need and passion to gain wealth and power and to find others

to mirror and admire their grandiosity. Underneath the image being portrayed is an emptiness filled with envy and at the core of this emptiness lies internalized shame.

The need for structure and being in control brings me to the next challenge:

Formalism

There is a big danger of just simply 'doing a job' as a pastor. The hours and pay are good if you just stick to all the prescriptions, but why aren't we content with it? Professions and crafts are different. In these we have an obligation beyond pleasing somebody; we are pursuing the very nature of reality, convinced that when we carry out our commitments, we benefit people at a far deeper level than if we simply did what they asked of us (Peterson, 1993:132).

The challenge for pastors is to really live according to Colossians 3:23 "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." People love formulas. We want structure, security and certainty. We want to create a comfort zone. The easier we can make "our world" and home to live in, the better.

This is ironic when we think about how many uncomfortable things are happening in our country. The contrast between comfort and discomfort, in a materialistic sense, are in some areas right next to each other. We find luxurious security complexes next to townships and although some discomfort may arise in our heart when we see the need outside of our window, we have already formulated enough reasons to look the other way and go and make ourselves a nice cup of coffee.

I once heard the story of a preacher who used a swear word, trying to emphasise and describe the poverty around them. The assertion that followed were that 80% of the congregation would probably have been more disturbed by his harsh words, than the need he described. We are used to a certain kind of formula with regards to sermons, church services, preacher's habits, tradition and no need dares interrupt our frame of reference

"The intense following of tradition is no concrete sign of God's presence. On the contrary! God is greater than tradition, greater than historical phases or centuries-old liturgical formulae. There is no magical or godly power in the mere repetition of liturgical or dogmatic jewels of the past. This does not mean there is no space for it, it has an important role. The irony however is that you can be formally correct, yet not free at all." Where the Spirit of the

Lord is, there is freedom (2 Cor 3:17). Freedom is not familiarity but the liberty to approach God with fear, because He allows us to do so (Cillers, 2004:42).

To approach God in fear and liberty is not an easy task in a culture of honour and shame. Before a preacher can approach people with a message from God, he needs to approach God first. The question is how does a culture of shame effect this approach and who can be seen as leading candidates for shame?

Leading candidates for shame according to Smedes (1993: 17-27) are:

- Guilt spreaders: *One wrong act equals one bad person.*
- The overly responsible: *Tries to solve everyone and the whole world's problems and if they can't they feel unworthy.*
- Obsessive moralizers: Something is either right or wrong; black or white. You may never taste life but must constantly evaluate it. The result is that they often feel immoral when they do anything slightly outlandish. God's grace is often really hard to grasp for them.
- Compulsive Comparers: "Everybody else's sun darkens their day." They are always comparing and that is followed by carrying shame they do not deserve. Sometimes we compare ourselves with an "arm" when you are in fact a "foot" for example. Some preachers often struggle to accept their specific gifting and continuously try to preach like someone else.
- Approval addicts: They need the approval of others before they can approve of themselves. They never get enough; one compliment today won't sustain them for the week. They suck their self-esteem from others.
- The never deserving: They can't receive and cannot enjoy the good gifts of life because they feel that they do not deserve those gifts. In retrospect this actually means they believe they are not worthy of them. The danger is when we go from undeserving to feeling unworthy. It is this feeling that makes a person ripe for shame.

-
- People condemned by bad memories: Everyone has once harmed another person for his or her own advantage. The challenge is to let yourself go back to those memories and be able to bring them into the light.
 - Those who dwell in the shadows of their fathers: The house you were brought up in forms a big part of your identity. If it is one of shame, you often carry it with you. These people never go out of the shadows and stay in the cycle of shame.
 - People who feel condemned by their dreams: We often feel condemned about our dreams and wake up with shame. The problem comes when you cannot separate yourself at all from your dreams.

The congregation sometimes lives under the illusion that none of the above is applicable to preachers. The danger is that we don't even recognise the pressure that we put on preachers. The preacher tries to maintain these unrealistic labels that are put on him/her which causes shame for the preacher and disappointment for the congregation. This does not mean however that the responsibility of the preacher is too much to bear, but rather emphasises their humanity.

Brown (2012: 10-20) highlights three components of scarcity and how it influences a culture:

- Shame
- Belittling
- Achievements

Our identity is easily formed by these three components and the temptation to be spectacular. To belittle others is the attempt to feel better about one's self. To see how much, you can achieve while abusing your position is another trap that preachers may fall into.

Toxic shame can also be seen as spiritual bankruptcy. Branshaw (1988:22) defines spirituality as a lifestyle that expands one's life. It is about growth, creativity and newness. It is about being. Being victorious and free. It is to triumph over our "nothingness". To compare this with striving and finding our identity through achievements is to try and find our happiness from the outside and not from within. This will leave us full of shame because the task at hand is impossible.

Sources of toxic shame:

- Significant relationships

“If you do not value someone, it’s hard to imagine being shamed by what he says or does. The possibility of toxic shame begins with our source relationships. Of our primary caregivers are shame-based, they will act shameless and pass their toxic shame onto us. Toxic shame is multi-generational. It is passed from one generation to the next. Shame-based people find other shame-based people and get married” (Branshaw, 1988: 25).

Applying this quote to a preacher’s congregation, the danger lies within the possibility of the culture that is being created to control through shame. The more intimate a relationship becomes, the risk and space for manipulation also increases. We often hear about close relationships (church families) that go along with great joy, disappointment and offence that happens in the context of a church.

Both the preacher and the congregation try to impress each other. The preacher needs to deliver a great sermon and often tries to portray the image he is labelled to portray. The congregation wants to look like a “good Christian” in front of the preacher but often acts completely differently at home. The truth is that this is not reality but an illusion we try to live in and try to control by shame because we are conscious of other's opinions.

Sexual temptations

Having close relationships within the parish also leads to different temptations like:

- The joy of sex

The book ‘Sex in the parish’ highlights the fact that we often neglect to talk about sex in the parish. The truth will set you free and shame and guilt will lead to deception and isolation. If we hear the word ‘sex’ we often think about it as sin. Some even believed that you cannot have sex within your marriage except with intent to reproduce, you’re not allowed to simply enjoy it.

Like previously stated, preachers' image of God, will determine their way of living and preaching. One needs to ask yourself why sex before marriage and extra-marital affairs are wrong in your own eyes. Is it because of your culture and what you’ve heard time and time

again, or is it a heart's revelation. We are all human beings and if you are going to try and stand against temptation in your own strength, you will probably fall and be trapped in shame.

Lebtacqz and Barton (1991: 27): One option is to define sexuality as something that is integral to our being. One young woman pastor wrote, "It is hard to separate sexual energy from an energetic sense of aliveness in general." A male pastor also responded similarly: "It seems artificial to separate sexual energy from spiritual or psychic energy." When sexuality is understood as part of the self, something unavoidable built into the very way we are in the world as human beings, then pastors are concerned to encourage a healthy acceptance of it, so that people may feel whole. As an integral part of what it means to be human in the world, sexuality is to be celebrated as one of God's best gifts. It can also be defined as something that happens between people. Sexual energy is not just personal energy then, but interpersonal energy. While most recognized that such interpersonal sexual energy is always present, many were concerned to channel it: "The positive role energy can play in a congregation will be directly proportional to each person being able to exercise self-control like we see in Galatians 5:23.

The picture sketched above is a great and positive way to think about sex but unfortunately we are all fallen human beings and in need of boundaries and accountability to help us with our self-control. Pastors can easily step into the "forbidden zone". Things might look innocent at first and I don't believe that any pastor goes into ministry with the idea to fall into temptation. The problem however is that we judge others by their works and ourselves by our intentions. Why it is that so many pastors fall into sexual temptations, even though it was never their intention and why is it seen as wrong?

Pastors are affected by their cultural settings; they do not stand alone. They need a theological and ethical framework for guidance. If a pastor does not have a vision and set principles that he/she wants to live by, they will fall much easier. We need to build our houses on solid ground (Matt 7:24).

This being said Bradshaw (1988:54) also points out how our sex drive can bind us in shame. He uses the following scenario to explain his statement: *"One day little three-year-old Farquar, while exploring his body, names his nose. He points to it and names it. Mom is exhilarated and calls Grandma to report Farquahr's brilliant achievement. Grandma comes over and asks Farquahr to perform his new found ability; which he does with grandiose pride. On each occasion when he names his nose, he receives great praise. Later on he*

finds other parts of his body, ears, eyes, elbows, navel... And one day, one Sunday with all the family in the living room (receiving the preacher), little Farquahr finds his penis!! He's pretty excited. He thinks, if the nose got them, this will really get them. So he wanders into the living room and proudly displays his penis. Never has little Farquahr seen such action! Mom has him by the ear and he's moving faster than he's ever moved before. Her face is contorted. She is visibly shaken and tells him in no uncertain terms never to show himself off again. He's told that what he did was bad."

We grow up with this notion in our heads and although it is good to learn not to just walk naked in the streets, we put shame and sex in the same box. We often forget that God is the one who breathes life into the mother's womb. Ecclesiastics 11:5: "As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything." For this to be true, God is much involved when a baby is being conceived. This is the miracle that happens, not something shameful, like our culture would like to portray it.

This being said, preachers will also be known by their fruits. So although the act of sex and sexuality in itself are not wrong, the context which it happens within, matters and has consequences. Our perspective should however change from just avoiding sex and conversations around it (because of all the shame that binds it) to acknowledging it as something sacred and beautiful and therefore respecting it.

Do pastors know when to draw the line?

Different boundaries pastors mentioned are as follows: One pastor mentioned that he will always look through the eyes of his wife and listen through her ears to a conversation. As soon as he feels uncomfortable doing that, he will see it as a warning sign. Others draw the line that they never counsel the opposite sex alone, where others will depend on how they feel. Another pastor mentioned that the key to the success of his marriage is the honesty principle he and his wife follow within their marriage (Lebtacqz and Barton, 1991: 48-53).

Lebacqz and Barton (1991: 65) gives a summarized checklist for desire:

- The publicity test: What would others think?
- Physical arousal – one's own or the other's
- Inordinate sexual fantasy
- Sexual gestures or body language

-
- Sexual innuendo in verbal exchange
 - Intuition, instinct, or not feeling right
 - Wanting to share intimacies that are not called for
 - A parishioner wanting too much time and attention
 - Wanting to shift the focus to sexual subjects

Most of the pastors mentioned that they judge the situation according to what their *gut* tells them. “I tend to go with what feels comfortable and appropriate. My own comfort zone tells me a lot. I judge by my feelings” Anonymous

Feelings play a large role in discerning but is it enough and why is dishonourable sexual behaviour such a big thing in the parish?

Power vs vulnerability

Relationships within the parish are seen as dangerous because of the difference which lies in the power gap between pastor and parishioner. Parishioners are vulnerable and the ones who share, risk and trust the pastor. The great responsibility lies with the pastor to set limits and not to take advantage of the situation. Once a pastor has stepped over the boundary, trust and the opportunity to speak into someone’s life is gone. (Lebacqz and Barton, 1991:112)

Not all pastoral practice involves counselling. There are scenarios such as working, worshiping, attending missions or (simply working as colleagues) *can be left out, repetition* together in church. Such a parishioner does not necessarily lose perspective around the pastor (Lebacqz and Barton, 1991:128). This said it’s important for the pastor to still be aware of what might not be as innocent as it looks.

Different challenges between male and female pastors in regards to power.

“Women are seeking “empowerment” rather than “power over” another... We would generally still urge clergy not to rely on the language of feelings, but to locate and specify the behaviours that are problematic. In fact, women clergy are doing precisely this. We would urge clergy to move into the arena of what can be argued as social policy, rather than remaining with the subjective language of what “feels” right on a personal level. However, we would also concur that the feelings of oppressed groups of people may be an important clue to what is going on ethically. When a man “feels” right about approaching a woman, we

would urge caution. But when a woman “feels” wrong about an approach toward her, we would urge her to trust that “feeling” and to use it as a clue for ethical analysis” (Lebacqz and Barton, 1991: 171).

The role of the congregation

“Without truth the congregation also receives no healing. Carrying a deep secret fosters, the habit of keeping secrets and of leaving hurts untreated. Honesty is buried and the church becomes a dysfunctional community. Nowhere is the power of the pastoral office more clearly illustrated than when that power is abused through inappropriate sexual conduct. The whole church is affected: the pastor, the pastor’s family, the parishioner(s), the local congregation and the wider church. Confronting the fact that it is an issue of power is the first step and to have adequate structures and procedures is the second” (Lebacqz and Barton, 1991: 231).

