

The transforming power of gospel preaching to an audience influenced by
post modernism

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1. ORIENTATION

1.1 Actuality

Although the Baptist Union of Southern Africa has a clear statement of faith (see *The South African Baptist Handbook 2002-2003*:388) it never the less has a very broad theological constituency. This is due to the Baptists understanding of “the right of private interpretation (of), and obedience to, the Scriptures” (Hudson-Reed 1983:356).

From the very beginning of Baptist history there have been occasional dissensions and unhappy divisions. “...Recent years have seen the battle ground shift to the age-old feud between objectivity and subjectivity, between the revealed and the experienced ... between the Reformed movement and the Charismatic movement ...” (*South African Baptist*, April 1979 p20). This controversy led to a large group of churches breaking away from the Baptist Union in 1985 (*The South African Baptist handbook*, 1985-1986 p 168). A further crisis took place at the 1997 East London Assembly where the assembly voted against a proposal to adopt a strict definition on the sufficiency of Scripture. At the next annual Assembly it was, however, unanimously agreed to accept the Scriptures as the Word of God (*The South African Baptist Handbook*, 1998-1999 p 413). This step took the Baptist Union back to what Hudson-Reed had said in 1983,

Differences of opinion strongly held and maintained among us have not been able to break the bond of loyalty to the Scriptures as the Word of God...We have always thought of ourselves as people of the Book. All Christians hold to the authority of the Bible, but Baptists have a peculiar view on the supremacy of that authority.

(Hudson-Reed 1983:357)

Baptists have been committed to the preaching of these Scriptures and particularly committed to evangelistic gospel ministry. At the beginning of 1990, the Baptist union agreed that church planting was the single greatest need in the country (Kritzinger 2002:59).

The strong confidence and emphasis on preaching the gospel is declining. Other ministry methods are being sought. At the 2002 annual Baptist Assembly it was agreed that: “The Executive call a forum to discuss ministry to the Post-Modern generation” (Minutes of the Baptist Union Assembly 2002).

This is an indication that confidence in preaching as currently practiced is waning. This pattern has previously occurred as indicated by Errol Hulse, “This is not the first time in the history of the Church that preaching is under attack” (1973:101). Even as far back as the New Testament times, we find the preaching of the Apostle under attack. There is pressure applied to eradicate the “foolishness” of preaching Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 1v18-25).

1.2 The Problem stated

Some ministers believe that preaching is outdated; others believe that this remains God’s primary instrument of declaring his revelation about Himself, man and salvation. Within Evangelical circles, there is an “eroding of confidence” and a “watering down of content” in preaching the Scriptures generally and preaching the gospel particularly.

In examining the how of preaching in a post-modern climate, and seeking to maintain both the authority and integrity of God’s word, three dangers become clear. The first is preachers could lose confidence in God’s Word, or with a Bible in hand, feel overwhelmed by post modernity’s tidal-wave like force. The second: Preachers might stoop to a type of reduced perspective

that shrinks God and His truth to accommodate listeners. Third: Preachers might adapt an essentially pragmatic approach.

(Johnston 2001:61)

More and more emphasis is being placed on technique, marketing, focus on the individual felt needs and management rather than on preaching.

Technique is being substituted for truth, marketing action for thought, the satisfaction of the individual for the health of the church...those who can preach the Word of God by those who can manage organizations ...

(Wells 1994:86)

Confidence in the Word and the work of the Spirit is being replaced by entertainment and the use of technology. Os Guinness warns about the danger of the trust in technology replacing a confidence in the sovereign freedom of God. He goes on to say that “we have invented technology to put God’s Word on hold” (1993:38).

Membership statistics in mainline denominations are declining (Kritzinger 2002:29) with church members often no different to their non-Christian counterparts. “It is my deep conviction that the greatest deficiency in contemporary expositional ministry is powerless; in other words, preaching is devoid of the vitality of the Holy Spirit” (Azurdia III 2003:12). The decline in mainline membership and lack of holiness amongst professing Christians is an indication that evangelical preaching today is weak and powerless.

The mood of the evangelical church is one of caution about the offence of the gospel. Consumerism rather than proclamation dictates the agenda of the church (Wells 1994:75).

The dilemma is worsened by constant allusions to the new generation in a postmodern world that is in need of a different approach. We do live in a changing world. It is not Christianity that has changed – just the issues and

questions faced by the people in the pews today (Johnston 2001:9). Peter Corney quoting Helmut Thielicke says, “The Gospel must be constantly forwarded to a new address because the recipient is repeatedly changing place of residence” (1995:1).

It is vitally important for the preacher to know his audience well, (Newbegin 1991:141) then able to make relevant application in to their world with the unchanging truth of God. The contemporary person is a post-modern person. This statement is an oversimplification of the problem as there are many variables that make it difficult to identify clear categories in postmodern anthropology (Janse van Rensburg 2002:39).

Some evangelical ministers long to see people transformed by God through the powerful and relevant preaching of the gospel. In doing this they cannot ignore the culturally diverse and postmodern affected and influenced audience and therefore need to understand both content and context of preaching the gospel in their own generation.

1.3 Hypothesis

The Apostle declares in 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5, “My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on man's wisdom, on God's power.” This type of preaching in the New Testament context resulted in changed lives. Paul makes a similar bold statement in Romans 1:16; “I am not ashamed of the gospel it is the power of God for the salvation of every one who believes.”

The following hypothesis assumes that preaching with a demonstration of the Spirit's power will bring about change in people's lives in any age. The hypothesis to be tested is, “The transforming power of gospel preaching to an audience influenced by post modernism”.

1.4 Methodology

The research of this study will follow two methods.

1.4.1 A Literature Study

The first is making use of a literature study. Preliminary research shows that there are many books and articles written on the subjects of preaching and ministry in the postmodern era. It is the intention of this study to glean as much of this literature as possible with a particular interest in that which has been written by evangelicals who like Baptists have a high view of Scripture. This will include a review of some of the classics on preaching as well as the most recent books and articles published on this subject.

1.4.2 Practical-theological Method

Since Practical Theology deals with God's activity through the ministry of human beings (Heitink 1999:8), the accumulation and organizing of information must not be an end in and of itself. It is rather a means to an end. The desired end is that of being a sharper instrument in the hands of God in the practice of preaching bringing about transformation in the lives of preacher and hearer.

It is for this reason that a second aspect to the methodology must be included. The literary study must be supplemented and supported by research methods that lead to changes in action.

According to Heitink, Practical theology as a theory of action is the empirically orientated theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society (Heitink 1999:6). It inevitably aims at change, through a process of management and steering.

In this methodology of practical theology one meets three concepts; understanding, explanation and change (Heitink 1999:163). These concepts are represented by Hermeneutic, empirical and strategic perspectives respectively. Each perspective forms part of a triangular relationship that interconnects assisting the researcher in the task of arriving at meaningful conclusions.

The hermeneutic perspective (Heitink 1999:178) includes understanding the mandate and method of preaching from a Biblical perspective as well as seeking to understand all the actions in the preaching event. It is here that the literature study will make a valuable contribution.

The empirical perspective (Heitink 1999:220) will focus on explanation. In the light of the hypothesis to be tested it is important to conduct an empirical study by means of a questionnaire. This will be carried out in the context of a congregation influenced by postmodernism in an attempt to establish and verify positive and negative elements in transforming people through the action of preaching.

The strategic perspective (Heitink 1999:201) will seek to facilitate change. Once the hypothesis has been tested in the circular process of understanding and explanation then a new theory of action will be formulated to sharpen the skills of the preacher with a better understanding of the postmodern influenced audience and greater confidence in the preaching of the gospel.

The process can be illustrated by means of the diagram shown in the figure below:

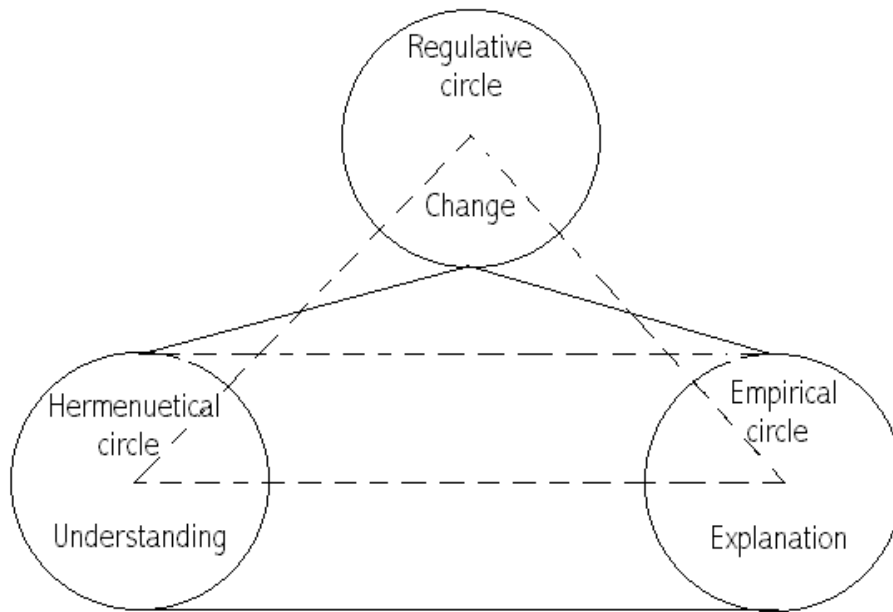


Figure 1

1.5 Development of study

In developing this study, the authority, inerrancy and sufficiency of the Bible is assumed. What really matters is what God thinks (Guiness 1993:14). The Bible therefore cannot be ignored or taken lightly by any preacher seeking to be relevant and effective in transforming the lives of his hearers. "All Scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16).

Seasons of fruitfulness may come. There may also be seasons of great difficulty. The preacher is instructed to persist. "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

The Apostle Paul was unashamed of the gospel, "because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16).

On the basis of the above assumption the research will be developed in the following areas:

1.5.1 A Theological Model for Preaching

Chapter two will seek to lay the foundation for a robust theological model of preaching. “It is important for Christians to understand postmodernism and to construct a theology to evidence awareness and response to it” (Erickson 2001:158). This investigation must take into account an approach of understanding the dynamics of the pressure being brought to bear on the Church as a result of the postmodern influence. This understanding must be examined in the light of theology gleaned from a study of the scriptures, particularly in the area of preaching.

1.5.2 The Postmodern Audience.

The purpose of this third chapter is to understand the person influenced by post modernity. The person living in the 21st Century must be taken seriously. When the congregation is not understood from their own context then proclamation takes place in a vacuum (Janse van Rensburg 2002:39).

Insight into the post-modern worldview will better equip the preacher to address today’s listener with clarity and relevance in at least two ways. First, understanding the assumptions, beliefs and values of listeners enabling the preacher to connect in areas of common ground and shared interest. Second, since preaching carries a prophetic voice that cries out when things run contrary to Christ and His Word, it allows the preacher to challenge.

(Johnson 2001:9)

1.5.3 Engaging the Postmodern Audience

In the fourth chapter I will identify the essential elements of preaching seeking to engage the postmodern influenced listener. While maintaining that biblical teaching and preaching must demonstrate a proper exegesis it is vital to give attention to the changing culture (Johnston 2001:12, Newbegin 1989:141).

These may include the ministry of the Holy Spirit. “I believe that the greatest impediment to the advancement of the gospel in our time is the attempt of the church of Jesus Christ to do the work of God apart from the truth and power of the Spirit of God” (Azurdia III 2003:29), preaching Christ and him crucified thus assuming a Christocentric approach. Creative communication skill and style (Johnston 2001:11) the intention here is to find legitimate ways of engaging a post-modern influenced society thus facing the obstacles hindering effective preaching and any other issue that may arise from the investigation into a society influenced by post-modernism.

1.5.4 An Adjusted Theory for Praxis.

Having tested the hypothesis, “The transforming power of the gospel in a post modern influenced audience”, the goal of the fifth chapter will be to present an adjusted theory of praxis.