We have heard the phrase “the truth will set you free” numerous / all-too-many times. In John 8:32, John writes “...and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free...” The power of words goes beyond our understanding and it will either build up or break down. There are only a few preachers who truly have the liberty to show up and be seen and to speak the truth even when it hurts. Why? Many have heard countless stories of hidden scandals in the parish and even though we move into a more liberal era, it is still a challenge to speak the truth. This is also not an excuse to live lawless lives but a cry for honesty and courage, to take up the responsibility and consequences that come with it. Primarily it will set the preacher free and will set the standard to be able to preach, not as a perfect human being but with a clean conscience. “The truth is like a lion; you don’t need to protect it. Set it free and it will protect itself.” Anonymous

To come to terms with what the truth, time is needed to confront reality and not run away from it by filling your calendar. This being said, another shame based feeling in the context we find ourselves in is that of not having enough time. We find ourselves at a place where there are too many expectations and not enough time.

Not feeling effective enough, are we wasting time? Cloud and Townsend (2002: 27) ask what the problem is when it comes to boundaries. We are created in the image of God and we should take responsibility for certain tasks entrusted to us, part of this responsibility however is to discern what your task is and what not. A need to always do the right thing or to avoid

conflict often leads to a lack of boundaries. When you don't have the ability to say no, it does not just affect yourself, but the ones closest to you as well. The main concern and problem is confusion about what your responsibility is and what you should and should not take ownership of.

In 2013 I was on my way to go on a mission trip to Thailand. At that time, I was busy planning United Thirst (a women's conference), praying for my residence as "primaria" and in the final year of my Bth theology degree. I was so busy with the things of God, that I forgot the God of the things. The following words came to me in a moment of silence: "Are you still going to be so amped about Me if you do nothing for Me? Is it what you do for Me that excites you, or who I am?"

Matthew 7:21-13 (ESV): *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord' did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name?' And then will I declare to them: 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*

It's true that we must live with an urgency to bring God's Kingdom on earth and that we often neglect that urgency. The challenge however is to be wise in setting boundaries and not to operate out of your own strength. We lack boundaries, because of the fear that shame may follow if we don't say yes to everything and find ourselves being manipulated. This leads me to my next point.

Managing boundaries

Our perspective of setting boundaries already starts to develop at childhood. Branshaw (1988:73) states how each child needs to develop boundaries and ego strengths, they need an ego defence more than adults. They need it for defence up to the age where they can develop good boundaries. For them to develop good boundaries they need parents who model good boundaries. Shame-based parents don't have good boundaries. Toxic shame is without boundaries and without any boundaries of protection, it is hard or even impossible to survive.

Taking this perspective into the parish, as previously stated, the church can be seen as a family. When there are new believers in the church who are still young in their faith, the preacher needs to portray healthy boundaries to have a healthy church family. He might

preach about boundaries, but if his own life does not testify of healthy boundaries, we will see no good fruits in this regard within his congregation.

Cloud and Townsend (2002: 28) mentions a few questions commonly asked when it comes to boundaries:

- Can you have a lot of boundaries and still be loveable?
- What can be seen as legitimate boundaries?
- What if my boundaries upset or hurt someone?
- How do I answer someone who wants my time, energy or love?
- Why do I feel SHAME when I consider boundaries?
- Is there a resemblance between boundaries and submission?
- Are boundaries not a sign of selfishness?

Misinterpretations or information about what the Bible says around these issues has led to many wrong teachings about boundaries. How do boundaries look?

Cloud and Townsend (2002: 31) describes it as an invisible property line and responsibility. In the physical world boundaries are quite clear. If you step on someone's property you know exactly where you are allowed and not allowed to be. To step beyond the boundaries set in place, you will know where you may go and have to ask permission to do so. The boundaries and fences are there to protect and give ownership to the property.

Spiritual boundaries are just as real but harder to define. These boundaries define, protect and sustain your soul. We have a responsibility toward others but also ourselves. A few examples of how spiritual boundaries look in our human context are as follows (Cloud and Townsend 2002: 36-53):

- Your skin: This is the most basic boundary that defines a human. This is the first thing that will help you recognize that you are separate from another.
- Words: There is power in words. It can change a whole atmosphere, build up or break down. The world can be changed through words. The most basic word you will find when it comes to boundaries, will be "no". We just need to create a culture where we have enough courage to say it more.
- Truth: When you believe that the Bible and God's promises and spiritual disciplines that He sets in place are true, it will have an effect on your everyday life.

-
- Geographical distance: This automatically sets physical boundaries in place and can also involve emotional boundaries.
 - Time: To withdraw your time from someone or a project can help you to regain ownership of a part of your life.
 - Emotional distance: This is a temporary boundary which can give your heart the time it needs to heal or feel safe again.

How does shame play a part in a lack of spiritual boundaries?

I would like to review Branshaw's definition of toxic shame as spiritual bankruptcy, in this regard. (*Spirituality is a lifestyle that expands one's life. It is about growth, creativity and newness. It is about being, being victorious and free. It is to triumph over our "nothingness". To compare this with striving and finding our identity through achievements is to try and find our happiness from the outside and not from within. This will leave us full of shame because the task at hand is impossible* (Branshaw, 1988:22)).

By the looks of this definition one might be able to go as far as to say that setting boundaries, like previously stated, is to protect the "inside" and to find our happiness there. It is to make us aware of our natural instinct to strive and it helps to discipline us to spend more time with God and rest.

Words that are not born out of silence lose their power. He also states that without solitude of heart, our relationships with others easily become needy and greedy, dependent and sentimental, because without solitude we just see other people as someone who can fulfil our own, often hidden, needs. In solitude we can slowly become aware of what it truly means to love because He loved us first (1 John 4:19), (Nouwen, 1975:11 and 22). God does not ask if we are perfect, but rather whether we are willing to live a life of obedience and responsibility. To say yes to such a lifestyle, also asks to count the cost of following Christ. Our journey involves suffering as well, but it is within these moments that we experience God closer as ever before.

Preachers often do not have a lot of space where they can feel safe enough to be vulnerable. The flip side of the coin is to have so many boundaries to protect themselves that they start to isolate themselves. This leads me to my next point:

Loneliness

One of the most universal human experiences is loneliness (Nouwen, 1975:3). To avoid that feeling we are running from one thing to another, filling our programs and never setting time apart for silence. We live in an age where silence is the last thing on our mind. Smart phones, television, internet, ipads, mp3 players (to name a few) are all around us.

The irony of having a 1000 Facebook friends and using pornography as an escape from loneliness is that contemporary society just makes us more aware of our loneliness. All the parties, get-togethers and even attending certain churches just leave us feeling empty? Nouwen states that the roots of loneliness are very deep and cannot be touched by optimistic advertisement, social togetherness or substitute love images. We live in a consuming society and safe spaces to really be vulnerable without being used is difficult to find, for church leaders this safe space is often even more difficult to find.

The growing competition and rivalry which pervade our lives from birth have created in us an acute awareness of our isolation. This leads to anxiety and an intense search for unity and community. It often also leads to great disappointment and depression. The painful awareness of loneliness might also be a gift that helps and invites us to look beyond our boundaries of our own existence. Our loneliness reveals to us an inner emptiness. This can be destructive and misunderstood but for the one who tolerates it, it is sweet pain. The Christian way of life does not take away our loneliness; it protects it as a precious gift. We do everything possible to avoid the painful confrontation with our basic human loneliness and allow ourselves to be trapped by false gods promising immediate satisfaction and quick relief (Willimon, 2004:159-160)

Our society is full of absolutistic expectations and always on the search for how people can fulfil our needs. When these needs are not fulfilled we get frustrated, but the truth is that no man or woman will ever be able to satisfy the desire to be released from our lonely condition.

Bradshaw (1988:12) mentions self-alienation and isolation as one of the faces of shame. Parts of one's self can be experienced as alien to one's self. He uses the example of being brought up in a family where there was no space to express any anger. When you feel any form of anger an experience of toxic shame follows. You now disown this part of yourself and become a people-pleaser or "doormat" because without this 'self-protecting energy' (which in this case will be anger), you will have no other choice.

Our self-alienation is often exposed within a relationship where our feelings are on the line and where sensitive spots can lead to reaction rather than response. A fear to face this exposure often leads to isolation and loneliness. Bradshaw (1988:13 and 14) goes as far as to say that the condition of inner alienation and isolation is also pervaded by a low grade chronic depression. The deepest and most devastating aspect of neurotic shame might just be the rejection of self by the self.

When a preacher does not love him or herself, I dare to say that it is impossible to really love others. The second command is to love others as you love yourself (Matt. 22:39). The starting point is to actually love yourself by receiving the love God has for us. A love we cannot earn. 1 John 4:19: "We love because he first loved us." So in actual fact loneliness and isolation affect the people around you almost just as much as oneself. In the context of a preacher, it will have a great effect on your congregation. The tension progress when these self-alienation parts are not dealt with. It is within this state that preachers still even try to take other's loneliness away.

"There is much mental suffering in our world. But some of it is suffering for the wrong reason because it is born out of the false expectation that we are called to take each other's loneliness away" (Nouwen, 1975:9).

We love to fill an empty space in people's lives which only God can do and that He primarily needs to do in us first. The attempt to take other's loneliness away may bring temporary satisfaction for both *parties* but will never put to rest the deepest cravings for wholeness. Trying to *help* is often a selfish act. It's great to feel needed, to feel that you mean something to someone. The difference between a selfless act of service and an act of selfish power is a pure heart. There is no man on earth whose heart is completely pure but this can't be an excuse to justify "false acts of service" that can also be described as a *feel good pill*. We convince ourselves that we are doing God's will, but are we actually doing what God's asks in that moment? Do we sit enough at His feet to know what He actually asks from us and are we willing to say yes?

Familiarity and being relevant

We get familiar and we want to be relevant. Cilliers (2004:41) writes about a movement that needs to take place from familiarity to the fear of God. He states that when we lose our sense of God's mystery, worship becomes a liturgical familiarity. "We are almost never shocked into silence or led to (true) humiliation or to amazement – we muddle along, busy

with our 'God-talk' and our little God-fabrication. We adapt so easily to the fashion around us, that the difference between church and a concert, liturgy and television and "feel good" things like shopping are hard to separate from worshipping God. We often fear men more than God.

Nouwen (1989:17) states that one of the main sufferings in ministry is that of a low self-esteem that leads to the desire to please men and be relevant. Preachers often try to prove themselves to be worthy of their calling that leads to striving. In Matthew 4:1-11, Jesus could have turned the rocks into bread, but why didn't He? Nouwen writes that the way Jesus came to show God's love was with vulnerability.

Jesus didn't need to prove anything to the men around Him. He knew who He was and had the self-discipline to control the power invested in Him. He did not use it for His own glory. He did not need to be relevant, but had the courage to fear God more than men.

Feeling irrelevant is a much more general experience than we might think when we look at our seemingly self-confident society. We can however truly be irrelevant and truly self-confident at the same time. If you look at the life of Jesus the question wasn't how much are you going to accomplish but are you in love with God? Do you know God's heart? The Christian leader of the future is the one who truly knows the heart of God as it has become flesh, "a heart of flesh," in Jesus, a heart that loves without limits. Knowing the heart of Jesus and loving Him is the same thing. When we accept this love, our desire will be to let others know that they are loved, more than trying to be relevant (Nouwen, 1989:22-25). This being said, reality is that it almost seems impossible to get to this place when we look through the perspective of our consuming culture - a culture where we mainly focus on what we can get and where we fight to survive or get to the "top".

We have been trained to think of ourselves and then to behave as consumers. I am worth what I spend. It shapes us without us knowing it. We want to find something useful for others' lives. It is like we are saying: "I will help you to be a consumer." Looking has become the new word... not listening to what God's will is but looking for a way to build my own kingdom. The task is to get away from our culture and listen to what God says. The greatest thing going on in history is that God is speaking. The dominical command is *Listen* (Peterson, 1987:87).

It was never I or me but we and us. Schooling focuses on what we can learn as opposed to building relationship with the person who speaks. It is all about building myself up the whole

time. I want to go as far as to ask why we are worshipping. Is it because of God's goodness or the experience we long for from it?

The theological task is eschatological, pointing beyond the present to what is yet to be. It is precisely for this reason that the Christian community should not only be living in hope, but acting in hope. Keeping that hope alive enables God's people to witness to the kingdom and grow in the knowledge, grace and love of God (de Gruchy, 1987:168 and 169).

To live in a way that brings hope, unselfishness is required. To bring hope to another person is to really focus on the other person or the situation that is in need of hope. Cilliers (2004:42) suggests the movement from a consumer mentality to expectation. Liturgy is always first God's service to us before we can serve Him. He is the one who initiates, transforms and calls us closer. Thus a worship service is ultimately not in our hands but in God's. This does not suit our consumer mentality. Humans however still plan and host the service, so there is still a responsibility that is the preachers, or leader for the specific context. We can either reveal a liturgical style of expectation or wreck it. The content and formulas can be exactly the same as another liturgist's style, but the manner in which it is executed, reveals sensitivity for a greater reality (Cilliers, 2004:43).