This chapter will include an empirical study by means of a questionnaire carried out amongst the members of the Central Baptist Church Pretoria

- To assess how post modernism is affecting their worldview
- To ascertain what elements of the current preaching praxis are:
 - Relevantly addressing their relationship with God and man, thus useful in their coming to and maturing in faith.
 - Irrelevant in the usefulness of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

2. A THEOLOGICAL MODEL FOR PREACHING

It is necessary to establish a sound Biblical foundation of preaching before proceeding with a discussion of a particular model for preaching. There is first and foremost the need to scrutinize the Scripture leading one to the place of confidence in the chosen model of proclaiming the Word of God in its full richness and power.

2.1 Three foundations of preaching

Peter Adam in his book “Speaking God’s Words” discusses what he calls the “three great theological foundations of preaching” (1997:15). These three foundations reinforce a confidence in the preaching of the word of God. The three foundations do not exclude the importance of understanding the hearers, as discussed in the next chapter, as part of the cyclical interaction that takes place in the praxis of preaching.

2.1.1 God has spoken

This is the belief that because God has spoken his words remain powerful, and without the ministry of this historic revelation of God in words there can be no ministry of the Word. The basis for any true human speaking for God is that God is a speaking God. Any human ministry of the Word depends on a God who is not silent. If God is dumb, then we may have a ministry of words, but not of the Word, God’s Word. And it is clear that the God of the Bible is a God who speaks.

(Adam 1997:15)

This view is argued to be correct based on God’s words in the Bible. Alan Careful elaborates,

God's revelation begins with a sermon; God preaches and world is made. God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. Six sermons are preached in a wonderful sequence, the word of God is proclaimed in heaven's pulpit and all comes to pass; the preaching forms the universe...the Word preached is no empty word; it accomplishes what it pleases and never returns void to him who speaks.

(n.d. 2)

Goldingay agrees by saying that words are both informative and performative – they communicate things and they do things. Commenting on John's reference to Genesis 1 where the divine initiative explicitly involves performative speech: God said, there is to be light! And there was light (2003:49).

The idea that words are inherently powerful is indeed fallacious. Many people's words lack power, but certain people's words are powerful, at least in certain circumstances, because of their position or their relationship to someone else. The words of a powerful person have power, and it is this fact that Genesis 1 reflects.

(Goldingay 2003:50).

God's words are powerful and creative of reality. "The God who speaks is the God who acts through his words" (Adam 1997:15). "The Genesis account tells us that God spoke the universe into being and thus establishes the principle that is developed throughout Scripture that God chooses freely to relate to his creation by his word" (Goldsworthy 2000:35). This can also be seen in the way God enters into dialogue with Abraham. "The story of Terah/Abraham puts Abraham and the deity in a dialogic position" (Birch et al 1999:82).

Both the Old and the New Testaments describe God as speaking.

Without God speaking there could be no promise, no covenant, no law, no story, no prophecy, no wise saying, no apocalyptic. The literary forms of the New Testament also reflect and convey the words of God through gospel, parable, letter and prophecy. It seems obvious that God, who ‘spoke and it came to be’ (Psalm 33:9) in creation, the God who spoke at Sinai, who spoke at ‘in many and various ways by the prophets’, Has spoken to by his Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).

(Adam 1997:16)

The doctrine of revelation is a basic tenet of the Christian religion. The origin of the message we preach is God himself. “Christianity is, in its very essence, a religion of the Word of God,” says John Stott. “No attempt to understand Christianity can succeed which overlooks or denies the truth that the living God has taken the initiative to reveal himself savingly to fallen humanity” (1982a:15).

As evidence for the idea that God speaks:

2.1.1.1 The Bible's polemic against idolatry

The Bible's polemic against idolatry where in Psalm 115 the argument is that idolatry is futile because of the impotence of idols, in contrast to the God of Israel.

Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. 4 But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. 5 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; 6 they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; 7 they have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. 8 Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them

(Psalm 115:3-8).

“Present your case,” says the LORD. “Set forth your arguments,” says Jacob’s King. 22 “Bring in your idols to tell us what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, 23 tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. 25 “I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes— one from the rising sun who calls on my name. He treads on rulers as if they were mortar, as if he were a potter treading the clay. 26 Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know, or beforehand, so we could say, ‘He was right’? No one told of this, no one foretold it, no one heard any words from you. 27 I was the first to tell Zion, ‘Look, here they are!’ I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings. 28 I look but there is no one— no one among them to give counsel, no one to give answer when I ask them.

(Isaiah 41:21-23, 25-28)

2.1.1.2 Humankind made in the image of God

The Bible’s teaching on humankind made in the image of God assumes a God who speaks. It is the speaking God of Genesis 1 that who says: Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, (Genesis 1:26). The creation of male and female is followed by the words that God speaks to them:

God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.” 29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

(Genesis 1:28-29).

Later the man speaks: The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man” (Genesis 2:23).

“The God of the opening chapters of Genesis is portrayed as a relational God” (Birch et al 1999:42). God, the speaking God, makes humans in his own image and speaks to them. Our speech and our hearing are a sign that God speaks and hears (Adam 1997:17). Stott agrees emphasizing the nature of human being made in the image of God and thus morally responsible having received commandments and invited into loving obedience (1982a:56).

2.1.1.3 The doctrine of incarnation

The doctrine of incarnation assumes that God is a speaking God. God’s dealings with mankind, says Pieterse (Vos ed. 1994:8), “have a communicative character”. Right from the beginning God took the initiative to communicate with people. This revelation comes to us in human language and in human form in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

When Jesus uses the double Amen as a preface to statements (John 6:26, 32, 47, 53) he is claiming to speak as God. His frequent use of the formula ‘it is written’ demonstrates his commitment to the words of God (Matthew 4:4, 6, 7, 10). Jesus also says that he receives his teaching from the Father, that those who belong to God hear what God says, and that he has given his disciples the words given to him by the Father (Johnson & Webber 1989:24).

There are those who see God’s revelation as a revelation of his person: “All revelation is the self-revelation of God” (Baillie 1956:34). William Temple concludes, “What is offered to man’s apprehension in any specific revelation is not truth concerning God but the living God himself” (Temple 1934:322). This view may allow that God is, that he engages in self disclosure, that he acts, that he gives signs of his presence, or that he appears in visions, but it is curiously coy about the belief that he speaks (Adam 1997:18). When Temple

distinguishes between “truth concerning God” and “the living God himself”, he is the victim of a false dichotomy. The God who is present is the God who speaks. If Exodus (cf Durham 1987) is about the presence of Yahweh, it also conveys the words of Yahweh, including the crucial words of covenant.

Knowing God is not some mystical and incommunicable thing. We know him through his acts and his word, by which he informs us of his acts and interprets them to us. God’s communication of himself through the presence of his Spirit does not happen apart from his communication about himself through his word (Goldsworthy 2000:36).

2.1.2 It is written

This is the belief that in his revelation in history God has preserved his words for future generations. It is because of this that preaching and teaching are based on the Bible. What we have in Scripture are the preserved words of God. “It is important to realize that the final form in which Scripture remains authoritative is its written form” (Grudem 1994:84).

Other language which is used to describe this activity of God is that of ‘inscripturation’ (see Clowney 1962:15, Bavink 1977:104, Berkouwer 1975:195ff, Knox 1982:18ff) and “fixation” (Berkhof 1979:77ff).

These represent the concept that when God spoke he had two audiences in mind, the generation that was present and future generations that would follow (cf. Romans 15:4; 2 Tim 3:15-16). The basic idea is that of preservation: ‘inscripturation’ describes the method that was either immediately or eventually used to preserve the words for future generations, and “fixation” describes the belief that God’s revelation is fixed or settled at a particular time for the future.

2.1.2.1 The Old Testament: present and future relevance

The major themes of the Old Testament show both the present and the forward-looking purpose of revelation. For example, in the promises made by God to Abraham, while it had meaning, relevance and function at the time they also pointed to generations to come (Adam 1997:27).

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. 2 “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

(Genesis 12:1-3, cf. 15-18)

Abraham obeyed the Lord and set out from Haran. He himself was not a great nation, and the blessing to the nations did not come through him.

Abram’s part is expressed in a single though searching command. While the heaped up ‘I will’s’ reveal how much greater is the Lord’s part. At the same time their futurity emphasises the bare faith that was required: Abram must exchange the known for the unknown (Hebrews 11:8)

(Kidner 1967:114)

By faith he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise (Hebrews 11:9). The promise had great significance for generations still to come (cf. Galatians 3:6-18).

It is not known when the promise to Abraham was written down and we presume that it was initially preserved in oral form. Preservation is part of God’s plan for the form of revelation to future generations. This is evident in the covenant instituted at Mount Sinai.

The inscripturation of the word of God occurs at Sinai with the establishment of God's covenant with his people. While God's calling of the fathers had a covenant form, the redemption of the assembly of God's people, the congregation of Israel, calls for a formal covenant ratification with a precise and objective covenant instrument in writing.

(Clowney 1962:39)

Moses was the first writing prophet (Grudem 1994:84) and, on Sinai and beyond, his writing ministry was crucial not only to the institution of the covenant (Johnson & Webber 1989:19), but also to his ongoing ministry of the Word to the people of Israel until the end of his life.

Words are crucial to covenant. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel" (Exodus 34:27).

The recording of words and instructions for future generations is crucial to biblical revelation. Biblical instances where God's words written become crucial to successive generations are:

This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance. (Exodus 12:14) Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." (Exodus 24:7) Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. 13 Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

(Deuteronomy 31:12-13).

A similar idea is expressed in the New Testament by Stephen when referring back to Moses. “He was in the assembly in the desert, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to us” (Acts 7:38).

In the later prophets, the writing ministry continues (Johnson & Webber 1989:19), applying to the present generation but crucial for future generations.

This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you. (Jeremiah 30:1-2) Go now, write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the days to come it may be an everlasting witness. (Isaiah 30:8) Then the LORD replied: “Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it. 3 For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay. (Habakkuk 2:2-3) In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian kingdom— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years (Daniel 9:1-2).

Wayne Grudem quotes Lindblom: “Since the prophets regarded their utterances as Yahweh’s words, they thought they were significant for all times” (1983:27).

The wisdom literature assumes that what has been learnt in previous generations will be of continuing relevance. “Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching” (Proverbs 1:8).

The original revelation, then had its own significance in its day, but it has an even greater significance as it is passed from generation to generation,

preserved by God as his revelation for his people in all eras in time (Adam 1997:30). J I Packer refers to this as ‘cumulative,’ and points out that this cumulative revelation becomes self interpreting (1979:86-87).

Calvin (1973:71) describes the process of preservation as follows:

But whether God became known to the patriarchs through oracles and visions or by the work and ministry of men, he put into their minds what they should then hand down to their posterity. At any rate, there is no doubt that the firm certainty of doctrine was engraved in their hearts, so that they were convinced and understood that what they had learned proceeded from God. For by his Word, God rendered faith unambiguous forever, a faith that should be superior to all opinion. Finally, in order that truth might abide forever in the world with a continuing succession of teaching and survive through the ages, the same oracles he had given to the patriarchs it was his pleasure to have recorded, as it were, on public tablets.

If one accepts the idea of cumulative and public preservation as integral to historic revelation then God's acts in history are of saving significance for the generations involved in them and also for future generations. Later ministries like that of the prophets continually call people back to the covenant made at Sinai. These later ministries may involve reading and applying the historical documents as in Ezra's public reading of the law.

The use of expressions such as “the law” or “the prophets” (Matthew 5:17), “the commandment” or “the word of God” (Mark 7:9, 13), or “the law of Moses, the prophets, and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44) by Jesus shows the acceptance of the Old Testament (Adam 1997:30) by him as composed of documents preserved by God and forming a cumulative unity.

Paul describes the privileges of the Jews in these terms. “Much in every way! First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God ...the people of Israel (Romans 3:2). Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises” (Romans 9:4).

The expressions, “the scripture”, “the scriptures”, or “it is written” illustrates the unity of the cumulative revelation and the importance of its preservation by inscripturation.

Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). Haven’t you read this scripture: “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; (Mark 12:10) But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?” (Matthew 26:54) 56 But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.” Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. (Matthew 26:56) ...and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21) They asked each other “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:3) The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3:8, 22) The gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ... What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” ...For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in

you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” (Rom 1:2; 4:3; 9:17) For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, (1 Corinthians 15:3) The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” 22 But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. (Galatians 3:8,22) As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, (Acts 17:2) Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (Acts 17:11)

The New Testament believes that because the Old Testament scriptures point forward to Christ, it is those who believe in the Lord Jesus who are now addressed by God through those same scriptures (Adam 1997:31).

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come” (1 Corinthians 10:11). “For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

(Romans 15:4)

Paul quotes God’s words in Isaiah for his own hearers: It is written: “As surely as I live,” says the Lord, “every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.” 12 So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:11-12).

Hebrews quotes Proverbs:

And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: “My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son

(Hebrews 12:5-6).

Jesus uses the words of Isaiah as addressed to Jesus own contemporaries: He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written; ”these people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Mark 7:6).

The New Testament uses expressions which make it clear that God addresses them and their contemporaries through the words of Scripture. Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” (Matt 4:4; cf. Deut 8:3)

Paul states that Isaiah’s words are what ‘the Lord has commanded us’ (Acts 13:47) Hebrews urges: “So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert,” (Hebrews 3:7-8).

B. B. Warfield can thus point to the interchangeable New Testament expressions, ‘it says’, ‘scripture says’, and ‘God says’, and refer to the ‘absolute identification by the New Testament writers of the Scriptures in their hands (the Old Testament) with the living voice of God’ (1981:283).

2.1.2.2 New Testament writing

The same emphasis of continued relevance is assumed in the New Testament.

For the writers of the New Testament the Old Testament remains 'the word of God', but they also use this phrase of the message of the gospel. The proconsul Sergius Paulus "wanted to hear the word of God" (Acts 13:7), Paul claims that 'we refuse to falsify God's word' (2 Corinthians 4:2) and church leaders are those 'who spoke the word of God to you (Heb 13:7). In Revelation, John is on Patmos 'because of the word of God' (Rev 1:9) and the martyrs have been slaughtered for 'the word of God' (Rev 6:9). As the Old Testament is the product of the inscripturation of the revelation, and as that revelation continues through the preservation of the inscripturated documents, so the New Testament is the product of inscripturation of the revelation in and about Jesus Christ.

(Adam 1997:33).

There are other New Testament Scriptures referring to the writing down of the word of God.

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1-4).

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30-31).

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea (Colossians 4:16).

Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter. (Hebrews 13:22) “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later (Revelation 1:19).

Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near (Revelation 1:3).

In the words of Henry Bullinger referring to Jesus:

He made the apostles his witnesses; which did afterwards first of all with a lively expressed voice preach all things which the Lord had taught them; and then, to the intent that they should not be corrupted, or clean taken out of man’s remembrance, they did commit it to writing; so that now we have from the fathers, the prophets, and apostles the word of God as it was preached and written.

(1849:56)

Summing up with the words of Edmund Clowney (1962:61):

We bear in our hands the words which Moses carried on the tables of stone down the thundering mountain ... We bear the whole witness of the Father to the Son: those things that are written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms concerning him. In our hands we hold the inspired kerygma and didache of the witnesses who testify of Christ.

2.1.3 Preach the Word

Those who receive the biblical revelation also receive the command to become speakers of God’s word. “For Scripture is a living instrument serving God for the proclamation of salvation (Berkouwer 1975:333). In J. I. Packer’s

well known phrase, Scripture is “God preaching” (1979:97) which leads to a third foundation for preaching which is the command, “Preach the Word”.

That is to say, preaching depends not only on having a God given source, the Bible, but also a God given commission to preach, teach and explain it to people and to encourage them to respond. The origin of the ministry of the Word is that God has given his words to his servants to pass it on to others.

(Adam 1997:37)

Preaching is an important action in ministry. Ministry can be described, says Vos, “as the church’s effort to communicate, and to proclaim the gospel” (1994:9). This effort to communicate the word of God has its roots in the Old Testament.

2.1.3.1 Ministry of the Word in the Old Testament

In Old Testament times, the prophets in particular proclaimed the Word of God with confidence and authority.

In general we find the same indications of authority in the succession of prophets from Samuel to Malachi and the same threefold form of expression as in the Mosaic period: direct speech by God to persons, God’s words spoken by persons, and God’s word’s written.

(Johnson & Webber 1989:19)

The prophets were keenly aware of the fact that the word was God’s word, not theirs. God communicated his word to them (Greidanus 1988:1-2). There is a conversing between God and his people.

The origin of Christian preaching teaches us something of dialogic character of preaching. God introduces himself to

Abraham, Moses, Ezekiel and others in the Old Testament in a dialogue: God speaks, man answers; God questions, man questions or raises objections; and in this inter-action God reveals himself and his will.

(Pieterse 1987:7)

Reference to the ministry of the word is made about God's servants in the Patriarchal period. Enoch is referred to as prophesying (Jude 14) and Noah is described as herald of righteousness (3 Peter 2:5). Abraham's teaching ministry is described in these words: "For I have chosen him, that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Genesis 18:19). Another example is Jacob blessing his sons (Genesis 49) and this reminds us that blessings and curse were an early form of verbal ministry. Because they reflected the power of God's words, they were powerful in producing the effect they described, and also irreversible (Genesis 27).

Moses is the great example of God's giving his words to his servant to pass on to others. "God calls Moses as his prophet par excellence and sent him to the people of God ...every word the prophet spoke in the name of the Lord was equivalent to God's speaking words. Thus what the prophet Moses spoke was what God spoke" (Johnson & Webber 1989:18).

The Old Testament is full of evidence that the ministry of the Word established by Moses was continued in successive generations. For example, it is said of the prophet Elijah in his ministry to the widow at Zarephath that 'the word of the Lord came to him'. (1 Kings 17:2, cf. 2, 8, 16, 24) The call of the prophet Jeremiah is described in these terms: 'The word of the Lord came to me ... Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth'. (Jeremiah 1:4, 9). Also Ezekiel (Ezekiel 2:9 – 3:1), Amos (Amos 3:7), Ezra (Ezra 7:11)

Adam points out that "...the expectation that the work of God in the future will be accompanied and in part accomplished by ministers of the Word" (Adam

1997:42). This is most clearly seen in the latter part of Isaiah (Isaiah 40:9; 61:1-2; 49:6; 50:4; 55:10-11; 52:7), that part of the Old Testament most enthusiastically used by the New Testament” (1997:42). Or as Goldsworthy affirms, “We have a prophetic message that does not simply promise a future saving act of God but indicates that it will be through proclamation that this salvation will come (Goldsworthy 2000:39).

2.1.3.2 Ministry of the Word in the New Testament

The New Testament opens with the ministry of the Word by John the Baptist: after a number of years, apparently of meditation and waiting on God, “the word of God came to John” (Luke 3:2) (Ladd 1974:35). In Mark 1:1-4 it is a ministry of the Word defined in Scripture (Isaiah 40:3). John uses that Scripture as part of his message (John 1:23). His preaching focuses on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:35; 3:30) and includes application and exhortation. (Luke 3:7-9)

John prepares the way by being the messenger and preparing the way. (Mark 1:2-8). After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. (Mark 1:14-15)

The founder of Christianity was himself the first of its preachers; but he was preceded by his forerunner and followed by his Apostles, and in the preaching of these the proclamation and teaching of God’s Word by public address was made an essential and permanent feature of the Christian religion.

(Dargon 1912:7)

Jesus either quotes or alludes to the Old Testament more than 150 times in the Synoptic gospels alone. He clearly equates the words of Scripture with the words of God (Johnson & Webber 1989:23). In the preaching and teaching of Jesus, God is regarded as the author of Scripture so much so that in certain contexts (Matthew 19:4-5 and

Genesis 2:24) “God” and “Scripture” have become interchangeable (Wenham 1973:28).

The inspired character of the Old Testament as originating ultimately by the Holy Spirit is mentioned by Christ When teaching in the temple said, “David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit declared ... (Mark 12:36). “Everywhere he appealed to the Bible as the final word on the matter on hand” (Johnson & Webber 1989:23).

Mark shows us that Jesus’ life and ministry evoke wonder and amazement, but the amazement begins with response to Jesus’ teaching. (Mark 1:22, 27) At this stage, preaching is Jesus’ priority (Mark 1:38). Mark also pictures Jesus as engaged in responsive teaching during dinner, in the cornfields and in the synagogue (Mark 2:23-27). This too forms part of his ministry of the Word. With the parable of the seeds in chapter 4, Jesus describes and links his own ministry of the Word, the growth of the kingdom of God, and the ministry of the Word of his disciples (Mark 4:26, 31). Mark summarizes Jesus dual ministry of the Word: to the crowds (With many such parables he spoke the word to them); and to the disciples (‘he explained everything in private to his disciples’). In view of this detailed picture of Jesus’ preaching and teaching ministry, it is no wonder that at his transfiguration, the voice from the cloud says, ‘this is my Son, whom I love, listen to him’ (Mark 9:7) (Adam 1997:45).

In the other gospels too, Jesus is the minister of the Word. Matthew describes Jesus last commission to his disciples as including the task of ‘teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you’ (Matthew 28:20).

In John, Jesus summarizes his teaching ministry: ‘the words that you gave me I have given to them, and they have received them’ (John 17:8). In Acts Luke describes his gospel as containing ‘all that Jesus did and taught ...giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen (Acts 1:1-2). The emphasis on proclamation is made in the choice of passage Jesus selects to read in the synagogue (Luke 4:16-21)

In emphasizing Jesus' ministry of the Word, I am not claiming that this ministry is all Jesus did, or that it was the most important of his actions. His ministry included various miracles, and his death and resurrection were of central importance. But his preaching and teaching were also an integral and essential part of his ministry and revelation. Jesus was a minister of the Word.

(Adam 1997:47)

“Jesus speaks with a distinctive authority. His words are spirit and life; they are the means of giving their hearers new life (John 6:45)” (Goldingay 2003:826).

Not only is Jesus a minister of the Word, but central to his strategy is the calling of others to that ministry (Mark 3:14-15). The disciples are urged to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest field to preach the message of the kingdom (Matthew 9:36-38). He instructs them to preach the message of the kingdom (Matthew 10:7).

The disciples' ministry of preaching the kingdom is ultimately and inextricably linked with their right understanding of both the Old Testament, and Jesus death and resurrection. On the road to Emmaus: “He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’” (Luke 24:25-27).

During Jesus' ministry on earth, the disciples received his word: (John 14:23-24). After Jesus death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the Counsellor, would continue this ministry to these disciples (John 14:25-26).

The Apostles are ministers of the word. God sent apostles to proclaim his word (Greidanus 1988:4). “An apostle is ‘one who is sent’ as the fully certified representative of another” (cf. Ridderbos 1975: 448-50). The apostles represented God himself as they proclaimed the word.

As in the past we see here the giving of God's words to pass on to others as a strong feature of revelation. The ministry of the Word continues and increases after Pentecost. In Acts 2, the first day of apostolic ministry is focused on a sermon. The sermon has as its content the Old Testament scripture and the story of Jesus, the application is 'repent and be baptized'; the sermon ends with exhortation, warning and pleading and as a result three thousand were added to their number.

(Adam 1997:49).

For Luke, this is not only the beginning of the apostolic ministry but also its model (Acts 4:31, 5:21). The priority of the ministry of the Word for the Apostles is demonstrated in Acts 6:2-4 (Gooding 1990:104). Luke's account continues with many descriptions of Paul's ministry of preaching and teaching. (Acts 9:22, 28-29) When Barnabas and Paul are sent out by the church in Antioch they 'proclaimed the word of God' (Acts 13:4-5) (Gooding 1990:209).