Having a consuming mind-set often leads to individualism. When things do not go the way we want them to, we go our own way, the much "easier" way. The reality however is that we will always reach a dead end somewhere along the way and will need to yet again choose another "easy" way out.

The preacher as part of the community and an individual

To be able to really understand individualism, we first need to understand true community. Bonhoeffer (1996: 81-83) states that whoever cannot be alone should be aware of community and whoever cannot stand being in community should be aware of being alone. Many people seek community because they are afraid of loneliness. The Christian community is not equal to a spiritual sanatorium. Some do not search for true community but for a thrill that will make them forget their isolation temporarily.

"The pastor must be the one who is charged with seeing – in all aspects of pastoral care. Individuals lives within the context of the whole. He or she needs to bear the sometimes heavy burden of the community's tradition; to note the presence of inequality, see division and diversity; create the conditions necessary for consensus to foster a climate where

reconciliation can occur; judge the potentially demonic aspects of our 'togetherness'; ask whether the community we seek and attain is a specifically Christian community; distinguish between his or her personal preferences and what community cohesion, maintenance and critique require" (Willimon, 2004:75).

Bradshaw (1988:68) writes about the "success myth" that leads to shame and preachers a kind of rugged individuality. One is to make it on his own and that you need to be self-made. He also defines success in different stages of our lives. From not wetting your pants as an infant, to prestige in school, to having a good job and family at your 10-year reunion, to growing your success and still be seen as healthy in your midlife, to being well-liked in an old age home.

The danger comes in when a preacher tries to force his or her personal and individualistic perspective of success on others. Some might still be spiritually at the stage where success for them is to drink "milk" every day. When a preacher tries to force a 'steak' down their throat they will be confused and shamed. This often leads to division and people who decide to go 'their own way'. Community involves unity. Unity isn't achieved by forcing everyone to agree on one topic or what the leader says. It is not to duplicate the preacher. It is about the courage to humble one's self and be vulnerable before one another with a willing heart to fight for relationship by engaging in honest conversation. There is a difference between community and a crowd.

Individualism starts to fade when a bigger purpose and heart for effective results is being pursued. It makes sense to think of how one would decide to go to war. As an individual, or with an army? The problem is that we don't feel the urgency of the spiritual warfare that is going on, because our focus is mainly on ourselves. Everyone has a right and the word 'submission' has much more negative thoughts around it than positive. The root cause for this is because of how the word has been misinterpreted and abused in the past. We are in need of a good definition for the word, submission.

King (2011:131) uses the following example to define submission in the context of a marriage. (I believe this is a great definition in general as well). Jesus decided to submit under God's will on the cross. Was He anything less than God? By no means, He is and was also God, but He had a bigger picture in mind and was willing to lay His life down for that. To submit in a healthy sense of the word is to have a bigger picture in mind. It has nothing to do with someone being more worthy than someone else, but about living for a greater purpose. It is to build God's Kingdom in an effective way.

We still need to bear in mind that Jesus submitted under a perfect God. In a church context leaders do and will make a lot of mistakes. The reason for submission is not because the preacher is perfect, but because we submit under God and if He asks us to follow a leader for a bigger purpose, we must be willing.

When you sign up for this bigger picture, it does however require hard work and responsibility. We live in a context where one is always on the lookout for a “short cut” or quick fix. The preacher is called to serve people through his or her preaching. The matter of fact is that sermons which are not well prepared, or are actually someone else’s sermon, shows. A lack of education or serving in the church where one preaches will be manifested in a sermon.

Our post-modernist mind-set tempts us (or leads us into the temptation) to let Google do everything, serving only to be seen, focusing mainly on ourselves and expecting to see (good) fruits from it.

“I have told seminarians that their first duty to their vocation is to study, to work hard to master the material, to be competent. There is absurdity in a seminarian having the liberty to say, “I just don’t care for church history courses, so I’m not taking any.” Can one imagine a medical student saying, “I don’t care for study anatomy so I studied microbiology instead?” The medical faculty has enough respect for the demands of medical practise to demand courses in anatomy” (Willimon, 2003: 40).

Alan of the Isles in his forty-eight chapters on preaching in his *Summa de arte praedicatoria* states the following: “O vile ignorance! O abominable stupidity! It imposes silence on a prelate, it renders mute the watchdog, the shepherd; it is a frog which, when placed in the dog’s mouth, takes away his power to bark. The prelates of our time occupy the chair of the master before they have known the student’s bench; they receive the title of teacher before they have worn the gown of the pulpit; they would rather stand over than stand with; they prefer the riches of unearned honours to the rewards of dedication. One who teaches without doing contradicts Christ” (Willimon, 2003: 41).

Conclusion

Shame is universal and can’t be denied. The preacher finds himself within a context where the temptations to fall into toxic shame are great. This has a huge effect on sermons and also the spirituality of the pastor. We are in need of practical guidance on how to address

(resilience isn't an appropriate word here, maybe revisit it) shame within the parish. We are in need of silence and to set our priorities straight. We are in need of preachers who first speak to God about the people, before he or she speaks to the people about God.

To be able to “see in the silence” one needs patience within a context of “quick fixes” and media distracting us the whole time. How much space does a preacher give God to move in their life, before he takes control in his own hands? Uncertainty is such a frustration and testing season for human beings. We want immediate answers, if God doesn't give one quickly, we will give Him one. We often jump to conclusions just to have a sense of certainty again. We want to understand. The uncertainty within silence is just too much to handle. We will rather keep ourselves busy enough not to have to face our anxiety. The Bible testifies to the fruit of the characters that were still before God and waited upon Him. Patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). Proverbs 3:5: “Trust in the Lord with all our hearts and do not lean on our own understanding” Heb 11:1 (ESV): “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” The whole Bible testifies about trust, patience and faith, these are only three examples. I can't help to think about how many things I have already missed out on, because I was impatient and took matters into my own hands. Do we set enough time apart to wait for God's revelation?

Formalism, relevance, individualism, secularism, shame and a lack prioritisation has led to great consequences that the church is currently facing. The question in the chapter to follow is how preachers can practically get to this place of courage, vulnerability, shame-free and authoritative place within a loving community?

Chapter 5

Seeing in the silence

Asking the question, how we might respond (Osmer, 2012: 1-11) the first pragmatic task will now be investigated: The importance to move from neglecting silent time to finding solitude and inspiration within the space of silence and rest.

Silence and solitude

“Silence and solitude are the marks of spiritual maturity. They lead to peace and bliss. The spiritual life is an inner life. It cannot be attained on the outside. The spiritual life is its own reward and seeks nothing beyond itself. Once we achieve inner peace and conscious contact, we want to overflow. It is the mark of truth and love to move toward goodness and transcendence” (Bradshaw: 1988: 131).

Shin (2012: 150) states as every dimension of life is interconnected to each other, the healing of a part of life is fragmentary. Healing of the alienated self should thus comprehend psychological, physical, relational and spiritual. We often neglect the spiritual part, because we fear silence and don't give ourselves the chance to sit long enough for everything to catch up with us. But it does eventually.

To be an open source for God to use, one needs to be plugged in. Sermons born out of a place of our own strength can be compared to the following vision. *Someone walking around with a bucket, trying to sprinkle water on everyone but doesn't understand why the bucket gets empty and the people are not drenched in water. To overflow, means to be 'plugged in' to a bigger source. To share God's living water, you need to get filled at His feet, so that you can overflow. The overflow will be the living water that reaches the people around you. Nothing out of your own strength but just the testimony and character that has already been imparted.*

Chapter four touched on the fact that we live in an era where we hardly have any time or space for silence. With all the challenges and distractions that a preacher face, it seems almost impossible to get to a place of preparing a sermon with true vulnerability and authority. We often know, and even preach about images of God, but have we really asked ourselves who God is for me personally? Or do we just run around talking about what we heard from others. In Mark 8:29 Jesus asks Peter: “... But who do you say I am?” Chapter

three focused on the role that our image of God plays on how one approaches the pulpit. The first challenge is to refocus on God and His presence and not so much on all the distractions.

When we look into the *praxis* one needs to refocus on God and His presence and not so much on all the distractions. This chapter will mainly focus on the practicality; how to regain this space of solitude and place of focus.

Bonhoeffer (1996:86) refers to silence as, “sometimes a dreadful wasteland with all its isolated stretches, terrors and a paradise of self-deception.” We often wait for a great revelation and experience within our moments of silence. But in fact when we use this approach, it's often in vain. Bonhoeffer goes on to say: “Let none expect from silence anything but a simple encounter with the Word of God for the sake of which Christians have entered into silence. This encounter however, is given to them as a *gift*.”

Living, reading and praying with an expectation

One should not spend time with God, through the Word, in prayer (and even within conversations with other people), without any expectation. You must however ask God to open your eyes to see what He wants you to see. This is not always the extra-ordinary encounter we waited for, but is even better. *Referring back to my testimony in the introduction, it was within the simple vulnerable moments and conversations, (without my own agenda) where I had encounters with God.*

This does not mean however that we should not anticipate extra-ordinary encounters with God, but does mean that we should lay down our timing and perception of it. We should be willing to be formed by God, rather than just searching to become the best preacher with the best sermons. This will often mean to count the cost that comes with it. The real question is whether one is willing to really pick up your cross and follow Christ? To become part of His church, His Word and story and stop trying to fit Him into ours.

Paul writes in Rom 5:1-5: “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ²Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, ⁵and hope does not put us to

shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

"Seek God, not happiness" Thomas Kempis, (Bonhoeffer, 1996:89).

(Peterson, 1987) mentions three angles that help to shape the pastor's integrity: Prayer, Scripture and spiritual direction. These are three parts that we often neglect because it actually requires discipline and won't be described as glamorous. He states that it's so easy to be a fake. People can impersonate a pastor without being a pastor, having a sense of self and not a sense of God. It is much more fun to see someone go to the moon, than to make the machine that gets him there.

It is much harder to develop the person preaching the sermon than the sermon itself. People want to fix what is wrong. He mentions that people pray according to their conditions and what they want; when you pray it must be according to God's conditions. Prayer is never the first word, God has the first word, and prayer is just a response to that which God has already said. To pray is the starting point, not the end. Peterson asks: "Is a desk still a place of learning or do we just write our opinions down?"

Nouwen (1989:23) emphasise the question that Jesus asked Peter before He commissioned him to be a shepherd: "Do you love Me". This is the question that can allow us to be at the same time, irrelevant and truly self-confident. If you look at Jesus for an example, He was crucified, fearing God more than men. This rejected, unknown wounded Jesus simply asked, "Do you love Me?" Knowing the heart of Jesus and loving him is the same thing.

The preacher needs to understand the importance of Sabbath, Scripture, Prayer, having a Spiritual director and being aware of the language that they use. These are building blocks towards courage and getting to know God.

Cilliers, (2004:41) dares to make a connection between four movements and God's presence (already touched on it in chapter 2). I would like to zoom in a bit more and define it in a practical sense combined with Peterson's three angles (Scripture, prayer and a spiritual director).

1. The art of observation
2. The art of interpretation
3. The art of anticipation

4. The art of transformation

The art of observation

Cilliers defines these four movements by comparing it with a dance. *This is the first encounter and observation of your dance partner, of the others on the dance floor and of the reality of the dance floor itself.*

You are aware of something. The approach that you have towards life at that moment will determine the angle that you look at and how you see. This approach to life can also be described as faith. Observation is a primary aspect of faith. Observation has to do with our senses, but it also surpasses that; our senses become a doorway to greater things. The art of theology is to see the light of God's revelation – the inhabitation of the Spirit in this world. What you observe is not always going to be beautiful. Both light and darkness are in the world. But without fasting you won't know what true feasting is. Fasting and feasting are two sides of the same coin (Cilliers, 2012:142).

The challenge is when we get so busy that we don't even "observe" the reality around us. Preachers get so busy with others problems that they don't acknowledge their own or they run away from reality and start living in their own "world". Step one is to acknowledge what you observe and to be open to do so. One needs to have moments of silence and just stop for a while to truly observe what is going on around and within you.

Bonhoeffer (1996:84and85): "The word comes not to the noise-makers but those who are silent. The stillness of the temple is the sign of God's holy presence in the Word. Real silence, real stillness, really holding one's tongue, comes only at the sober consequences of spiritual silence".

One finds Biblical examples about the importance of a *quiet* place throughout the Bible. It is when we come to a place where we focus to observe spiritually, that we can go out and really observe what is going on around us. Matthew 6:6-8: "When you pray, go to your room and close the door. Pray privately to your Father who is with you. Your Father sees what you do in private. He will reward you."

In Luke 5:15-16 Jesus withdrew himself yet again from the crowds: "Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed." Mark 1:35-37 "Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray."

Moses received the law in Exodus 24:2 when he went to a quiet place: “Moses alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.”