J A Motyer in the foreword of Haddon W Robinson (1986: ii) claims that Paul's description of his ministry in Acts 15:7 provides an important clue for understanding the task of all preaching "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe." Motyer draws attention to God's choice, the lips, and mouth of the preacher, the response of hearing the word of the gospel, and the response of faith.

Paul, says Greidanus (1988:4), frequently calls his messages "the word of God" or "the word of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Runia (1978:23, 25) notes that Paul uses these phrases not only for the written Word of the Old Testament, but also for the word preached in New Testament times.

The book of Acts ends with this description of Paul: "For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

31 Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 28:30-31).

Paul describes his own ministry in terms of proclamation and teaching, He is conscious that the Word of God has been committed to him and that he has been made a mouth-piece of the exalted Christ (Ladd 1974:380).

For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power (1 Corinthians 1:17). But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:23-24). We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labour, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me (Colossians 1:28-29). And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a teacher of the true faith to the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7).

In 1 John 1:1-3, too, we find an apostolic ministry of the word in terms of declaration and testimony (Ladd 1974:613):

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ

(1 John 1:1-3).

The post-Pentecost proliferation of the speaking of God's truth among not only Jewish but also Gentile believers in Jesus Christ is signalled by Peter's use of the words of Joel 2:28-32 in his Pentecost sermon (Johnson & Webber 1989:29).

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy

(Acts 2:17-18).

This then has a continuing relevance for all believers of all time. "Here is the promise that God will pour out his Spirit on all people, and that one of the results of this will be that they speak the words from God. Every believer then has a word ministry, if not a formal ministry of the Word" (Adam 1997:52).

One cannot avoid noticing the place the ministry of the Word takes in the lives of people on the early church. There is the choosing of the seven who have a ministry of the Word (Acts 6:2), there is Stephen in his speech to the Sanhedrin (Acts 7:51 – 52), there is Paul, Barnabas, Priscilla, Aquilla, Urbanus, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Eudias, Syntyche, Clement, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus called Justus and Epaphras (Adam 1997:53, Johnson & Webber 1989:29).

Paul encourages the believers in Colosse to 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God (Colossians 3:16).

Paul urges the young Timothy to "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Timothy 4:2).

“They prosecute their work of proclaiming the gospel, therefore, in full confidence that they speak ‘by the Holy Spirit’ (1 Peter 1:12), to whom they attribute both the matter and form of their teaching ...” (Warfield 1948:163).

When both the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles have finished their ministry, it is seen that their message needs to be taught to succeeding generations, hence the appointment of teaching elders (Adam 1997:54).

Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (Acts 14:23) Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in preaching and teaching (1Timothy 5:17).

Stott (1982a:18-47) sketches the emphasis placed on the preached word of God from the early church fathers through to the evangelicals of the 20th century.

The Apostolic task of preaching continues through the early church bringing about the kingdom and this it is to remain until the day when Jesus will return in great glory to consummate the kingdom (Goldsworthy 2000:45).

2.1.4 Implications

There are a number of important implications (Adam 1997:56) for preachers of the word that emerge as a result of the foundational truths that God speaks, it is written and preach the Word.

2.1.4.1 God’s words are effective

Because they are God’s words that God has spoken, they have all the power of God, the speaker, behind them and within them. Our role is not to make God’s words powerful through our speaking, but to help people recognize the power and significance of those words.

2.1.4.2 God’s words are part of his self-revelation

God's words are not remote from him; he is present in his words. Our preaching of God's words is not an invitation to consider something remote from God, but an invitation to meet the living God in his words.

2.1.4.3 God has appointed the ministry of the Word

Human servants are God's main means for making his words known. Preachers are not an intrusion, nor are they unnecessary in an obedient church; they are God's method of bringing his words to Christian and non-Christian alike.

2.1.4.4 God has preserved his words for us today

God wrote the Bible with us in mind. It is an ancient book, but it is 'God's preaching'. We need to work on how it is relevant, but we may assume that it is relevant, and that it contains God's message for us today.

2.1.4.5 God uses human agent

God has human agents in giving his revelation and preserving his words. When we are teaching and preaching the Bible, we shall need to take into account the one divine mind behind it, its one divine author, and thus recognize its unity, authority and power. We also need to respect its varied human authors, and the historical and theological context in which each separate part was written.

2.1.4.6 God's revelation is both historical and contemporary

Our preaching of the Bible should not be merely historical (without contemporary application) or merely contemporary (with no regard to its historical context and meaning). Rather, we should reflect the two audiences God had in mind: the original hearers of the words, and those for whom the words are preserved, including ourselves. Good preaching will be firmly grounded in both eras, understanding the words in their biblical context, and applying them today as God intended.

2.2 A proposed model for preaching

On the basis of the above three pillars for a Theology of preaching it is necessary to establish a particular model that flows from such a biblical basis. The ministry of the Word or preaching must be given a high priority in the life of the Church. Robinson (1987:17) states the case for preaching in his book *Biblical preaching*;

...no one who takes the Bible seriously dare count preaching out. Paul was a writer. From his pen we have most of the inspired letters of the New Testament, and heading the list is the one to the Romans. Measured by its impact on history, few documents compare with it. Yet when Paul wrote this letter to the congregation in Rome, he confessed, "I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that we may be mutually encouraged by each others faith, both yours and mine" (Romans 1:11-12 RSV). Paul realized that some ministries simply cannot take place apart from face-to-face contact. Even the reading of an inspired letter will not substitute. "I am eager to preach the gospel to you ...who are in Rome" (Romans 1:15 RSV). A power comes through the word preached that even the inerrant written word cannot replace.

Robinson further develops the idea that to the New Testament writers preaching stands as the event through which God works. Peter for example, reminded his readers that they had "been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the loving and abiding word of God" (1 Peter 1:23 RSV). How had this word come to effect their lives? "That word," Peter explained, "is through the good news preached to you" (1 Peter 1:25). Through preaching God had redeemed them.

The Thessalonians were people "who had turned from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven" (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 RSV). That came about, explained the apostle, because "when you received

the word of God you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thessalonians 2:13 RSV). Preaching in Paul’s mind did not consist of a man discussing religion, Instead God himself spoke through the personality and message of the preacher to confront men and women and bring them to himself.

All of this explains why Paul encouraged his young associate Timothy to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). Preach means to “cry out, herald, exhort.” Preaching should so stir a man that he pours out the message with passion and fervour. Not all passionate pleading from the pulpit, however, possesses a divine authority. When a preacher speaks as a herald, he must cry out “the word.” Anything less cannot legitimately pass for Christian preaching (Robinson 1987:18). Greidanus (1988:10) agrees saying that, “if the Scriptures were a prerequisite for Timothy’s preaching they are so even more for contemporary preachers, for the latter have no other source of revelation.”

In a bygone century Richard Baxter reminded his fellow pastors of the central place of preaching in the fulfilment of their duties:

We must be serious, earnest and zealous in every part of our work. Our work requireth greater skill, and especially greater life and zeal, than any of us can bring to it. It is no small matter to stand up in the face of the congregation, and to deliver a message of salvation or damnation, as from the living God, in the name of the Redeemer. It is no easy matter to speak so plain, that the most ignorant may understand us; and so seriously that the deadest of heart may feel us; and so convincingly, that the contradicting cavaliers be silenced.

(Baxter 1829:114).

Since it is the intention of this writer to test the hypothesis, “The transforming power of gospel preaching in a post modern influenced audience”, it is necessary to choose a model that understands the seriousness of the task of accurately and relevantly proclaiming the revealed Word of God. The chosen

model must enable the preacher to speak not his own ideas, thoughts or opinions but that of Scripture.

To quote Adam when speaking of Moses' preaching, he says, "We now have the main ingredients of the ministry of the Word – the servant who hears God's words, the writing down and reading out aloud of God's words, and the preaching of God's words by means of exposition, application and exhortation" (Adam 1997:40).

A model that is based on the above biblical foundation that includes these ingredients and enables the preacher to carry out the charge of preaching the Word is that of expository preaching.

2.2.1 Expository Preaching

No treatment of the nature of expository preaching would be complete without referring to the dramatic scene recorded in Nehemiah 8:

All the people assembled as one man in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. 2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. 4 Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam. 5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they

bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. 7 The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. 8 They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read

(Nehemiah 8:1-8).

Expository preaching seeks to follow the pattern of preaching as established by Ezra and his colleagues. Those godly men read God's book and explained it, and they did so in such a way that the people understood the implications (Begg 1999:27, Hughes 2001:19). Expository preaching is "Bible-centred preaching". That is, it is handling the text "in such a way that its real and essential meaning as it existed in the mind of the particular Bible writer as it exists in the light of the over-all context of Scripture is made plain and applied to the present-day needs of the hearers" (Unger 1955:33). The text of Scripture must be explained in such a way that people understand what God is saying to them (Hughes 2001:69).

True expository preaching creates an expectation amongst hearers to hear what it is that God is saying. Calvin (1973:42) expresses this in his commentary on Ephesians:

It is certain that if we come to church we shall not hear only a mortal man speaking but we shall feel (even by his secret power) that God is speaking to our souls, that he is the teacher. He so touches us that the human voice enters into us and so profits us that we are refreshed and nourished by it. God call us to him as if he had his mouth open and we saw him there in person.

2.2.1.1 The key principles of expository preaching:

- a) Expository preaching always begins with the text.

That does not mean that every sermon will begin with the phrase, “Please turn in your Bible to ...” But it does mean that even when we begin by referring to some current event or the lyric of a contemporary song, it is the text of Scripture that establishes the agenda for the sermon. The expositor does not start with some private idea instead he begins with the Scripture itself and allows the verses under consideration to establish and frame the content of the sermon (Begg 1999:28, Robinson 1980:23). The congregation should be able to see that it is from the text of Scripture where he derived truths put forth in the sermon (Hughes 2001:18).

This is a basic principle put succinctly in *The Directory for the Public Worship of God*, written in 1645. When raising an issue from a text, preachers are to ensure that “it be a truth contained in or grounded on that text” (The Confession of Faith 1970:379). That is why John Stott says, “It is our conviction that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching” (1982a:125).

It is wrong therefore to think of expository preaching merely as a style chosen from a list (topical, devotional, evangelistic, textual, apologetic, prophetic, expository). Roy Clements confirms this, “Expository preaching is not a matter of style at all. In fact, the determinative step which decides whether a sermon is going to be expository or not takes place, in my view, before a single word has been actually written or spoken. First and foremost, the adjective ‘expository’ describes the method by which the preacher decides what to say, not how to say it” (Clements 1998)

The task of the expositor goes beyond a running commentary on a passage or even a succession of word studies loosely held together by a few illustrations. It goes beyond the discovery and declaration of the central doctrine found in the passage.

In preaching the aim must be to let the text speak. As von Rad instructed young preachers: ‘every text wants to speak for itself’ (von Rad 1977:18). We should not only try to find out what the text means; we should also ask: ‘What

is the passage trying to do?’ (Buttrick 1985:91). In the words of Gerhard Ebeling: ‘The sermon is the execution of the text ... it is the proclamation of what the text has proclaimed’ (1966:109). The text provides both information and proclamation (Logan1986:137) and as the Bible is read and preached, God speaks to us today.

b) In expository preaching the preacher stands between two worlds

Expository preaching seeks to fuse the two horizons of the biblical text and the contemporary world. Stott in his book *‘Between two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century’* (1982b) argues that it is possible to preach exegetically and yet fail to answer the ‘so what?’ in the listeners mind. Ezra’s hearers would not have begun construction on the booths if he had failed to establish the link between the text and the times. True exposition must have some prophetic dimension that leaves the listener in no doubt that what he has heard is a living word from God and creates in him at least the sneaking suspicion that the Author knows him. The preacher’s task is to declare what God has said, explain the meaning and establish the implications so that no one will mistake its relevance.

Biblical and Theological studies do not by themselves make for good preaching. They are indispensable. But unless they are supplemented by contemporary studies, they can keep us disastrously isolated on one side of the cultural chasm.

(Stott 1982b:190)

David Read (1952:62) commends the need for study but goes on to say,

...that theologically-cushioned, isolated study is a lethal chamber, and it is a dead word that is carried out along the corridor ...not the living Word spoken as it must be, from the heart and from life to life.

It is necessary for the preacher to understand the world of the congregation (Pieterse in Vos 1994:6). This requires more than just the study of the Bible and commentaries but a penetration by the preacher into the world of the parishioners.

Long states that the preacher must approach the text as a representative of the congregation. He says, “we have been immersed in the lives of these people to whom we will speak, which is another way of saying that, symbolically at least we rise to the pulpit from the pew (1989:12).”

c) In expository preaching show relevance

Expository preaching encourages the listener to understand why a first-century letter to the church in Corinth is relevant to a twenty-first century congregation living in Pretoria.

The horizons of the biblical text and the contemporary world should fuse in such a way that the listeners are learning by example how integrate the Bible with their own experience. Listeners face the twin dangers of assuming either that what they have just heard is totally unrelated to where they are living or that it is immediately applicable, that is “just for them” (cf. Begg 1999:30).

The preacher, has to place himself in the text’s situation (horizon), whilst been true to one’s own situation (horizon). In the hermeneutical interaction that follows (putting one’s prejudices as questions and listening to the text’s answers to these questions) the preacher’s horizon is broadened

(Vos 1994:7)

Vos concludes, “Speaking and listening happens in dialogues. A dialogue with the biblical text can occur where there is critical exegetical analysis and attentive listening on the part of the preacher” (1994:7).

d) In expository preaching depend on the work of the Holy Spirit

Azurdia III (2003:29) claims that,

The greatest impediment to the advancement of the gospel is the attempt of the church of Jesus Christ to do the work of God apart from the truth and power of the Spirit of God. Like the disciples, preachers are powerless, in and of themselves, to accomplish the 'greater works'. The declaration of Jesus in John 15v5 remains true to this day: 'Apart from me you can do nothing'.

Pieterse confirms this by saying that we can only hear the living Word in preaching through the work of the Holy Spirit (1987:15).

Hughes correctly argues that our belief in the power and our dependence on the Holy Spirit of God must never 'give us licence to be mediocre communicators' (Hughes 2001:85). The same warning is given by Spurgeon to preachers who fail to employ effective homiletical techniques, saying:

There are some preachers who care very little whether they are attended to or not; so long as they can hold on through the allotted time it is of very small importance to them whether their people hear from eternity, or hear in vain: the sooner such ministers sleep in the churchyard and preach by the verse on their gravestones the better.

(Spurgeon 1970:127)

It is true the Holy Spirit can do anything he wants, but "he has called us to preach the word and to preach it clearly, to preach it accurately and to preach to communicate the content of the gospel" (Hughes 2001:85).

3. THE POSTMODERN AUDIENCE.

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the person influenced by post modernity. People from all walks of life are exposed, at least to some extent, to the trends and influences of their particular day. Those present in Church services week by week are not exempt from these new ideas, trends and pressures. "The person living in the 21st Century must be taken seriously for meaningful ministry to take place. The preacher must understand the congregation in its own context to avoid proclamation taking place in a vacuum" (Janse van Rensburg 2002:39).

Nell (Vos ed 1994:28) makes an obvious but important point, "A sermon must be heard in order to have any effect ...Preaching as a communication act is intended to act upon an audience, to modify an audience's convictions or dispositions ..." The preacher in every context, including the postmodern context needs to know and understand his audience.

The word 'postmodern' can be used having various meanings. In a broader and general sense it can be descriptive of a particular genre of literature, art or architecture (Johnston 2001:24). In this study the term 'postmodern' will be used to refer to a movement in the history of ideas, since as Os Guinness explains, "modernism as a set of ideas may well have collapsed and 'post-modern' may be legitimate to describe a set of ideas that succeeds it" (Guinness1992:27).

Some, like David Cook (1996:9), have sought to define it:

Postmodernism moves beyond the "modern" scientifically based view of the world by blending a scepticism about technology, objectivity, absolutes and total explanations with a stress on image and appearance, personal interpretation, pleasure and exploration of every spiritual and material perspective.

This dissertation will follow the approach that “postmodernism is better understood descriptively and by its features, rather than by definition” (Johnston 2001:24).

3.1 The distinctive features of postmodernism

In this section we will use ten distinctives as proposed by Johnston (2001:26) that have emerged as hallmarks of postmodern people as a basis for developing an understanding of the features of postmodernism. Other sources and authors will be consulted to build on the suggested framework as proposed by Johnston.

3.1.1 Postmodernists react to modernity and all its tenets

The hallmark of modernism in the twentieth century has been its belief in the rationality of the universe. There has been a growing dissatisfaction in the twenty first century with the modern view. The result has been the emergence of the postmodern movement (Erickson 2001:158).

In our day, a change has taken place in what the word modern means. Where previously it meant the most recent and even the current, it has now come to mean a particular time period with a particular ideology associated with it. Thomas Oden (1995:23) dates the modern period from 1789 to 1989, from the fall of the French Bastille to the fall of the Berlin wall.

There is agreement that this period intellectually could be characterized by a number of qualities. There is also agreement that this period and this ideology, at least in its more extreme and purest forms, is passing from dominance and may already be passé. Postmodernism, on this analysis, is that which succeeds it, both in terms of chronological sequence and of intellectual dominance.

(Erickson 2001:160)

In John Herman Randall's *Making of the Modern Mind* a number of characteristics of modernity is identified (see Randall 1940:11-15).

1. Modernism has been essentially humanistic. The human being is the centre of reality, and in a sense everything exists for the sake of the human. In an earlier period, God had been thought of as the central and supreme object of value.
2. Together with humanism is naturalism. Nature, as the habitat of the human, is strongly emphasized.
3. With this growing interest in nature, means of investigating and understanding it were developed and refined. This is the scientific method. From being regarded as the best means for gaining knowledge the shift has gradually been in the direction of considering it to be virtually the only means of investigating truth.
4. Nature, rather than being thought of as passive and an object of human activity, is considered dynamic, and the sole and sufficient cause and explanation of all that occurs. Instead of human origin, for example, being thought of as an act of special creation by God, biological evolution is seen as the cause of the human. Humans are not as uniquely different from other living beings as was formerly thought.
5. Determinism is a strong element in modernism. Science was possible because there were certain regularities within reality, which could be discovered and formulated into laws. This enabled humans both to predict and to control what happened.

6. The scientific method also tended to be practiced in a reductionistic fashion. Objects of study were regarded as “nothing but” something more basic. Thus Psychology tended to be reduced to biology, biology to chemistry, and chemistry to physics.
7. There was a strong tendency toward foundationalism. This is an attempt to ground knowledge on some sure first principals. Knowledge was thought to be absolute and unqualified, whereas religion has to base itself on faith.
8. There is a commitment to the metaphysical realism. The objects of the inquiry in which science engages are objects external to the consciousness of the knower, existing independently of any perception of them.
9. There is a representative view of language. Language refers to real objects that are extra linguistic.
10. There is a correspondence theory of truth. Truth is a measure of propositions and is present in those propositions, which correctly correspond to the state of affairs that they claim to present.

In general modernism was seeking for an explanation that would cover all things. So the great systems of the modern period were omni explanatory. Darwinism accounted for everything in terms of biological evolution. Freudian psychology explained all human behaviour in light of sexual energy, repression and unconscious forces. Marxism interpreted all events of history in economic categories, with the forces of dialectical materialism moving history toward the inevitable classless society. These ideologies offered universal diagnoses as well as universal cure (Erickson 2001:164).

There has been a growing dissatisfaction with this modern way of viewing things.

...in many quarters of our common world there exists an increasingly shared conviction that the modern world is dying, if not already dead...”at the dawn of the 21st century – awash in the blood of ideological and nationalistic conflict, beset by pandemic viruses, and standing at the brink of ecological

disaster – such confidence has been all but sentenced to the gallows, and the name of its executioner is postmodernity.

(Lose 2003:1)

It is felt that the modern approach has failed to accomplish that which it purported to do or that which was needed to be done. There are more restrained and more radical forms of this abandonment of the modern view. Diogenes Allen has outlined four areas in which this breakdown of the modern synthesis has occurred, four pillars of Western society that are crumbling (see 1989:21-25).

1. The idea of a self-contained universe is dissolving. This was a widely held premise of scientific thinking. It was possible to explain the universe without any appeal to God. While it was permissible to believe in God as a matter of personal and private faith, this belief was not necessary for an observable reality.
2. The second collapse is the failure of the modern world to find a basis for morality and society. The goal was to establish a rational ethic, to demonstrate by reason alone a universal morality and basis for society. This modernity has failed to do. The failure was not so evident while members of society adhered to traditional values based on Greek and Christian principles. With the abandonment of such values, however, a virtual chaos has resulted, similar to the time of the Old Testament judges, when everyone did what was right in his or her own eyes.
3. Optimism regarding inevitable progress has also been lost.
4. The fourth Enlightenment principle was the inherent goodness of knowledge. Experience has shown us, however, that knowledge is neutral, its moral value depending on those who possess and use it. So some of the major discoveries of our time have been used for great good, but there has also been applications that have resulted in great evil.

All of these in Allen's judgement provided a great opportunity for Christian belief for our time, for they represent the removal of major obstacles or competitors to the Christian faith.

J I Packer says: "The only agreed upon element is that postmodernism is a negation of modernism." (Packer in Goetz 1997:53) Where modernity revelled in reason, science and the human ability to overcome, postmodernity wallows in mysticism, relativism and the incapacity to know with certainty both what is true or the answers to life's great questions. The demise of modernity signals an awakening from the illusion of human progress. "We began to realize that the very technology which we have relied upon to bring us Utopia, was in fact in danger of destroying the whole earth" (Robinson 1997:30).

Postmodernism refers to a worldview that is a backlash against the Enlightenment dream and dismisses any overarching set of ideas. Postmodernity is a worldview that says no worldview exists. The Enlightenment arrogance sought to provide answers to all questions. Postmodern people simply live in the quandary of not knowing and of potential meaninglessness. Look at the contrasts (Harvey 1987:43):

Modernity

Postmodernity

Romantic view of life

absurd view of life

Purpose

play

Design

chance

Hierarchy

anarchy

Word

silence

A completed work

process

Analysis from a distance

analysis through participation

Creation/synthesis

deconstruction/antithesis

Present

absence

Centering

dispersal

Semantics/words

rhetoric/presentation

Depth

surface

Narrative/grande historie

antinarrative/petite historie

Metaphysics

irony

Transcendence

immanence

Postmodernity possesses a more open mind. One person's reality is equally legitimate to the next person's – and the progression is to embrace everyone's point of view.

Modernity's arrogance in certainty is countered by postmodernity's profound openness. The implication of this new openness shouldn't be lost in relation to biblical revelation. Our Christian conviction rests on the notion that "God is, and he is not silent. "To this postmodernity shrugs, "perhaps" (Johnston 2001:29).

3.1.2 Postmodernists are suspicious of objective truth

Disillusionment with Enlightenment thinking resulted in a society that is sceptical.

Since the postmodern movement rose out of the study of language that concluded that any talk of objective truth is purely illusion, one can never speak of knowing something objectively, or even state something is true because it corresponds to reality. Postmodernism, after all, maintains that a person can really only say, "according to my perception, that is true.

(Johnston 2001:29)

Postmodernism will argue that you cannot divorce yourself from the interpretive process of knowing; therefore, your own perceptions, understandings, bias, and presuppositions will always taint your conclusions about what is true.

Postmodernism says the idea of a world of facts, or an objective world, is an illusion, concludes Martin Robinson. 'Everything is subjective. So the relative pluralism that was present in modernity (with regard to values and morality) has now been

extended to the whole of life. Everything is pluralistic now. All views are as good as mine.

(Robinson 1997:30)

Absolute truth as derived from revelation is no longer generally accepted by the postmodern person. Truth is now discovered in the process of communication. It is in the context of relationships and exchange of insights and experience with each other that this takes place. People today are more cautious, skeptical and suspicious and do not swallow everything they are told (Pieterse 2002:83).