Referring to Peterson’s three angles (Scripture, Prayer, and Spiritual director), some lines can be drawn to the next three movements (interpretation, anticipation, transformation).

The art of interpretation - *The moment you need to interpret the dance, interpret the movement of your own and your partner’s bodies. You give your interpretation of the specific dance.*

Although a creative imagination can be dangerous, we are also in need of one to move set liturgical boundaries. We need to sense the presence of God in our world and we need to cultivate a healthy and ongoing critical stance. We are surrounded by images and icons; how do we interpret them? The art of interpretation must always be born from God’s approach, revelation and interpretation to us. For interpretation, you need community (koinonia), it frees us from moralism and individualism. (Cilliers, 2012:166).

Scripture

The importance of Scripture is central when it comes to spending time with God. Peterson uses a beautiful metaphor that we need to turn our eyes into ears. Reading Scripture is not the same as listening to God. He uses the example of a husband who would rather read his newspaper than to listen to his wife (Peterson, 1987:87). Reading Scripture is to go beyond observing and start interpreting.

Peterson refers to 3 conditions that contribute in taking over how we hear the Word:

- Remarkable invention
- Unfortunate education
- Faulty job description.

Contemplative exegesis involves these two matters (Peterson, 1987:126):

- An openness to words that reveal
- A submission to words that shape

When you get to this place, you get to know God through His Word. The moment when you are willing to trust the Word of God. The first step however is to read it, trust for a revelation and then go over to action, that the Word can become alive in your daily life. A sermon carries so much more weight when one can see that the specific Scripture truly came alive to the preacher while he is sharing it from a vulnerable place.

Bonhoeffer (1996:85) draws a line between *silence* and the Word of God. He states that silence means nothing else than waiting for God's Word and coming from God's Word with a blessing. Silent time before the Word, has an impact on your whole day and, I would like to add, on your sermon as well. He goes on by saying that he has learned to be silent before the Word, we will also learn to manage our silence and our speech during the day.

Can it be that one will find a lot more meekness in the parish, when time spent with God in prayer and in the Word increase?

Within the interpretation process we find a tension between God's being (history) and God's revelation. This leads us to anticipation (Cilliers, 2012:166).

- The art of anticipation - *Equally important is the anticipation of the other's dance movements, it's essential for a harmonious dance.*

We are all yearning for a better world. This yearning can also be described as hope. Within this movement we find an eschatological aspect. There is a big tension between the already and not yet.

Signs of the presence of absence are:

- Eucharist
- Art: It helps theology to remain eschatological; incorporates chaos and hope
- Dancing metaphor: a hop leads into a leap – to dance is to hop in hope.

We must not just lament in this phase but develop a culture that celebrates. It is a space for new revelation that we tend to skip, this just confirms once again the importance of silence. Cilliers describes silence as a life on its own which is closely related to words; powerful words are born in silence. We are in need of silence and in need of liturgists that were formed in silence (Cilliers, 2012:181).

The time of anticipation is usually also the time that gets us on our knees. It is yet again when we find ourselves in a liminal space which leaves us vulnerable. To set time apart for prayer is a discipline that every preacher needs to grow in. The Sabbath must be understood Biblically and not by culture. Peterson refers to God preparing the day while we sleep, giving us the energy that He can't when we are awake. The question every morning is are we going to join in the activities that God prepared for the day and are we going to be still before God to find out what it is?

Peterson (1987:166) states the following: "We find pastors who don't pray, pastors who don't grow in faith, pastors who can't tell the difference between culture and Christ, pastors who chase fads, pastors who are cynical and shop-worn, and pastors who know less about prayer after twenty years of praying than they did on the day of their ordination". This takes us to our next point:

Prayer

"The discipline of contemplative prayer is central in keeping ourselves from being pulled from one urgent issue to another and from being strangers to our own God's heart. Contemplative prayer keeps us home, rooted and safe, even when we are on the road, moving from place to place and often surrounded by sounds of violence and war. Contemplative prayer deepens in us the knowledge that we are already free, that we have already found a place to dwell, that we already belong to God, even though everything and everyone around us keeps suggesting the opposite" (Nouwen, 1989:29).

Different types of prayer and practical examples:

- Letters to God

It helps one to focus, you can go back and see how God came through, how you grew in Christ or not. It's a place where you can be honest and often see what's going on in your heart, a lot of times its things you are not even aware of until you typed it out and read the letter.

- Common prayer

Nouwen states that if someone asks him how they must pray, he invites them to church. There is definitely room to pray by yourself and for yourself but in the long history of Christian spirituality, community prayer is more important, than individual prayer. We learn a lot in common prayer. The first thing Nouwen mentions is to be led in prayer. When you pray by yourself, there is a sense that you started something, where in church you respond to the words “Let us pray” which means that you are humbled. Prayer has to be a response to what God has said. The second thing is that you set yourself and feelings aside focusing on a bigger picture. It disciplines us to be more outward focused (Nouwen, 1993:9).

- Intimacy and vulnerability before God as individual in prayer

Although we need community and learn a lot to pray together. The prayer of the individual also counts. We need to be people whose identity is deeply rooted in God’s first love. We are in need of leaders who primarily seek intimacy with God. (Nouwen, 1989) In Matthew 7:23, we see that God longs for intimacy with us, above any works, when he says: “...I never knew you, depart from me, you workers of lawlessness...”

It’s so nice to testify about a breakthrough or something you have “figured out”, but are we willing to address the things in our lives that people will actually be able to relate to? Stories that testify to our humanity and need of a Saviour? Stories that move us out of our comfort zone, stories where we can’t do anything else but trust in God and be fully dependant on Him? I realised that I love to preach, but if you ask me to be vulnerable on the pulpit the excitement decreases. Are we preaching for our own or His glory? Are we referring people to ourselves or to Him?

The more we get to know God on a personal level, trust will increase to truly just lead others in prayer towards God and not ourselves. Sometimes someone just needs you to sit next to him or her, so that they can pray out loud. People spent numerous hours talking to each other about their problems and then only a few minutes praying about it.

Bonhoeffer (1996:89) “Prayer means nothing else but the readiness to appropriate the Word and what is more, to let it speak to me in my personal situation, in my particular task, decisions, sins and temptations”.

- Intercession

To intercede can be defined as: *standing in the gap for someone else*. Jesus is our intercessor before God. Rom 8:34: "...Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us" (ESV). Another translation uses the word "pleading" instead of "interceding". To intercede is to plead on someone else behalf.

It is not easy for preachers to remember all the people entrusted to their care in their intercessory prayers. There is a need for intercessors in the church. Bonhoeffer (1996:90) states: "A Christian community either lives by the intercessory prayers of its members for one another or the community will be destroyed. I can no longer condemn or hate other Christians for whom I pray, no matter how much trouble they cause me."

The moment people start to pray together, the focus shifts from pride to God, giving you a view of the bigger picture. A community within prayer is established. A preacher once told me of an incident where he had to pray for one of his colleagues with whom he was quite irritated at the time. He wanted to correct him in so many ways. The moment he started praying for him, everything but correction came out of his mouth. God lay on his heart to celebrate and honour the preacher in front of him. God works in mysterious ways and transform us through it.

Bonhoeffer uses the metaphor of a purifying bath for intercession. The individual and community should enter into this bath daily. To offer intercessory prayer is when Christians are bringing one another into the presence of God. To see each other as poor human beings and sinners in need of grace (Bonhoeffer, 1996:90).

- The art of transformation -*It is a reality that dancing changes you, transformation take place as you dance.*

One moves from moralism to ethics. Transformation can be described in three parts namely: a new identity, being on a road towards continuous growth and transforming the society in which you live. Your eyes open to the need around us. It connects us with reality and sometimes this reality is too terrible for words so images are used (Cilliers, 2012:206).

This transformation process of every human being happens continuously throughout their life, whether it is for the good or bad, transformation happens universally. It is not something

people can avoid. This transformation process is often difficult and leaves a person feeling quite vulnerable. A preacher stays in this process as well and is not exempt from facing it. The importance of having a spiritual director as a preacher is of utmost importance. Every preacher needs a “safe space” to ask the questions they wouldn't be able to ask elsewhere.

This is also the third angle according to Peterson, every preacher needs a spiritual director: “In meetings with my spiritual director, I have often had the sense of being drawn into a living, oral tradition. I am in touch with a pool of wisdom and insight in the life of faith and the practise of prayer in a way different from when I am alone in my study. It is not unlike the experience I have in worship, as I participate in Scripture readings, preaching, hymn – singing and sacraments. These are not so much subjects that you know about as an organic life that you enter into. In spiritual direction I am guided to attend to my uniqueness in the large context and discern more precisely where my faith development fits on the horizon of judgement and grace” (Peterson, 1987: 176).

All four of these movements requires time. Time. The word preachers hardly have enough of...Or maybe they do, but how can one manage it as a preacher?

Peterson states that if no one asked him to do anything, he would be:

- A pastor who prays

Everything we do must come out of an intimate place with God. An “unbusy pastor” will have more time to build his/her relationship with God.

- A pastor who preaches

Do pastors set enough time apart to prepare a sermon?

- A pastor who listens

Do pastors have enough time to really listen to the congregation's heart? It's easy to avoid the tough, intense work of listening by being busy. Pastoral listening requires unhurried leisure (Peterson, 1993:21).

While I was praying for someone the following image came to mind. It was someone busy fighting with a blunt sword. He was so busy that he never saw the sharp sword God wants to give him. The sword that will be much more effective, but because he didn't spend enough time with God he kept on fighting with the blunt one and didn't understand why he was so

tired. To be effective is to go and give of that which you received within your inner room with God.

The importance of Sabbath

I would like to quote part of a letter Eugene Peterson wrote to his congregation after he decided to take a sabbatical. *“Sabbatical years are the biblically based provision for restoration. When the farmer’s field is depleted, it is given a sabbatical – after six years of planting and harvesting, it is left alone for a year so that the nutrients can build up in it. When people in ministry are depleted, they also are given a sabbatical – time apart for the recovery of spiritual and creative energies.*

I have been feeling the need for just such a time of restoration for about two years. The sense that my reserves are low, that my margins of creativity are crowded, becomes more acute each week. I feel the need for some ‘desert’ time – for silence, for solitude, for prayer. One of the things I fear most as your pastor is that out of fatigue or sloth I end up going through the motions, substituting professional smoothness for personal grappling with the life of the Spirit in our life together. The demands of pastoral life are strenuous and there is no respite from them. There are not many hours in any day when I am not faced with the struggle of faith in someone or another, the deep, central, eternal energies that make the difference between a lives lived to the glory of God and a life wasted in self-indulgence or trivialized in diversions. I want to be ready for those encounters. For me, that is what it means to be a pastor: to be in touch with the Lord’s Word and presence, and to be ready to speak and act out of that Word and presence in whatever I am doing – while leading you in worship, teaching Scripture, talking and praying with you individually, meeting with you in groups as we order our common life, writing poems and articles and books. It is in this capacity for intensity and intimacy, staying at the centre where God’s Word makes things alive, that I feel in need of repletion. The demands are so much greater today than they were earlier years. One of the things that twenty-three years of pastoral life among you means is that there is a complex network of people both within and without the congregation with whom I am in significant relationship. I would not have it otherwise but I must also do something to maintain the central springs of compassion and creativity lest it all be flattened out into routines. Parallel with this felt need for ‘desert’ time. A desert time and a harvest time, time for prayer and time for writing, the two times side by side, contrasting, converging, cross-fertilizing” (Peterson, 1993:145).

I honour Eugene Peterson's leap of faith and step of obedience in taking this sabbatical. Another fear he mentions is that the congregation won't be able to survive without him. He asked himself how dependant the congregation was on him or had he actually directed them to God? In the end everything fell into place and the congregation kept on flourishing without him.

One of the greatest characteristics a pastor can have is meekness. The ability to have self-control because your identity is not locked up in winning an argument but in God. (Peterson, 1993:90) writes about the challenges of going into the ministry after all your years of studies. You sit with all this head knowledge, but what is the most effective way to reach your congregation?

The reason for the Sabbath in Exodus is that God rested on the seventh day, therefore humans also need to rest. In Deuteronomy our ancestors never rested and became slaves to work. Instead of works that came out of a place of grace, they worked and grace needed to follow. People need the Sabbath to have time to reflect, stand back and see what God is already busy doing. Time can be seen as a tool. You develop and mature in time. You can't make your plans solely by talking to one another but must take time to listen to Him. Augustine started his ministry by grace vs Pelagius who started with human effort (Peterson, 1987:63).