This has implications for biblical preaching as in the postmodern world the authority of the Bible is brought into serious question. At best the postmodernist places the Bible on equal footing with other sacred books. Likewise, even those who do accept the Bible as carrying unique authority might also say, "That's your interpretation, not mine!" The title of a chapter by Phillip Kenneson in a collection of essays called *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World* (1995) epitomizes this postmodern suspicion of objective truth: There is no Such Thing as Objective Truth, and It's a Good Thing Too.

The Enlightenment viewed the world on two levels. On the one level there is the metaphysical world of values, morality and faith. On the other level there is the empirical or physical world of science, reason and mathematics. "Later generations teased out the implication that the objective world (of science and reason) was the real world and the subjective world (of faith and morality) was less important" (Robinson 1997:30).

Or as Friedrich Nietzsche projected, a conclusion was reached that the subjective world of values, morality, and God didn't exist at all! Nietzsche argued this subjective world of God and faith represented categories of human origin and could – yea, should – be summarily dismissed. Human beings were then freed to live as they please, unfettered by the restraints of traditional concepts of good and evil, and right and wrong. Nietzsche took the first steps of dismissing all matters of faith and morality as irrelevant to life. So

whereas Nietzsche said only the objective world mattered, now postmodernity declares only the subjective world actually remains (Johnston 2001:31).

Where the Enlightenment sought to relegate matters of faith to the rear of the bus as either insignificant or non-existent. Postmodernity returns value to faith and affirms the nurturing of our spiritual being as vital to humankind. Unfortunately with the loss of truth, people will now seek a faith without boundaries, categories, or definition. People will be increasingly open to knowing God, but on their own terms. Loyalty is something of the past in this environment where there is so much suspicion. The church is seen to be one of the largest and most self-serving institutions in the history of the world.

“This institutional self-preservation creates an atmosphere of doubt where people assume the Church is merely speaking out of something it has at stake. Post modern people are sceptical about such hidden agendas” (Buttrick 1995:414).

The Biblical communicator is left with the challenge of presenting Christ in the relativist context where “truth, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder” (Johnston 2001:31).

3.1.3 Postmodernists are sceptical and suspicious of authority.

The postmodern person has become disillusioned and has grown into what Janse van Rensburg calls *homo sceptics* (Janse van Rensburg 2002:49). This person critically questions everything. The so-called sacred and previously untouchable values and traditions no longer find unquestioning acceptance.

Because of this scepticism and the fact that the postmodernist sees all truth as relative they are therefore wary of anyone who claims to possess the truth (Johnston 2001:31). Because the postmodernist sees truth as being relative preaching can very easily be taken as a pinch of salt. This then leads to greater openness to other faiths. Criticism of other denominations and faiths is not well received. It is more likely that they are convinced that all groups and

individual have a right to have their own opinion (Janse van Rensburg 2002:50).

Some of the French philosophers who pioneered the concepts of postmodernism – Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard, for example – argued that truth is not an objective idea but a human construct, something that individuals create. As a result, truth and reason were no longer viewed as morally neutral. Truth is seen as a tool, perpetuated by those in control as a means of oppression and maintaining control of the under classes, the most dangerous creatures are those claiming to know.

(Johnston 2001:32)

Lose confirms this view adding that the postmodern emphasis on knowledge as governed by perspective and power accounts for the shift from epistemology (the science of knowing) to hermeneutics (the study of interpretation). Apart from foundations to guarantee the validity of knowledge, all that is left, as Nietzsche observed a hundred years ago, are interpretations (2003:23).

Post modernity rejects all worldviews because any one way of understanding the world will inevitably leave out someone, leading to marginalization and oppression. This, they believe can be balanced by tolerance to keep the power equally distributed. Any single person or group that lay claim to know the truth is received with scepticism.

We find then that postmodernism has an aversion to metanarrative or the big story. The metanarrative is the all consuming, all-encompassing overview that seeks to answer the big questions of human existence. Postmodernity objects to the possibility of a metanarrative for two reasons:

The first objection is epistemological.

If a narrative purports to be not simply a local story but the universal story of the world from *arche* to *telos*, a grand narrative encompassing world history from beginning to end, then such a narrative inevitably claims more than it can possibly know ...but if metanarratives are social constructions, then, like abstract ethical systems, they are simply, particular moral visions dressed up in the guise of universality ...The result is that all kinds of events and people end up being excluded from the way in which the story gets told. No metanarrative, it appears, is large enough and open enough genuinely to include the experiences and realities of all people

(Middleton and Walsh 1995:70).

The second objection is ethical. "Metanarratives are inevitably oppressive and violent in their claims to 'totality'" (Middleton and Walsh 1995:71). In the end, injustice prevails and people eventually pay the price for allowing the metanarratives to exist.

Once the grand stories are removed, the only thing that remains is the "little story". It is here that relativism resurfaces. The only true understanding that anyone can speak of is what's been personally experienced. The postmodernist goes on to reject the concept of the historical record. "History is only an attempt to impose order on past events, but since life has no meaning, you can't impose order. In the end, history can only be the story of the conquerors and it is not a reflection of what actually happened" (Robinson 1987:31). Hence, Postmodernity has given birth to the revisionist view of history.

This has implications for the preacher in that if people cannot believe the record of an event like the Holocaust which took place a half a century ago, how much harder is it to speak convincingly about the resurrection of Christ, which took place two thousand years ago and will most likely clash with their existing worldview?

For the postmodern thinker, the authority to derive meaning lies in the hands of the individual; authority is from within and not without. In relation to preaching, postmodern people will tend to perceive the preacher as voicing a personal viewpoint. “That’s your interpretation of the Bible.” (Johnston 2001:34)

One of the consequences to this thinking is that in a postmodern framework, the Christian faith stands as a valid option, a way, but not the way.

3.1.4 Postmodernists are facing an identity crisis

Since postmodernity grew out of the deconstruction movement, which set forth that meaning in language was not objectively understood and that interpretation was highly subjective the same principles began to be applied to self Johnson (2001:37). Postmodern people then are like missing persons in search of self and identity.

“If there are no absolutes in the objective realm, neither can there be absolutes in the subjective realm. There can be no fixed identity, no sense of self, and no unified human soul” (Veith 1994:83).

The postmodernist is not so sure about himself anymore (Janse van Rensburg 2002:46). Middleton and Walsh (1995:51) describe the disintegration of the *Homo autonomus* as “a postmodern identity crisis of immense proportions”. This person has lost his or her grip on life. “The postmodern self thus exists in a perpetual state of self-contradiction” (Middleton & Walsh 1995:110). The following description puts the uncertainty and the fear together: “And we look around us we see crowds of cowering people huddling in their corners, shivering in desperation, as a freezing wind chills their bones” (Middleton & Walsh 1995:25).

The feeling of hopelessness and loss brought about by postmodernism highlights the meaninglessness of everything (Janse van Rensburg 2002:47).

Even the future is then is described by someone like Derrida (1974:5) as a monstrosity.

The identity crisis flows, not only from others' changing perception of a person but also from the uncertainty of one's own self-perception. Kenneth Gergen probes this postmodern dilemma in his book *The Saturated Self* (1991), concluding that no one really knows who he or she is; therefore assume any identity. "A person, like the truth, is nothing more than a social construct that is constantly forming and being reconstructed to suit the situation at hand" (Middleton and Walsh 1995:52).

In modernity, a person struggled to find meaning in a mechanized world, being dehumanized. In postmodern times, personhood is an illusion, and people are decentralized. The age of Postmodernity then compounds the already existing identity crisis brought about by modernity (Johnston 2001:38). Modernity stressed the role of individual freedom. In postmodernity the value of individual freedom continues unabated. But as individualism grows, it comes at the expense of the individual who fails to perceive his or her sense of connectedness in the world. This leading to the place which the only world one can know is one's own private existence. Middleton and Walsh declare: "The heir of modernity's *homo autonomus* is postmodernity's solitary soul couched in front of the television set, seeking satisfaction for unspecified needs and ineffable desires" (1995:55).

Modern technology has also seriously contributed to the breakdown and loss of self. Jean Baudrillard calls the human mind "a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence." Already a subculture of computer aficionados known as cyberpunks has emerged. He adds: "Their goal is to exist in their own electronic world of virtual reality, virtual sex, and virtual communities. They seek to achieve, in the words of one observer, 'the fusion of humans and machines'" (Veith 1994:82).

There is a blurring of realities and loss of any category of distinctiveness. In this case the postmodern blurring obliterates the lines between human existence and non-human existence (Johnston 2001:39).

As a result of the “decentralized self” confusion reigns. “Without external standards (truth and morality) and without internal standards (a sense of self and dignity), there is only cynicism, panic and ‘free fall’” (Veith 1994:82).

For this reason, postmodern times favour short-term commitment. “Indeed, instead of long term commitment, the postmodern self just moves onto the next game, to the next show, to the next relationship,” comment Middleton and Walsh. “This is the nomadic self, on the road with the carnival” (1995:58).

People in this age want to keep their options open. Something may work for a time but as things change a person need to be able to change with the times. This all leads down the path of people having the freedom to become whoever they wish, yet without certainty of knowing who they really are. Adrift therefore at sea, every person will seek out something, some reference point to give life some meaning (Johnston 2001:39).

3.1.5 Postmodernists have blurred morality and are pragmatic

In the western world, modern people applied reason as a gauge to ethical behaviour – and the Judeo-Christian ethic was accepted in principle, if not in conduct. But today in a postmodern society, multiple standards of morality may apply and situation ethics prevail. The same act may be deemed right or wrong depending on the situation and motivation. Morality, like belief, becomes a matter not of principle but of “what works for me” (Noonan 1994:217).

In a society that has settled for what works rather than what is right and true, we find expedience the overarching factor in decision making. “Pragmatism then becomes the only possible philosophy of action.” (Veith 1994:95)

We do not live in an immoral society – one which right and wrong are clearly understood and wrong behaviour is chosen. We live in an amoral society – one in which ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ are categories with no universal meaning, and everyone ‘does what is right in his or her own eyes.

(Robinson 1993:140).

The morality of any decision, which might vary in view of the individual or situation, is secondary to the expediency of the moment (Johnston 2001:41).

Morality, like religion, is a matter of desire, and that desire takes precedence for postmoderns. “What I want and what I choose is not only true (for me) but right (for me),” Watkins (1996:168) explains the mindset.

That different people want and choose different things means that truth and morality are relative, but ‘I have a right’ to my desires. Conversely, ‘no one has the right’ to criticize my desires and choices.

The implication of each person having a right to construct his or her own moral code makes the imposition of one’s own morality upon another individual the single most detestable act. The principle of non-interference is what post moderns prefer. Tolerance then becomes the highest virtue for post moderns (Johnston 2001:42).

3.1.6 Postmodernists continue to search for the transcendent

In a postmodern worldview, where external standards by which to ascertain what’s good or right do not exist, people begin to look inward. They are unwilling to allow human intellect to serve as the sole determiner of what we should believe. Postmoderns look beyond reason to non-rational ways of knowing, conferring a heightened status on the emotions and intuition (Grenz 1996:14).

Where the modernist the issue of cultivating faith was credibility, for the postmodernist it is desirability. The issue is not so much whether it happened but whether one views these beliefs as desirable. In other words, one chooses to believe something because one wishes it were true (Veith 1994:195).

With the loss of any external measurement for gauging what is true, all that remains is the inner sense of what seems and feels comfortable to the listener. This inward look has produced a greater realization of the spiritual capacity of human beings as well as cultivating a deeper sense of the mystical element of life. Postmodernity takes hold of a wider perspective of reality, including the spiritual and intuitive aspects of human existence. This can be seen in the growth of the New Age movement where the supernatural is being embraced and often expressed in an anti-intellectual manner with crystals, palm readings, star sign and psychics. Postmodernists have embarked on a new search for the transcendent, anything beyond the empirical realm (Johnston 2001:45).