Moving from loneliness to solitude

How can you move from loneliness to solitude? Nouwen writes about the path from the desert to the garden. "Instead of running away from our loneliness and trying to forget or deny it, we have to turn it into a fruitful solitude. To live a spiritual life one must first find the courage to enter into the desert of your loneliness and to change it by gentle and persistent efforts into a garden of solitude. This requires not only courage but also a strong faith. As hard as it is to believe that the dry desolate desert can yield endless varieties of flowers, it is equally hard to imagine that our loneliness is hiding unknown beauty. The movement from loneliness to solitude, however is the beginning of any spiritual life because it is the movement from the restless sense to the restful spirit, from the outward-reaching cravings to the inward-reaching search, from the fearful clinging to the fearless play" (Nouwen, 1975:13).

Bonhoeffer (1996:82 and 92) mentions that people can abuse both community and solitude. Some just take refuge in community because they flee from themselves and long for the thrill

of community. They use community as a distraction. The flip side of the coin is that a preacher can also abuse his solitude. Bonhoeffer asks whether the presence of the Christian community is a reality and a help to the individual. Is the Word of God close and a comfort? Or do we misuse solitude against the community, the Word and prayer. He states that within your solitude you can shatter the community or you can strengthen and sanctify it. It all has to do with self-discipline and to be a servant to the community and not an abuser.

Nouwen defines solitude as: "An inner quality or attitude that does not depend on physical isolation. On occasion this isolation is necessary to develop this solitude of heart, but it would be sad if we considered this essential aspect of the spiritual life as a privilege of monks and hermits. It's not too difficult to distinguish between the restless and the restful, between the driven and the free, between the lonely and the solitary in our surroundings" (Nouwen, 1975:16and17).

Evaluating your language as a preacher

Peterson 1993:90 He mentions three common languages that one uses:

- The language of intimacy and relationship
- The language of information
- The language of motivation

Preachers are often really good at number 2 and 3, but they often neglect the language of intimacy and relationship. When you really choose relationship above winning an argument or finding your identity in what you know, you often don't even need words to reach out.

"Pastoral work, learned later, is that aspect of Christian ministry that specializes in the ordinary" (Peterson, 1993:112).

Most people are usually not in a big crisis. People often compare people's issues and are more interested in the "big issues" at hand. This does not mean you must leave someone who is dying to go and make small talk with someone else, but we are often impatient with the 'ordinary'. Maybe God wants to give His people certain keys (authority) in times that might feel ordinary but where you honour and focus on someone as a child of the Most High and respect what he/she is telling you. Your identity must not be so locked up in always trying to do the extra ordinary but in the opportunities God sends along our daily path. When we "help" other people, most of the time it's an act of power rather than of service.

“God wants us to care, not as “professionals” who know their client’s problems and take care of them, but as vulnerable brothers and sisters who know and are known, who care and are cared for, who forgive and are being forgiven, who love and are being loved. Somehow we have come to believe that good leadership requires a safe distance from those we are called to lead. Medicine, psychiatry and social work all offer us models in which “service” takes place in a one-way direction. But how can anyone lay down his life for those with whom he is not even allowed to enter into a deep personal relationship? Laying down your life means making your own faith and doubt, hope and despair, joy and sadness, courage and fear available to others as ways of getting in touch with the Lord of life. We are not the healers, we are not the reconcilers, and we are not the givers of life. We are sinful, broken, vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for” (Nouwen, 1989:43).

(Peterson, 1993:59) contrasts the cure of souls with the task of running a church. Both have elements of importance and he does it in the same manner that he and his wife run their home. There are many essential things that need to be done by routine, often (not always) with joy, but running a house is not what they do. What they do is build a home, develop a marriage, raise children, practise hospitality, and pursue lives of work and play. He objects to reducing pastoral work to institutional duties, not the duties themselves, which he gladly shares with others.

Bonhoeffer (1996:91-92) sees the following as proof/evidence of genuine time of meditation and Christian community. He asks the question: “Has the community served to make individuals free, strong and mature, or has it made them insecure and dependant?”

It is in times of struggle, when the preacher or a loved one is not around that one's faith is put to the test. It is in those times when one will see if an individual is planted in the Word of God through a heart's revelation or whether he/she just lives out of head knowledge. A preacher needs to be planted in the Word, because if he only preaches to please men and be affirmed, he will only take offence, never be satisfied and burn out.

The following movements' needs to take place: Moving from:

- primarily focusing on all our shortcomings to our perspective of God
- constantly searching for the extraordinary to seeing the extraordinary within simplicity
- fighting for victory to fighting from victory
- hiding behind a title to acknowledging our God given authority
- from shame to freedom, vulnerability and courage

-
- striving to accepting undeserved worth as children of God
 - From an anxious preacher, to one who can preach from a *still* place knowing the One He preach about?
 - From accepting grace as an excuse to accepting it as an empowerment
 - From an issued based sermon within our church to acknowledging the needs around us.
 - From arrogance to being a learner who really listens
 - From trying to be the Saviour to leading them to the One who saves...

“If preaching is in any way a continuation into the present of God’s revelation, then what we are doing and how we are doing it should be harmonious with our understanding of the mode of revelation” (Craddock, 1985: 51-52).

Reynolds (2008:176 and 210) asks what does it mean to be human and saved by God through Christ? His conclusion: “Because Jesus is the icon of a vulnerable God, Christian witness is an inclusive love of difference that is Christological in shape. The nature of this creative-redemptive love fosters acceptance and recognition of human vulnerability and disability as bearing the image of God. The moral thrust of Christian community has its origin here. It is within this revelation where sermons can be born from both our heart and head knowledge.

It is however within this liminal space when you become quiet and just stop for a while, where you will become vulnerable to your true emotions and shame can be exposed.

Craddock (1985:53) states that there are silences that are negative and can even be painful, the silence of cowardice, the silence of fear, of guilt, of loneliness of death. The next chapter will be an attempt to turn these silences from a negative experience to a positive one as we move from shame to vulnerability.

Chapter 6

Moving from shame to vulnerability

Still asking the question, how might we respond? The second pragmatic task will now be investigated: To move from shame to vulnerability.

Recapping the definition of shame and vulnerability:

Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging. There is a universal fear to talk about shame and the less we talk about it the more control it has over us” Brown (2012:68-69). Shame will guard a person against exposing his inner-self to others and also to him or herself. Shame is the fear of disconnection. We are cognitively, physically, spiritually, emotionally created with the need of love and belonging (Bradshaw, 1988: 10). It removes someone from reality and prevents us to dare greatly.

To be vulnerable is to show up and be seen, to ask for what you need to talk about how you are feeling, to have the hard conversations and to dare greatly.

Acknowledging that a shame-based driven person or organisation is not healthy is quite clear. The question for this chapter is, “What now?” Brown’s answer is to *resilience* shame. Resisting it, is not possible.

Shame is a social concept and usually happens between people; therefore the healing also takes place between people. Within an atmosphere of true empathy, understanding and compassion, shame can’t survive (Brown: 2012:75). For a preacher who has a pastoral heart, this might come easier, but for the herald and prophet, it might not be first nature. The church needs both. The silver lining one should try and find is to recognise shame, but also not to dwell too long on it. The danger lies within both the following spaces:

- When the preacher’s focus is so much on trying to ‘fix’ a shame-based culture, that shame becomes his primary concern. He starts to focus so much on shame that it becomes bigger than God for him or her.
- The flip side of the coin is when a preacher only speaks of victory but doesn’t stop to acknowledge the hurt and reality around him. He wants results quickly and just tries to keep the shift moving. There is no time for *recharging*.

Recognizing shame and understanding its triggers

Brown (2012:75) states that it is both biology and biography. One should try to recognize a physical reaction when you're bound by shame and which thoughts or expectations triggered it. Bradshaw's (1988:125) step one for transforming toxic shame into healthy shame is to admit a feeling of powerlessness. You need to admit just how bad you feel before you can receive love and acceptance mirroring in others' eyes.

Reaching out

Are you connecting with others and have the courage to own and share your story?

Bradshaw (1988: 126) states that we should reach out to something greater than ourselves and that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. To focus continuously to prepare the 'perfect' sermon and to become the 'perfect' preacher will lead to discouragement, narcissism and toxic shame.

You need to practice your courage. It is not something that will just 'happen'. There will be opportunities in your daily life right in front of your eyes to take a leap of faith and challenge yourself. Brown states that it is when you feel like you want to hide, but the way to fight shame and to honour who you are is by sharing your experience with someone (Brown, 2012: 80).

God calls preachers to be courageous. Paul writes in Philippians 1:19-20: "¹⁹for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance, ²⁰as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honoured in my body, whether by life or by death."

The call to be courageous does not however start or end with Paul. The Bible is full of verses where God calls on people to be courageous:

Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

Psalms 31:24: "Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord!"

Deut 31:6: “⁶ be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

Practicing critical awareness

Are you what you want to be or what you think others expect you to be? Do you know what is driving you to shame and is it realistic and truth (Brown, 2012:75)?

Become creative

As previously stated shame limits your ability to be creative and dare greatly. The question one should ask is whether there is enough “space” in your sermon to be creative.

“In the Old Testament, the understanding of space is an important expression of identity. Perceptions of your identity is often interrupted, transformed and a new meta-identity formed within the space of stereotypical perceptions. Within the holy spaces you discover who God is, but also who you are and what has been granted to you by grace. Transcendence of space occurs in such a manner that one sees God, oneself and reality with different eyes” (Cilliers, 2016:15).

Pattison (2013: 160-161) states that the end of the Christian life is to see the face of God. In our Western culture however, since the reformation particularly, the aspiration to see the face of God in anything more than a figurative way has largely disappeared. The emphasis started to fall more on the distance between humans and God.

Be accountable

We live in a ‘cover-up’ culture. One finds that it is often more important to protect the reputation of a system and those in power that it is to protect the basic human dignity of individuals or communities. You can be certain that shame is systemic, ethics and accountability is dead (Brown, 2012: 196).

Shame within the framework of an organisation

The five best strategies for building shame resilience within an organization according to Brown (2012:196) are:

-
- Supporting leaders who are willing to dare greatly and facilitate honest conversations about shame and cultivate shame resilient cultures
 - Facilitating a conscientious effort to see where shame might be functioning in the organization and how it might even be creeping into the way we engage with our co-workers and students.
 - Normalizing is a critical shame resilience strategy. Leaders and managers can cultivate engagement by helping people know what to expect.
 - Training all employees on the differences between shame and guilt and teaching them how to give and receive feedback in a way that fosters growth and engagement.

Have feedback. Ask people you trust and who challenge you to give feedback on your sermon. These are difficult and often uncomfortable conversations to have because we struggle to give and receive feedback in a way that moves people and processes forward. Without feedback there can be no transformative change. Vulnerability is at the heart of the feedback process. This leads to identifying with each other's stories and lives. We need to sit on the same side of the table and evaluate how we talk to people and how willing we are to engage with them (Brown, 2012: 196-202).

Find a social network. Bradshaw (1988: 120) states that the only way one can find out whether you are wrong about yourself is to risk exposing yourself. Shame is triggered when premature exposure happens in an unsafe place. You need a safe place for your shame to surface and be dealt with. Close relationships provide that safety and that is why they are so important in the healing process.

For shame to heal one must risk joining a group. Preachers often isolate themselves and become lonely because of a lack of "safe" spaces. It is important for the church leader to have a group where he or she can both give but also receive.

Grace

Smedes (1993:105-109) is convinced that the healing of our shame begins with a spiritual experience of grace. He states that grace is an unusual alternative to three common remedies when it comes to our feelings of unworthiness. A usual response according to Smedes is often:

-
- Lowering our ideals to the level of our abilities to meet them

This statement has a fundamental flaw. One cannot for example lower your ideals of personal integrity whenever you feel bad about lying. What we should do however is to separate the ideal of our true self from our false self. We should ask ourselves who or what shapes our ideals. The secular world, unaccepting parents, a person in your congregation who is never satisfied by any sermon. We should separate our ideals from our goals: Ideals are the persons we want to be; goals are the things we still want to do (Smedes, 1993:106). When these two are confused shame creeps in.

When a preacher makes him or herself vulnerable on the pulpit, a sermon often reflects a lot of a preacher's character. Responses towards vulnerability on the pulpit can be drowned in shame, when a preacher does not distinguish his goals and ideals. Looking through the lens of praxis the preacher needs to distinguish these two from each other and have self-knowledge about your personal goals and ideals.

- Persuading yourself that you are just fine the way you are.

Shame can only rise so far in any system before people disengage to protect themselves. When we're disengaged, we don't show up, we don't contribute and we stop caring. We should cultivate a culture of celebration. Blame and finger pointing are often symptoms of shame (Brown, 2012: 195).

"Grace-based people dare to own any current, any drive, any sadness, any joy, and any urge that might show up in their spiritual basements. They know that nothing in their conscious or unconscious selves can make them unacceptable to God" (Smedes, 1993:148).

The challenge is to get over our fear of rejection. Smedes states that grace is the gift of being accepted before we become acceptable. Preachers find themselves right in the middle of a lot of critique which can either have a positive or negative effect on their sermons. When the preachers start to cater for acceptance rather than being truthful to the message on his heart, the fruits of it will show at one point or another.

Grace helps us to move from a constant feeling of heaviness to living life lightly (Smedes, 1993:148). People love the word "pastor". Different meanings formed by culture shape the title. Someone who is passionate about God, someone who only works on Sundays or must always be busy, someone who shows compassion to others, meeting their needs, someone

who is almost holy and without faults. Preachers often feel that it is their responsibility take others' burdens upon themselves and have an answer to everything.

When the burden becomes too big, you need to ask yourself whether you are still busy with what God actually asked, or your own agenda. Matthew 11:30: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." When the burden becomes too heavy it might just be your own doing and lack of boundaries.

Smedes (1993: 153) states that shame is heavy and grace is light. These are the two counterforces in the human spirit. Grace lifts and shame depresses. He goes so far to say if our spiritual experience does not lighten our life, we are not experiencing grace.

Trying to live out every expectation coming from a congregation will lead to burn out. The challenge is to spend enough time with God, knowing what He asks and focusing on that. He will provide the strength you need to face the challenges ahead.

Shame you do not deserve, attacks you from the false self that passes as your true self. The false self is the self you strive to be in order to be acceptable to our secular culture or graceless religion. You believe lies about yourself and if you go on confusing the 'self' God meant for you to be you will go on and on with a lot of unhealthy shame that has no basis in reality (Smedes: 1993:153). Preachers get trapped in a self-created, dream world of how they wish it is and the perfect character they wish they could be. We want to get a shortcut to get in touch with our true self.

The matter of the fact is that people stay human and that criticism is not something that is naturally enjoyable for any human being. You can however learn how to like Smedes (1993: 156) puts it take your critics lightly. He uses the example of how apostle Paul handled criticism (or critique):

1 Corinthians 4:2-4: "Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. ³ But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴ For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me."

Paul was threatened to be shamed in the city of Corinth but he was not going to let them. Paul was one of the biggest critics toward Christianity in Acts when he was still named Saul. Being a critic by nature he had to learn how to manage his criticism directed to himself. The secret behind not receiving unhealthy shame in his life is his trust and believe in a perfect

God. The only thing that really mattered to Paul was, what God thought of him. He believes that God is his only judge and accepted him by grace no matter how unacceptable any of his critics may judge him to be. The scare to be judged by others is gone and with it the shame and heaviness that comes with it (Smedes 1993: 157).

Moving from perfectionism to acknowledging our imperfection

Imperfection is the mark of a good person who is capable of being even better. To feel our imperfection is to feel the energy of our potential. When you start to see your imperfections as reason to be grateful and are thankful to be limited creatures with unlimited potential, you will live more lightly (Smedes, 1993:156). Grace however is not an excuse to live immorally. Jesus did not come to draw a line through the law but to fulfil it. We did however receive an empowerment to be and do more than we could ever dream of by the grace that can be found at the foot of the cross.

To realise your dependence on God is a key to freedom. Bradshaw (1988: 127) states that shame-based people do not believe they have the right to depend on anyone. One needs to decide to turn your life and will over to God to restore a right relationship of dependence on God.

Reconciliation is a key to a shame-free life. You do not only need to restore your relationship with God, but also with yourself and those around you. The process of self-reunion takes time and requires patience. Once you get to a place where you accept yourself and the way you are made, you are a lot more open to recognise your short-comings and learn from it. From this place you can challenge yourself because your identity is not so locked up in your attempt to be perfect. Preachers often feel tremendous pressure to walk the talk and have little grace on themselves. There is no space for weakness.

Preachers need to learn how to talk to themselves, the way they would talk to someone who they really love and whom they try to comfort in the midst of a meltdown. It comes much easier to tell other people that they are only human and that we all make mistakes, than to take the same advice for ourselves (Brown, 2012: 80).

Step 7 of Bradshaw's, 12 steps on how to heal the shame that binds you, is to humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings, this will lead to restoration in regards with healthy shame. We need to come to a place where we accept ourselves enough to be able to talk about our wrongs. Within this place of becoming free of our shame we also need to pray for a spiritual awakening. One should recognise that the goal is to become more effective for God's

Kingdom and that toxic shame and all its cover-ups end in spiritual bankruptcy. Once you identified toxic shame in your own life and dealt with it, you need to help your brothers and sisters and practise the spiritual principle of honesty and service to others in this regard (Bradshaw:1988:129).

Moving from unforgiveness to forgiveness

“To walk with unforgiveness in your heart to expect someone else to die while you are drinking poison.” Anonymous

To be healed from shame you did not receive you need to come to terms with your feelings about the person who shamed you. Sermons birthed from a wounded place or attempt to bring correction to a personal matter with someone in the congregation, reflect something in the sermon and are dangerous. It takes courage and vulnerability to get to forgiveness.

Moving from false to true humility

Preachers often feel like they are not allowed to take any credit for anything they do but deep down they still appreciate affirmation. They pretend to take no credit for themselves but in fact they might struggle with false pride or receiving. I once heard the following story that can be used as an example. *A lady came up to a preacher telling him how great his sermon was. His response was that it was all God and that he can take absolutely no credit for it. She responded, “it wasn’t THAT good...”*

True humility is to think and do nothing less or nothing more than what God called you to do. It is not to think less of yourself, but less about yourself. The fact of the matter is that we are empowered by God and it is only by grace that we can share God’s message but you still decided to open your mouth and prepare the sermon. You had a free will in the journey. To say thank you to a compliment does not mean you are arrogant, but that you can receive a compliment and are delighted to be the vessel God used.

Smedes (1993: 148) states that shame and pride are opposite feelings about ourselves. Shame is the feeling of being unworthy and unacceptable that leads to the loss of pride. As shame is healed pride is being restored again. The trick is to discern between healthy and unhealthy pride.

Pride lies at the core of our hearts and is not something you do intentionally, it is a feeling that arises that has an effect on how you live and preach. The definition of pride that we want to run from, we call arrogance. St. Augustine called it – *self-esteem gone wild*. One should be aware of arrogance that leads to being unteachable and not willing to engage in true dialogue.

The other side of the coin however is that you become so scared that you might be arrogant or proud that you don't walk in the God-given authority you have. To be a Christian is sometimes misinterpreted by always keeping quiet and standing back. To be a servant and follower of Christ does not mean that you must have a lack of self-confidence and a fear of men, which is often the excuse for our "*humility*".

You need to own your story, good or bad. "If you own your story, you get to write the ending, but if we bury the story you will forever stay the subject of the story" (Brown. 2012: 80).

"As we gain the freedom to accept ourselves, we can be reasonably sure that we are healed of shame. Accepting ourselves is still difficult and a process and not a one-shot cure. We accept ourselves when we take responsibility for writing our life stories out of whatever raw material we were given. We do it when we own the depths of ourselves even when what is going on down there scares us. We do it when we take a grateful pride in what we do with our lives. Smedes (1993:151).

Preaching from a place of joy

Brown (2012: 119-120) states when you lose the ability or willingness to be vulnerable, joy, becomes something you approach with deep foreboding. In times when things are going really well you tend to think that disaster is around the corner. You don't let yourself enjoy the moment you are in but run ahead of yourself. So before you can get to a place of joy you should also learn to embrace, see and appreciate the blessing God sends your way. That being said, the following question should also be asked:

How is it that preachers start out with big dreams, a lot of ambition and a self-confidence to change the world but end up being burnt out? One of the root problems for this is false expectation and our motives which are more based on "happiness" than "joy". Happiness is determined by our circumstances and what we did or did not achieve. Joy is something deeper, where you accepted yourself because you are accepted in Christ and where you can rejoice in your sufferings (Romans 5).

According to Smedes (1993: 151) self-acceptance is a warm-up for the appearance of joy. Inexperienced preachers often expect to find acceptance and popularity through their preaching. When this longing for happiness is not satisfied, pastors try to cure the whole congregation because he or she has the intense need to feel needed.

Christian spirituality and discipleship goes hand in hand. Before a preacher or anyone for that matter can even think about discipleship, your own spirituality and beliefs should be investigated. According to (Kourie: 12 and 13) spirituality has to do with the lived experience of being a Christian and that it is holistic. Contemporary spirituality has an impact on the totality of life. It is non dualistic but involves the entire life of faith, which involves social and political dimensions, as well as your body and mind. It effects change at cognitive and affective levels of the person. True spirituality also requires renewal and commitment. It is an ongoing process and not a destination that can be ultimately reached on earth.

“A true spirituality transfigures one’s understanding of religion: it is no longer seen as primarily doctrinal adherence, institutional affiliation or even ethical loving, but rather a personal engagement with God. Christian spirituality effects a new, transformed humanity and makes visible the truth of what human life is ultimately all about, namely being loved by a God of unconditional love” (Kourie:0000 14).

To get to the place described above is a process, but there are certain principles and disciplines one can practise to guide us to a place where you can grow in spirituality. The question regarding this study is how a preacher can get to a place where he or she can see *in the silence* in the midst of chaos, shame and pressure? It is one thing to move from shame to vulnerability on the pulpit but one cannot simply stop there. To be and stay in a place of solitude where you have enough courage to be vulnerable and dare greatly, spiritual disciplines will be required like previously stated in chapter 5. Through these disciplines identity is being established. To find your identity from within and not in what you do or preach, is the other difficult task at hand.

Chapter 7

Leading from a title to leading from within

Like previously stated, the words, “Don’t preach to me” reflect how society thinks about preaching according to Peterson (1993:17). It is often seen as an offensive intrusion into a person’s private life. How to gain authority in a culture with this mind-set is the question being asked. Preaching can be described as a public act being directed to a group and defined as divine communication of God to man. The other side of the coin is how a lifestyle can be seen as a sermon to each individual you meet and that your life might be the only Bible some people read.

Reflecting on chapter two, being appointed as a leader and receiving a title does contain power and authority, but cannot be seen as the ultimate authority one can have. The purpose for this chapter is to continue with the fourth question Osmer (2008:4) asks, “How might we respond?” Power and authority described in chapter two, will be used as a lens to look at the rest of the chapter and the pragmatic task ahead.

Gaining authority as an authorised minister of the Word

“The preacher proclaims not his own word, but the Word of God: it is the Word of God that gives birth to faith in Jesus Christ (1 Pet 1:23). No one can speak the Word of God except him who has been sent by God as Jesus was, for “No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him” (Matt 11:27). To put it another way the preacher has nothing to say except that which God has given him to say (Burke, 1978: 6).

This being said preachers are still often described as people who love “the sound of their own voice”. True preaching however is inspired and empowered by the Holy Spirit. It is grace received when attempting to interpret God’s Word.

Leading from within

The difference you wish to see must start with one self. It is easy to criticise, but harder to become the difference you want to see and develop a grateful heart. Sanborn (2006:29-85) mentions six principles of leadership in his book, ‘You don’t need a title to be a leader’. A clear line can be drawn between these principles and how a preacher’s sermon can gain more authority.

The power of self-mastery

Sanborn (2006: 30) asks the question, “How do you live life? Do you see everything as an obligation or as an opportunity? Those who see everything as an obligation want to get every task done as quickly as possible, but those who bring true change in the world act from a sense of incredible opportunity and gratefulness. Preachers need to trust God to give them His perspective on the tasks entrusted to them, including their sermons. The shift from seeing life as an obligation to opportunity will only happen by constantly renewing your mind and not to conform to the patterns of the world (Romans 12:2).

We need to check our intentions. This leaves us vulnerable to our shortcomings, but also empowers us to dare greatly and depend on a bigger source of authority than just our own.

The power of focus

“Focus and determination beat brains and intellect every time. Without focus, it is impossible to move forward to achieve your goals. Power is to stay engaged in what is going on. The goal of anyone who wants to act as a leader is to move beyond the perpetual distractions we face and focus on what really matters” (Sanborn, 2006: 44-48).

What does it mean to stay engaged with what is going on and focused? Someone once said, the newspaper should be in one hand and the Bible in the other hand while you prepare a sermon. The challenge is not to become too distracted by what is going on around you but to be able to acknowledge it and be able to interpret the Bible through a hermeneutical lens with a broad perspective. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:10-13 that we should, “try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord and that we should take no part in unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things they do in secret”.