“People of all faiths, and people of no faith, are on a spiritual quest. In spite of modernity’s attempt to atheize the intellectuals and scientists, we now find ourselves in a world that is deeply spiritual” (Sweet 2001:143).

As far back as 1977, E F Schumacher wrote these words:

It may conceivably be possible to live without churches; but it is not possible to live without religion ...the modern experiment to live without religion has failed, and once we have understood this, we know what our postmodern tasks really are.

(1977:153)

In the postmodern search for the transcendent, people will be encouraged to experience as much as life as possible, getting as much out of life as you can. The thinking among generation Xers is that only the brave push the

boundaries; the weak resign themselves to constructs that someone else has produced (Johnston 2001:46).

We will have to come to terms, as we stagger into the postmodern era, with the hard to avoid evidence that there are many different realities, and different ways of experiencing them, and that people seem to want to keep exploring them.

(Anderson 1990:152)

For many people today, the only readily acceptable answer to the search for what is beyond is found in the forces of nature. For others, the search will involve a delving into mysticism, the occult, ancient Celtic beliefs, witchcraft and chanting. The search will take some into drugs and sexual exploits. This and much more in an effort by confused and lost individuals groping for meaning (Johnston 2001:47). Or as Leonard Sweet confirms, “we are becoming less religious but more spiritual” (2001:145).

3.1.7 Postmodernists are living in a media infested world

There is no doubt that the media remains the single most influential force of the twenty first century. “A major force in the shaping of the postmodern mind has been the impact of contemporary technology. The product of rationalism, the electronic media may make rationalism impossible” (Veith 1994:121).

In the modern world the printed word ruled. Time magazine named Gutenberg the person of the last millennium “for inventing the printing press, and paving the way for the Enlightenment – a movement of ideas grounded in the written word. In the same way, the advent of the television ushered in the postmodern age. With deconstruction the force of the written word was diminished as words were seen to carry no meaning. Images then entered the world leaving the viewer not with carefully crafted ideas and precepts but with impressions. Images function to allow the viewer to construct one’s own interpretation (Johnston 2001:48).

Books still have the power to enchant as seen by the response to Harry Potter, but ubiquitous screens are shaping people today in ways we have yet to understand Sweet goes on to quote statistics that reveal that 88% of US American households now claim at least 2 televisions, the average American child lives in a household with 3 televisions spending an average of 38 hours a week consuming media outside of school (Sweet 2001:51).

In his book, *Amusing ourselves to Death* (Postman 1985), Neil Postman argues that the world has moved away from a print culture to a media culture. Media now dominates the way in which people think and discuss ideas publicly. Veith summarizes Postman's position:

Reading a 300-page book demands sequential thinking, active mental engagement, and a sustained attention span. Reading also encourages a sense of self – one reads in private, alone with oneself and with one's thoughts. Watching television, on the other hand, presents information rapidly and with minimal effort on the part of the viewer, who becomes part of a communal mass mind. Visual images are presented, rapid-fire, with little sense of the context or connection.

(Veith 1994:81).

The difficulty arises, as in postmodern times there is the tendency to confuse truth and entertainment. Film and video can now bring about the wildest fantasies and make them seem realistic. Real events, by the same token, are fictionalized. "It's little wonder that the TV generation has a hard time distinguishing between truth and fiction" (Veith 1994:81-82).

Communication media and the internet have played an enormous role in establishing globalization (Janse van Rensburg 2002:50). This has on the one end of the spectrum resulted in people being exposed to the rest of the world with the desire to be like them. Bauman (1998:53) describes this process:

The many watch the few. The few who are the watched are the celebrities. They may come from the world of politics, of sport, of science or show business. Or just be celebrated information specialists. Wherever they come from, though, all displayed celebrities put on display the world of celebrities – a world whose main distinctive feature is precisely the quality of being watched – by many, and in all corners of the globe: of being global in their capacity of being watched.

This pressure of globalization for people to be world citizens in a comprehensive sense has on the other hand an opposite pole. The irony in the obsession to be “like them” has the opposite outcome as well - that people want to be themselves. The individual does not want parental values, church teaching, cultural traditions or civic demands to inhibit them to live their lives as individuals. Janse van Rensburg suggests that this subjective world visions and individualistic world direction are opposites that neutralize each other (Janse van Rensburg 2002:51).

He further argues that in the past people were largely left brain dominated thus analytical and deductive in their approach. This type of person is more readily addressed with argument. This may to some extent continue but the postmodern person has a greater right brain orientation. This aptitude will create an opportunity for preaching presentation to be more creative (Janse van Rensburg 2002:53).

3.1.8 Postmodernists are more informal

“Modernists exalted art above the reach of ordinary people,” Veith (1994:97-98) explains.

Artists were an elite priesthood; only the highly trained specialists or others in the know had any idea what they were trying to do. Postmodernists, on the other hand, in line with their radical political ideas, reject the institutional elitism of the high

culture ...they mock the convention of the art world and openly embrace the pop culture consumerism and kitsch.

Art in the postmodern era continues as a social commentary affirming that rationality and causality are not all they're cracked up to be. Postmodern culture has learned not to take itself too seriously. "This is the era of the permanent smirk, the knowing chuckle, of jokey ambivalence as a way of life. This is the Irony Epidemic." The traditional values of modernity are met with jest (Anderson 1990:147).

The people of the twenty first century through TV and movies carry with them a high degree of cultural awareness, even regarding the Christian culture, so that the use of clichés and jargon will more likely merit a chuckle or a yawn. For preaching, Christian clichés are anathema (Johnston 2001:52).

This challenge is exacerbated because for moderns something made sense when it appealed to the intellect or could be perceived by reason. For postmoderns something makes sense when it can be felt or perceived, perceptible by the senses (Sweet 2001:99).

For the postmodern person there is not much room for the cognitive and the rational. More and more emphasis is being placed on the affective, experiential and emotional realities especially in the artistic and spiritual areas of life (Du Toit 2000:66). In so doing postmoderns are becoming more subjective and informal in their preferred experiences of life.

3.1.9 Postmodernists are on a quest for community

The Reformation brought the beginning of the rise of individual, and then the Enlightenment exalted the status of the individual to new heights. In reformed thinking, the onus moved from belonging to the Church, the corporate body, to each individual's responsibility to believe and accept Christ on a personal level. With the translation of the Bible into the languages of the people, each person bore the priestly honour of reading and studying God's Word for

himself or herself. Postmodernity hasn't jettisoned the value of the individual; however a deep longing for community has begun to surface (Johnston 2001:54).

The authenticity of relationships and the integrity of community hold a powerful attraction for a new generation of young people struggling to find something lasting in today's throwaway culture – something precious in the midst of a society that feeds on trash and greed.

(Iliffe 1996:38)

The development of technology is contributing to the quest for community. This according to John Naisbitt's forecast in his best seller *Megatrends*. He called the phenomenon "high tech/high touch" (Naisbitt 1982) explaining that the increased use in technology would lead people to seek more human touch. Generation X represents the group most immersed into computers and technological gadgetry. The effect of this is an increased desire to be more attached to nature but in a similar fashion, a craving for meaningful relationships (Johnston 2001:54).

A second contributing factor, says Johnson (1995:50), is the breakdown of the nuclear family.

While baby boomers value success and achievement, baby busters value belonging and acceptance ...that desire for acceptance and belonging stems from the loneliness and alienation of splintered family attachments.

The generation Xers find being together and talking about life helps them know that they are not alone in their common struggles and longings. According to Veith (1994:144),

The combination of social changes, technological developments and postmodern ideology has undermined the very principle of a unified national culture and has driven individuals to find their identities in subcultures.

Subcultures present pockets of people finding acceptance and security through the formation of communities, a place to belong. As a result it is more important for the postmodernist as to how things are done. Process rather than bottom line has priority. It may take longer to do something simply because one has to work more carefully and constructively in relationships to achieve a given goal. This attention to process affects preaching as well as how the church functions. Communication must be more than the dissemination of ideas or obtaining of a predetermined response from the listener such as coming forward or raising their hand in commitment (Johnston 2001:55).

Relationships are a top priority thus making authenticity and trust vital ingredients in relating well. Time may be needed to get to know the person so as to overcome any suspicion thereby proving a trust. The people of postmodernity will warm to more participatory events and activities.

3.1.10 Postmodernists live 'for now' in a materialistic world.

The postmodernist does not view the world with optimism and confident expectation that everything will get better and that disease and human failings will be overcome. There is instead disillusion with all that is modern and there is a search for another framework of life. There is a loss of certainty, and in its place there is a scepticism and cynicism about life, each other and the future (Cook 1996:12).

Janse van Rensburg also sees the postmodern person as unsure or uncertain lacking confidence in the future. This he claims, quoting Middleton and Walsh (Middleton and Walsh 1995:23), is as a result of what the first and second world wars did in destroying the euphoric confidence that people discovered

in modern science. The expectation of an earthly utopia created by modernism was shattered through the experience of these wars (Janse van Rensburg 2002:46). He goes on to state that this feeling of hopelessness and uncertainty became the soil out of which the philosophical thoughts of Nietzsche and Heidegger were reborn thus contributing to a decline in values and belief in absolute truth (Janse van Rensburg 2002:46).

Many postmodern people no longer look to the future or for a grand design; what remains is the here and now. "Life is superficial and appearance counts for everything. You need not take life seriously because everything's merely froth and bubble" (Johnston 2001:56).

Some postmodernists will look for a higher meaning for life, while others will opt for a self-help path, but for many, the answer will simply be good times. Cook speaking for the generation Xers of postmodernity says, "We want to have fun. We want the good things in life and we want them here and now. Our needs are at the centre of our existence" (Cook 1996:13).

Janse van Rensburg describes the postmodern person as *homo vitalis*. Life must be lived. He quotes Bauman (1998:64) as using the term *momento vivere* to indicate that life must be enjoyed because life is so short, Bauman follows this with the following statement from Delumeau: "Since life is short, let us hasten to enjoy it. Since the dead body will be so repulsive, let us hurry to gain all possible pleasure from it while it is still in good health".

Johnston agrees that Generation Xers are keen to experience life to the full. One need only observe the booming entertainment; electronic games and sporting industries to see how hard people are willing to work at their play (Johnston 2001:57). This pleasure seeking in the here and now is accompanied by the need for options. A consumer culture demands variety and gets it, for after all, people become bored and the customer is always right.

The search for meaning will also drive people down the materialistic trail. “What once would have been regarded as luxuries (entertainment systems, computer games) are now viewed as necessities of life” (Cook 1996:24). The modern economy saw people as producers, Veith declares. The postmodern economy sees them as consumers” (Veith 1994:178). Postmodern people therefore view their time as a commodity, and a precious one, so the very thought of ‘wasting’ a Sunday morning with little or no take home value is repugnant (Johnston 2001:59).

3.2 The common features of people from all cultures

In the same way that the preacher seriously considers the distinctive features of the culture (in this instance the postmodern influenced person) being ministered to, the preacher must also understand his audience from a Biblical and theological standpoint. The postmodern person, just like a person from the biblical era, dark ages, reformation, renaissance, enlightenment, modern period or any other era is not unique. There is a common anthropology true of all humanity, regardless of culture and context, that the preacher must understand that which is true of all men of all ages.

3.2.1 Man in the image of God

Of all the creatures God made, only one creature, man, is said to be made in the image of God. “As such he is distinguished from all other creatures and stands supreme as the head and crown of the entire creation” (Berkhof 1976:202). Grudem offers the following definition for in the image of God: “The fact that man is in the image of God means that man is like God and represents God”. In seeking to identify the features of being made in the image of God we should not limit this to intellectual ability, moral purity, spiritual in nature, dominion over the earth, ability to make ethical choices or immortality. In addition to these it can be said that the more we know about God and man the more similarities we will recognize. Every way in which man

is like God is part of being in the image and likeness of God (see Grudem 1994:442-444).

3.2.2 The Fall: God's image is distorted but not lost

Adam's sin has had a significant consequence on all of humanity. The image of God in man has been negatively affected. Berkhof argues that "in the intellect it revealed itself as unbelief and pride, in the will, as the desire to be like God, and in the affections, as an unholy satisfaction in eating of the forbidden fruit" (Berkhof 1976:223).