Being exposed requires great discernment and disciplines to stay focused on God’s will. One needs to prioritize to use the time entrusted to us, wisely. One also needs to be focused on what might seem “foolish” to the world but important to God. Peterson (1980: 240-241) uses the metaphor of stones by looking at the story of David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:31-40). There was more ‘power’ in something as foolish as stones when compared to a giant fully armed. Peterson (1980: 240-241) states it beautifully in his epilogue:

“The patriarchal, exodus and wilderness traditions had all been developed in a nomadic culture. Now God’s people were settled in a world that was agrarian and urban. The recent

past in which charismatic judges had shown flashes of brilliance had disintegrated into anarchy. The attempt, out of that chaos, to establish order again through a monarchy was already on the way to failure. In the midst of these circumstances that seemed like chaos David was still both modest and bold enough to use only that which he had been trained to use in his years as a shepherd (his sling and some stones). It was a turning point at the time, a new leadership ministry was taking place, although no one really knew it. David was not yet king; it would be years before he was recognised as such. The world at that moment seemed divided between the arrogant and bully people of Philistia and the demoralized and anxious people of God, between the powerful but rather stupid giant and the anointed but deeply flawed king. No one could have guessed that the man picking stones out of the brook was doing the most significant work of the day..."

David was focused and obedient in the midst of chaos. He was willing to look like a 'fool' in the eyes of his culture but like a warrior to God. He was mocked for the sake of God, but he made himself vulnerable and had enough courage by the grace of God to dare greatly. Cilliers (2012: 102) states that the pulpit is not spared when it comes to "looking like a fool". Sermons are being mocked; preachers are often described as fools that preach a "foolish gospel". The power of God however lies within the "foolishness". Being foolish reminds preachers that we can never master the gospel we proclaim, it never lets us "settle" or conclude but makes us hungry to learn more about like de Gruchy says, the ultimate mystery, we call God. Cilliers continues to say that the gospel interrupts all conclusions and creates a liminal space where new perspectives are possible. It is within this space where both the preacher and congregation learn to look and dare to speak.

The aim is to stay focused on what God sees as powerful by spending enough time with him, gaining insight on what is going on in the world, to be obedient, to set boundaries, to dare greatly and to prioritise.

Power with people

"Everything we accomplish happens not just because of our efforts but through the efforts of others. The biggest difference between people who manage others, versus people who lead other, is how they develop those under them" (Sanbourn, 2006:53).

Having authority on the pulpit often leads to the misperception, that the preacher's voice is the only one that counts. (Craddock, 1985: 25) believes that the preacher's conviction must be directly stated so that listeners are active participants in preaching, whether it is through

vocal expression or through silence. By saying that listeners are participants of preaching, one makes at least three statements about preaching according to Craddock.

- The message must be appropriate to the listeners and addressed to a specific crowd.
- Sermons should proceed in such a way that gives the listener something to think, feel, decide and do about, during the preaching.
- Sermons must speak for as well as to the congregation. The Bible is the churches' book not just the minister's alone. The church must reach out as a body to people inside and outside the church.

"Leadership is power *with* people, not power *over* people. One of the biggest reasons people quit their jobs is because of a lack of appreciation, everyone wants to feel significant and appreciated" Sanbourn (2006: 54-55).

The power of persuasive communication

Peterson (1993: 53) identifies three areas where you can distinguish between running a church and curing souls: Initiative, language and problems.

- Initiative: In running the church, the pastor seizes initiative, he/she takes charge and responsibility to motivate. The cure of souls is a cultivated awareness that God has already seized the initiative.
- Language: In running a church the pastor uses language that is descriptive and motivational, you want people to be informed so that there are no misunderstandings and so that things can get done. The cure of souls is a decision to work at the heart of things, where our relationships in faith and intimacy are developed. We need to move from descriptive language to personal language of love and prayer.
- Problems: In running a church you want to solve problems. The cure of souls is to direct them to God through teaching them a life of prayer.

We adjust reconciliation terms into our own language to justify our thinking. People are very careful of how they define their theology to exclude the justice issue. Terms like "our people", "the other" etc. must be used in a sensitive sense and in the right context. You grow up in a specific context with a specific language and it's important to question the language you

speak. We must ask ourselves why are we speaking about certain circumstances and people the way we do and what is the effect that it has (Wisjen, Frans, Henriot, Peter and Mejia. 2005 :6-8). The challenge is to be real but also sensitive at the same time. We must learn to discern when it's the appropriate time to say something and also to whom.

We must recognize the distinction between reconciliation as an event, a progress and a goal and not confuse our hopes with realistic opportunities event if they are connected” (de Gruchy, J.2002:28).

The distinction between reconciliation as an event and a progress must be understood for us to truly move forward. A lot of healing, understanding and unselfishness is needed for true reconciliation to happen within the church. Without justice true reconciliation won't happen, so we need to be willing to face and the deal with the past. We must stop trying to be and get the new “big resolution”, learn from the past and trust God to open our eyes to that which is already right in front of us.

“Communication isn't the objective in business or life, the objective is understanding. Communication is simply the tool to accomplish that.” Mark Sanbourn

Sanbourn (2006: 69 - 72) gives six practical tips for persuasive communication which I will use as a lens to look at the preacher's sermon:

1. Tell stories and be willing to receive feedback and criticism.

Stories illustrate and facts validate. Good stories are powerful because it includes an emotional component. To be your story is better than telling it. Reinforcing who you are through the stories that you tell helps to gain trust from your congregation. This approach asks once again for vulnerability.

2. Call for action:

Use language like so let's go out and do ABC... or “Do I have your word for that?” and “Who is with me?”

One can easily see by how a preacher communicate whether he is a leader or not...

- Others tell. *Leaders sell.*
- Others impress. *Leaders influence.*

-
- Others try to be heard. *Leaders strive to be understood.*
 - Others explain. *Leaders energize.*
 - Others inform. *Leaders inspire.*
 - Others relay only facts. *Leaders tell stories.*

3. Focus on the other person.

Remember to be clear on what you are trying to say. You might already know what you are thinking but the congregation cannot read minds. “One of the biggest obstacles to effective communication is discounting another’s point of view. Great leaders are also not evaluated on the length at which they speak but on the impact of their message” (Sanbourn, 2006:71). One should guide the congregation in the direction to ask themselves what this means to me and what can I do about it.

4. Simplify the message.

The preacher must not try to impress his or her audience by everything they know but use it as a lens to look at their message and how they can make concepts easy to understand and repeat.

5. Entertain to engage

Giving communication a bad name is to be boring. A preacher should find ways how to grab his or her audience. This does not however mean to try and be someone else, but to find creative ways within the frame of your own identity. “People can’t be bored into action. So try entertaining them instead (Sanbourn, 2006:72).

6. Speak the truth in love

We often tell people what they want to hear rather than what they need to hear. Paul writes in Colossians 3: 23 -24: “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.” To speak the truth is to stay honest with yourself and the conviction in your heart and to preach whole heartily primarily for the Lord and not to please men but to love them with your words of truth. This might mean that you would once again look like a “fool” in people’s eyes but will be obedient to God. Being a preacher involves counting the cost that comes with it. This does not however mean that a preacher can be insensitive, but

it does call for a courageous character that fears God more than men and stays true to the conviction in their heart.

Paul writes in Ephesians 4:11-16 about the different gifting's of how the gospel can be spread. The most important aspect however is that it is done in truth and love. Paul longs for mature Christians, who are no longer 'tossed to and fro by the waves' but who have enough courage to stand in the truth and speak from a place of love.

Ephesians 4:11-16: *"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love."*

Speaking the truth in love means to tell the truth not for your own benefit but for the benefit of the person you speak to (Sanbourn, 2006: 72). It is to tell them what they need to hear (not just what you wish they will hear out of personal issues) but that which will help them grow.

The power of execution – *Intent without action is daydreaming*

Sanbourn states that to have a vision is a noun but *visioning* is a verb. The ability to implement ideas and to have credibility in the eyes of your congregation and accomplish trust among each other, will call on having a team dynamic. Questions like what role will each person play and where can they grow and contribute in specific gifting's need to be asked.

Willhauck and Thorpe (2001: 1-37) uses the metaphor of a spider web to describe how leadership from the inside out can have great value in getting everyone involved. They state that some of what the future structure would look like depends on denominational needs and theological perspectives. We should stop feeling intimidated by each other and create spaces where everyone can contribute. Although power and authority can come in different forms like, social, positional, informational, connectional, expert, coercive and relational power.

They make the statement that a shift needs to take place from focusing primarily on positional power to connectional and relational power. Personal success must come secondary to shared vision. Mother Theresa once said: “God did not call us to succeed but to serve”. Within relational power a motive to serve will be easier than in positional power.

Willhauck and Thorpe (2001: 150) came up with ten key descriptive elements of how teaming up with diverse opinions and involving the congregation as a team will work.

- There will be less distinction between followers and leaders – supporting, body of Christ and gifts. They will lead out of the gifts they received - empowerment
- Social justice ministries will become the focus – instead of being relegated to one department or committee, social justice and missions will become the work of the whole body. Outside into the street
- Worship will look very different – less spectators more participants
- Christian education will be for spiritual formation – the congregation will be able to talk openly and explore
- Ministry will be done by small groups of people who covenant together –for a long term vision, not quick fixes.
- Reward systems will change or become unnecessary – the aim will not be to be rewarded by numbers but by doing God’s will
- Churches will not stand alone but will be more connected in districts, regions and nations
- Regional conference and national church leadership will not be top heavy – share ownership give ownership. Conferences and synods will be events that gather and connect people and emphasize worship and setting priorities for ministry for the coming years rather than events and decisions and voting.
- The diaconate will have a pivotal role in web leadership in the church- servants – bridge between church and the world.

There is power in giving. “In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” Acts 20:35. To fully grasp this mentality one needs to be surrounded by other people and part of a community.

Sanbourn’s (2006:85) final principle for leadership that he mentions is, the power of giving. He states that giving teaches us to look beyond ourselves, to be of greater service in helping others, to make the world a better place, it also gives purpose to one’s life. Action points that can be taken is to give time, not just money; to practise giving without recognition; to

determine what is the best way to contribute before you just do it. Everything we have was given to us, the choice is in our own hands whether we are going to keep it to ourselves or be willing to freely give back that which we freely received (Matt 10:8).

I agree with Peterson (1993:17-49) that the essence of being a pastor begs for redefinition. He continues to say: "If I, even for a moment, accept my culture's definition of me, I am rendered harmless."

People love the word "pastor". Different meanings formed by culture shape the title. Someone who is passionate for God, someone who only works on Sundays or must always be busy, someone who shows compassion to others, meeting their needs, someone who is almost holy and without faults. Although this might be over-exaggerating, a lot of these ideas around being a pastor still surface from time to time. Peterson (1993:17-49) offers three adjectives to clarify the noun, pastor: unbusy, subversive and apocalyptic.

The unbusy pastor: "How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit into place?" Eugene Peterson

When we "help" other people it's most of the times rather an act of power than service. There is a great stigma that pastors need to be busy all the time. Peterson states two reasons he and other pastors believe that they should be busy.

- I am busy because I am vain (We all have a need to be needed.)
- I am busy because I am lazy (I let others decide what I will do instead of resolutely deciding myself.) We fall in the trap of filling our day with demands from people instead of having time to obey God and to do the things He called us to do (Peterson.1993 17-18).

Burke (1978: 8) claims that while the preacher has certain responsibilities, he or she cannot possibly do all the preaching that is required to build up the Church and their congregation. To leave a legacy is to be able to empower others. To facilitate spiritual growth by being an exhorter. To show others what they are capable of, but also to be responsible when deciding who you trust the mic with to talk to the congregation entrusted to you.

The subversive pastor

"I am undermining the kingdom of self and establishing the kingdom of God. I am being subversive."

We need to continually ask ourselves whether we are creating a platform for people to help them become what God wants them to become or what we want them to become. This is not always an easy job especially when the congregation is in need of a specific leader or helper (Peterson, 1993:41). Most of us believe that the goals that we set for ourselves and the goals that God has in mind for us is the same thing. It's very easy to get deceived in this regard. We need to continually ask ourselves the question: Whose kingdom are we building?

The apocalyptic pastor

"With the vastness of the heavenly invasion and the urgency of the faith decision rolling into our consciousness like thunder and lightning, we cannot stand around on Sunday morning filling the time with pretentious small talk on how bad the world is and how wonderful this new stewardship campaign is going to be."

We need to start living in the now. Pastors are the ones in communities who repeat and insist on kingdom realities against the world appearances and therefore must be apocalyptic. The dictionary meaning for apocalyptic is simply "revelation". The uncovering of what was covered up so that we can see what is there. We need to "see" in the here and now. Being apocalyptic your life as pastor must simplify into prayer, poetry (letting yourself go beyond what you can see) and patience (Peterson, 1993:41-42).

The final movement that needs to take place is to try and grow beyond narcissism to a life that reflects the image of God. I would like to reflect on the quote of Willimon (2003: 24-25), "In a culture of omnivorous need, all-consuming narcissism, clergy who have no more compelling motive for their ministry than "meeting people's needs" are dangerous to themselves and to a church that lacks a clear sense of who it is. It can easily become the relentless scanning and feeding of the ego (Willimon, 2003: 24-25).

Based on an article by Nancy De Moss: "The Heart God Revives" pastor Fred May preached on a few practical movements that need to take place with regards to narcissism in our society.

Narcissism vs godly leadership

Narcissism	Mature Christianity
Focus on the failures of others.	Have an overwhelming sense of their own spiritual need.
Constantly seek conversational control to keep the focus off their own short-comings and failures.	Are sincere, attentive listeners; void of attention-seeking.
Are fiercely independent and have an air of self-sufficiency. Desire self-advancement and indulge in self-promotion.	Are comfortable with inter-dependence and reciprocal relationships.
Constantly have to prove themselves to be right.	Are willing to yield, even the right to be right, intentionally yield their rights. They possess meekness (personal strength under perfect control).
Are selfishly protective of their time, reputation and rights. Have a great desire to be served.	Are self-denying, unassuming, and unpretentious; are motivated to serve others and are willing to wait patiently.
Aspire after and obsess over success.	Are motivated to be faithful and to make others succeed.
Have a great drive to be acknowledged, affirmed and shown appreciation.	Are eager to defer honour and are happy for others to receive credit.
Feel confident in how much they know, thus they possess a burning desire to teach and correct others.	Feel humbled by how much they still need to learn, therefore they're perpetually teachable, and receptive as faithful disciples / followers. Are willing to risk getting close to others and to make themselves vulnerable.
Are quick to blame and accuse others – are self-appointed thought police who deem it their duty to dole out judgement and punishment to wrongdoers for their perceived bad motives.	Are slow to pass judgement and condemn others; seeking insight and understanding first.
Are unapproachable or defensive when criticized or corrected.	Receive criticism or correction in humility.
Are concerned with personal image management and reputational risk.	Are rather concerned with being honest and authentic.
Find having to forgive others sincerely and unconditionally difficult and at times	Appreciate God's complete forgiveness of them – which they readily extend to others.

impossible.	
Find it difficult to share their spiritual need with others.	Are willing to be open and transparent with others as God directs.
Find the receiving of gifts challenging and threatening; owing to the assumed burden of personal obligation.	Receive gifts with gracious gratitude and humility deeming God to be the ultimate source of those blessings.
Have a hard time saying, "I was wrong; will you please forgive me?"	Are quick to admit failure and to seek forgiveness when needed.
Constantly compare themselves, compete with others and feel worthy of deferential treatment.	Compare themselves to the holiness of God and feel a desperate need for His mercy.
Are attracted to relationships or association with those deemed powerful and significant.	Prefer to associate with those who have no means of benefitting or advancing them.
Are blind to their true heart condition.	Are transparent; they 'walk in the light', open about what transpires in their inner world.
Don't think they have anything to repent of.	Realize they have need of a continual heart attitude of repentance.
They derive pleasure from controlling others through the power of verbal shaming.	Are constantly vigilant to protect others from suffering pain; especially that of shame and indignity / humiliation.
Don't think they need revival, but are convinced of everyone else's need of it.	Has a continual need for a fresh encounter with God and a fresh infilling of His Holy Spirit.
Feel and express self-pity in the face of adversity.	Consider it a great joy whenever they experience adversity.
Must have the last say at all costs.	Have learnt to trust God to vindicate them and their opinion.
Are not inclined to feel, or express, gratitude for things they consider themselves entitled to.	Are thankful in word and deed regardless of circumstances.

This summarises the movements that need to take place with regards to the challenges preachers face in our culture to become the difference they long to be.

Conclusion

The possible, valuable contribution of this research was to acknowledge the importance of a preacher's character and wellbeing and the effect it has on his or her sermon. It was an attempt to move our preaching from: A place of shame to courage and freedom; Individualism to community. Being rushed to creating a space where one can see *in the silence*. An issue based, exclusive sermon to acknowledging and focusing on the needs around us. From trying to be the 'Saviour' to leading them to the ultimate mystery, we call God. The One who gave us our *titles*.

May preachers and congregants create a community of grace where the church will be known by their love; a love for their Father, each other and themselves. A love that keeps each other accountable, vulnerable, motivates, forgives, empowers and dares greatly.

I would like to end of by reminding us of the following speech. May every child of God find enough courage to make it something practical in their everyday life.

"The Man in the Arena," delivered on April 23, 1910 in Paris, France.

*"It is not the critic who counts; not the
man who points out how the strong man
stumbles or where the doer of deeds could
have done them better.*

*The credit belongs to the man who is actually
In the arena, whose face is marred by dust
And sweat and blood; who strives valiantly;
who errs, who comes short again and again,*

*because there is no effort without error
and shortcoming; but who does actually
strive to do the deeds; who knows great
enthusiasms, the great devotions;
who spends himself in a worthy cause;*

*who at the best knows in the end the triumph
of high achievement and who at the worst, if
he fails, at least fails while daring greatly..."*

Bibliography

- Barron, R. B. *What images of God are Present in the New Testament*, 28 August 2007 (video file) [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxCyTva08TM>.
- Barron, R. B. *What images of God are Present in the Old Testament*, 28 August 2007 (video file) [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FTZ4KAmriM>.
- Bate, S.C. 1991. *Evangelisation in the South African Context*. Editrice Pontificia Universita Gregoriana: Rome.
- Bonhoeffer, D. 1996. *Life Together and Prayer book of the Bible*: Fortress Press, Augsburg.
- Bradshaw, J. 1988. *Healing the shame that binds you*: Health Communications, Houston Texas.
- Brown, B. 2012. *Daring Greatly – How to courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, love, parent and lead*: Penguin Group, New York.
- Burke, J. 1978. *Gospel Power – Toward the Revitalization of Preaching*: Victory Boulevard, New York.
- Campbell, C. L and Cilliers, J. H. 2012. *Preaching Fools – The Gospel as a Rhetoric of Folly*. Baylor University Press: Wacor, Texas.
- Caputo, J.D. 2006. *The Weakness of God – A Theology of the Event*: Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Cilliers, J.H. 2004. *The living voice of the gospel – revisiting the basic principles of preaching*: SunPress, Stellenbosch.
- Cilliers, J.H. 2016. *A space for grace - Towards an aesthetics of preaching*: Sun Press, Stellenbosch
- Cilliers, J.H. 2012. *Dancing with Deity – Re-imagining the beauty of worship*. Bilble Media, Wellington.
- Cloud, H and Townsend, J. 2002. *Grense – Wanneer om ja of nee te sê om beheer oor jou lewe te neem*: Johnnathan Ball Uitgewers, Jeppestown.
- Craddock, F.B. 1985. *Preaching*: Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- de Gruchy, J.W. 1987. *Theology and Ministry in Context and Crises – A South African Perspective*: Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- de Gruchy, J.2002. *Reconciliation Restoring Justice*.Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- de Gruchy, J. 2013. *Led into mystery – Faith Seeking Answers in Life and Death*. SCM Press: London.
- de Klerk, BJ and de Wet, FW and Letsosa,RS. 2008. *Exposure to vulnerability as a new opportunity in preaching the Gospel to vulnerable people*. Unpublished Research Paper delivered at the congress of the Society for Practical Theology Publications. Northwest University, South Africa

-
- Dodd, B.J. 2001. *Empowered church leadership – Ministry in the Spirit according to Paul*: Intervarsity Press, Illinois.
- Eiesland, N.L. 1994. *The disabled God – Towards a Libratory Theology of Disability*: Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- Faith and Order Paper 101.1982. *Baptism Eucharist And Ministry*.World Council of Churches:Geneva.
- Fawcett, L. 2000. *Religion, Ethnicity and Social Change*. Hampshire, Great Britain: MacMillan.
- Foss, M.W.2002. *A Servant's Manual – Christian Leadership for tomorrow*: Fortress Press: Minneapolis.
- Franks, A and Meteyward. J. 2007. *Liminality: The transforming Grace of In-Between Places*: Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling 6, no 3.(pp.216).
- Jacobs, T (2016). Personal interview, e-mail to T. Jacobs [Online], 22 February. Available e-mail: sucelle.olivier@gmail.com.
- Jones, J.D. 2008. *Heart Mind and Strenght – Theory and Practice for Congregational Leadership*: Alban Institute, Herdon.
- Jurgens, H and Mouton, E and Hansen, L.D and Le Roux, E. 2012. *Men in the pulpit, women in the pew – addressing gender inequality in Africa*: Sun Press, South Africa
- King, C and C. 2011. *Twelve questions to ask before you marry*: Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon.
- Kourie, C.E.T and Kretzscmar, L. 2000. *Christian Spirituality in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg.
- Kraybill, J.N. 2010. *Power and Authority: Helping the Chruch Face Problems and Adapt to Change*: Elkhart, Indiana.
- Lebacqz, K and Barton, R.G. 1991. *Sex in the Parish*. John Knox Press, Louisville: Kentucky.
- Leedy, P.D and Ormrod, J.E. 2014. *Pearson New International Edition – Practical Research*. Tenth edition. Pearson Education Limited: Harlow, England.
- Long, T.G. 2005. *The Witness of Preaching*: Westminster John Knox, Louisville.
- Neyrey, J.H. 1991. *The Social World of Luke-Acts- Models for interpretation*. Hendrickson: Peabody, Massachusetts.
- Nouwen, H.1989. *In the name of Jesus – Reflection on Christian Leadership*: Longman and Todd, London.
- Nouwen. H. 1998. *Reaching Out – Beyond the Mirrior*. Harper Collins Publishers, London.
- Osmer, R. R. 2008. *Practical Theology – An Introduction*: Eerdmans Publishing, Cambridge.
- Pasewark, K. A. 1993. *A Theology of Power – Being beyond domination*: Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis.

-
- Pattison, S. 2013. *Saving Face – Enfacement, Shame, Theology*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, England.
- Peterson, E.H. 1980. *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work*: Grand Rapids, Leominster, England.
- Peterson, E. H. 1987. *Working the Angles – The shape of Pastoral Integrity*. Eerdmans, America.
- Peterson, E.1993. *The Contemplative Pastor – Returning to the art of Spiritual direction*: Wm. B. Eerdmans, United States of America.
- Peterson, E. 2000. *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction –Discipleship in an Instant Society*: Downers Grove.
- Piper, J. *Created in God's image*, 18 June 2011 (video file) [Online] Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CN96ct3vDGU>.
- Piper, J. The Gospel Coalition National Women's Conference. "*In the Throne Room: The God of Holiness and hope - Isaiah 6*", 28 August 2012 (video file) [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuJEW7mhq7M>.
- Placher, W.C. 1994. *Narratives of a Vulnerable God*. West Minister John Knox Press: Louisville Kentucky.
- Reynolds, T.E. 2008. *Vulnerable Communion – A Theology of disability and hospitality*: Brazos Press, United States of America.
- Ryan, E (2016). Personal interview, e-mail to E. Ryan [Online], 28 January. Available e-mail: sucelle.olivier@gmail.com.
- Sanborn, M. 2006. *You don't need a title to be a leader – How anyone, anywhere can make a positive difference*: Walterbrook Press, Colorado.
- Shin, H.U. 2012. *Vulnerability and Courage – A Pastoral Theology of Poverty and the Alienated Self*. Lang Publishing, New York.
- Smedes, L.B. 1993. *Shame and grace – Healing the Shame We Don't Deserve*: HarperCollins.
- Spring, G. 1982. *The Power of the Pulpit – Thoughts addressed to Christian Ministers and those who hear them*: The Sparten Press, Edinburgh.
- Stanley, A and Scroggins, C. 2008. *Sermon series: I want to be great [DVD-ROM]*. Available: North Point Ministries.
- Super Soul Sunday - Brené Brown's Greatest Truth: "*Be Brave; Show Up*", 4 October 2015 (video file) [Online]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYFRcK4hDes>.
- Swart, H (2016). Personal interview, e-mail to H. Swart [Online], 28 January. Available e-mail: sucelle.olivier@gmail.com.
- Tournier, P. 1968. *A Place for you*: Harper and Row, New York.
- Van Gennepp, A. 1960. *The Rites of Passage*: University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

-
- Van Niekerk, R (2016). Personal interview, e-mail to R. Van Niekerk [Online], 28 January. Available e-mail: sucelle.olivier@gmail.com.
- Willimon, W.H. 2003. *Calling and Character – Virtues of the ordained life*: Abingdon Press - Nashville.
- Willimon, W.H. 2004. *Pastor- A Reader for Ordained Ministry*: Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- Willhauck, S and Thorpe, J. 2001. *The Web of Women's leadership – recasting congregational ministry*: Abingdon Press, Nashville.
- Wisjen, L. et.al 2005. *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A critical quest for Truth and Transformation*. Maryknoll: New York.
- Wright, D.F. and Ferguson, S. B and Packer, J.J. 1988. *New Dictionary of Theology*: InterVarsity Press.
- Wright, N.T. *NT Wright on what it means to be an image bearer*, 16 July 2010 (video file) [Online] Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yp-Ku-ekAY>.