...Since man has sinned, he is not as fully like God as he was before. James confirms this when he says that men generally, not just believers, "are made in the likeness of God" (James 3:9). His moral purity has been lost and his sinful character does not reflect God's holiness. His intellect is corrupted by falsehood and misunderstanding; his speech no longer glorifies God; his relationships are often governed by selfishness rather than love and so forth. Though man is still in the image of God, in every aspect of life some parts of that image have been distorted or lost. In short, "God made man upright, but they have sought out many devices" (Ecclesiastes 7:29). After the fall, then, we are still in God's image – we are still like God and we still represent God – but the image of God in us is distorted; we are less fully like God than we were before the entrance of sin...

(see Grudem 1994:444)

3.2.3 The Doctrine of inherited sin

The sin of Adam has affected all of humanity (see Grudem 1994:494-498). "Few will be inclined to deny the presence of evil in the human heart, however much they may differ as to the nature of this evil and as to the way in which it originated" (Berkhof 1976:239).

The Bible teaches that we inherit sin from Adam in two ways (see Berkhof 1976:245-246, Grudem 1994:496).

First, Inherited Guilt: We are counted guilty because of Adam's sin. Paul explains the effects of Adam's sin in the following way: "Therefore ...sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Romans 5:12). The idea, that "all men sinned" means that God thought of us all as having sinned when Adam disobeyed, is further indicated by the Apostle Paul

...for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

(Romans 5:13-14)

Paul points out that from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, people did not have God's written laws. Though their sins were "not counted" (as infractions of the law), they still died. The fact that they died is very good proof that God counted people guilty on the basis of Adam's sin.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

(Romans 5:18-19)

Second, Inherited Corruption: We have a sinful Nature because of Adam's Sin. The inherited sinful nature is sometimes called "original sin". (Grudem 1994:496). Berkhof affirms that the sinful state and condition in which men are

born is designated by the name *peccatum oiginale*, which literally translated in the English “original sin” (1976:244).

Original sin does not refer primarily to the first or original sin committed by Adam and Eve. Original sin refers to the result of the first sin – the corruption of the human race. Original sin refers to the fallen condition in which we were born.

(Sproul 1992:145)

The Bible teaches the universality of sin (Berkhof 1976:240, Grudem 1994:496). The Psalmist confesses that from the moment of conception he had a sinful nature. “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5). A similar idea is spoken of by the Psalmist in Psalm 58:3: “Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies”. Our nature includes a disposition to sin and Paul affirms that before we were Christians, “All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath (Ephesians 2:3).

The inherited sinful nature and tendency to sin does not mean that human beings are all as bad as they could be. But in spite of the ability to do good in many senses of the word, our inherited corruption, our tendency to sin, which we received from Adam, means that as far as God is concerned we are not able to do anything that pleases him. Grudem (Grudem 1994:497) suggests that this may be seen in two ways;

First, in our Natures we totally lack spiritual good before God: every part of our being is affected by sin – our intellects, our emotions and desires, our hearts (the centre of our desires and decision making processes), our goals and motives and even our physical bodies. Paul says, “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature” (Romans 7:18). Jeremiah tells us that “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure, who can understand it?”(Jeremiah 17:9). Scripture does not deny that unbelievers can do good in human society in some senses. But it is denying that they can do any spiritual good in terms of a relationship with God. Apart from the work of

Christ in our lives, we are like all other unbelievers who “are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts” (Ephesians 4:18).

Second, in our Actions we are totally unable to do spiritual good before God: We also lack the ability to do anything that will please God and the ability to come to God in our own strength. Paul says. “Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). Speaking of bearing fruit for God’s kingdom and doing what pleases him, Jesus says, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). Unbelievers cannot please God as their actions do not proceed from faith in God or from love to him, and “And without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). There was a time, says Paul, before conversion that the Ephesians “...were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient” (Ephesians 2:1-2). Unbelievers are in a state of bondage and enslavement to sin, because “...everyone who sins is a slave to sin. (John 8:34). Though from a human standpoint people might be able to do much good, Isaiah affirms that, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6; cf. Romans 3:9-20). Unbelievers are not able to understand the things of God correctly, for “the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned’ (1 Corinthians 2:14). Nor can they come to God in their own power, for Jesus says, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:44).

Sproul uses the term ‘total depravity’, following others like Berkhof (1976:225), to describe this condition, but prefers the phrase radical corruption (1992:148). He uses the word ‘radical’ not so much to mean ‘extreme’ but rather to see that our problem with sin is that it is rooted in the core of our being.

This does raise the issue of people having an ability to freely make choices. If we are as sinners those who have a total inability to do any spiritual good in God's sight, then do we still have any freedom of choice? Grudem states, "Certainly, those who are outside of Christ do still make voluntary choices – that is, they decide what they want to do, then they do it. In this sense there is still a kind of freedom in the choices that people make (cf. Grudem 1994:330-31). Yet because of their fundamental preference for sin, unbelievers do have freedom in the most important sense of freedom – that is, the freedom to do right, and to do what is pleasing to God. ...ability to repent and desire to trust in God is not naturally ours but is given by the prompting of the Holy Spirit ..." (Grudem 1994:498).

4. ENGAGING THE POSTMODERN INFLUENCED LISTENER

Having sought to better understand the postmodern influenced person in the previous chapter, and having identified a biblical model for preaching, the focus and emphasis of this chapter is to identify those elements of preaching that will enable the preacher to more effectively engage the postmodern influenced listener. But as Don Caron points out, “It is vital to address the cultural presuppositions of our hearers so that we do not unwittingly obscure the gospel” (www.anglicanmedia.com.au/old/cul/WorldviewClash.htm).

In seeking to do this it is also recognized that there are those essential elements of preaching applicable to people from all ages and cultures. A study like this cannot and must not assume that preachers of the gospel are embracing these elements in the task of preaching. It is necessary to identify these elements in an attempt to reinforce the need that preachers have in ensuring that their ministry is rooted in the unchanging elements of preaching applicable to people of all ages and cultures.

4.1 Engaging listeners by drawing near rather than alienating

The more opposition people encounter, the more entrenched they become in their belief systems. This principal can be applied in the act of preaching. Confrontational preaching does not have to be adversarial in approach (Johnston 2001:77). By directly attacking a person’s belief systems or behaviour places that person on the defensive and may go on to strengthen the very beliefs you are attempting to dislodge.

Preaching the gospel involves confrontation but there are ways to confront and effectively challenge both postmodern beliefs and biblical unbelief.

4.1.1 Build Relationships

The Apostle Paul following the model of Christ offered and gave of himself in ministry to people. Paul did so "...in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love" (2 Corinthians 6:6). A gentle rather than aggressive rapport will lead to authentic communication.

Correctly held strong convictions by evangelicals have led to perceptions by others that Christians are threatened and incapable of dealing with a person's refusal to embrace their way of thinking. Craig Loscalzo is right when he says that, "A postmodern world demands a pulpit willing to be a viable conversation partner" (1996:41).

For preachers to become "viable conversation partners" they require both a demonstration of understanding and listening to postmodern people. Preaching becomes less about the dissemination of ideas and more about relating to listeners with stories and life experiences. This takes place with a collaborative rather than an adversarial approach (Loscalzo 1996:41).

The preacher must therefore endeavour to work on the relational aspects of preaching resulting in a deeper sensitivity and respect for his listeners. In doing this he will earn the right to be heard rather than assuming that this is automatically granted.

The Sunday morning or evening sermon does not stand on its own. It is delivered in the context of many relationship communication networks within the congregation. The sermon can stimulate conversation, enter existing conversations, or end such conversations through the light shed by the Word thus leading to consensus, insight and vision (Pieterse 2001:23). The congregation is a communicative network in which the preacher as a called and trained theologian can give direction to this communication (Vos & Pieterse 1997).

4.1.2 Tune in to the contemporary world

The task of the preacher must extend beyond sound exegesis to application and illustration. To accomplish this, effective preaching must demonstrate a working understanding of the issues, concerns and the interaction of peoples' daily lives, helping the listeners to interpret their world from a biblical point of view (Johnston 2001:79).

This was the approach of the Apostle Paul in Acts 17. His preaching shows evidence of some prior inquiry into the nature of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophies, which disregarded any belief in the afterlife.

Postmodernists presume the Bible is irrelevant to contemporary society; the preacher must convince his listeners otherwise. Jesus excelled in knowing how to engage his hearers in their own context.

Jesus preaching thus begins where the people are – in the every day world of Galilee. He told stories that reflected the world of his audience...yet the familiarity of this world is disturbed by unexpected twists in the story.

(McGrath 1992:47).

Those unexpected twists were the confronting element to the way people commonly believed. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declares, "You have heard that it was said ...but I tell you" (Matthew 5:21ff). Jesus met his listeners in their world but then proceeded to lead them to the realities of His Father's world (Johnston 2001:80).

The danger for today's preacher is one of answering questions that no one is asking anymore. This places an obligation on the preacher to strive for the presentation of the Christian faith "in terms and modes of expression that makes its challenge intelligible and related to the peculiar quality of reality in which people live" (McGrath 1992:45).

Where people are asking the wrong questions it is first necessary to lead them to the place where the need and interest is created to ask the right and

important questions. The preacher cannot presume a biblical foundation but instead must seek to foster understanding by broaching a secular idea that can then be tied to a theological concept (Johnston 2001:81)

4.1.3 Be more Apologetic

More and more people of the postmodern generation know less and less of a Christian worldview. The preacher must not assume or presume too much of the listener's Christian background.

Much of current sermonizing sins in that it takes for granted everyone still knows all that needs to be known to live a godly life...Don't assume that people know and accept faith or any aspect thereof. Rather supply convincing argument as to why faith is more reasonable than doubt

(Miller 1995:131).

There is a great danger in preaching only to the converted or the insiders and thus fail to engage the unchurched and the postmodern influenced person. These churches may struggle to survive struggling to find anyone to listen. Loscalzo (1996:416) makes a valid point emphasizing the apologetic role of the preacher.

The preacher's ideal role resides in giving meaning. Apologetic preaching helps people grasp the world theologically, to bring theological meaning and understanding into their lives ...Apologetic preaching equips Christians, intellectually and spiritually, to intelligently present and defend the Christian faith. It gives people the means to address questions of theodicy, sin and salvation in Christ, which, when misunderstood, becomes obstacles to faith.

Biblical apologetic preaching must grapple with doubts, unpacking Christian assumptions and contemplates the unbelief of the sceptic (Johnston 2001:82). Miller (1995:19) has a timely appeal to preachers today when he states,

The church ...has become so interiorised that it only 'reads its own mail' and only speaks to its own interests to the people of Zion. 'Marketplace preaching is a call to go outside the walls and find out once again what people are talking about and what their interests and needs really are ...the church must speak to the interest of the marketplace if it is to hold its attention.

Preaching to today's listeners will require a working knowledge of the common ground postmodern belief and unbelief. With the post modern shift comes new openness to areas of Christian faith such as humans spirituality, the existence of the supernatural and the search for the transcendent. The point of engagement must come through common ground that even the postmodernist assumes in disbelieving something (Zacharias 1995:23).

4.1.4 Address the mind and the heart

Preaching historically has chiefly been left brain in its orientation mostly using an analytical and deductive approach. The inclusion of a more right brain utilization in a postmodern context has led to a need of being more creative in the preaching event (Janse van Rensburg 2002:53). Clements concludes that preaching needs to address both the mind and the heart saying that, "any bible exposition will have failed if it locates the intellectual of the text, but neglects to communicate the emotional texture in which the content is embedded" (1999:181).

The postmodern context challenges the church to abandon a style of communication that aims at downloading information on its members. It calls the church both to a style of communication that involves life experiences and expectations of its members, and that appeals to all their faculties and not

solely their intellect. Preachers must communicate in a way that appeals to the cognitive, emotive and conitive dimensions (Rossouw 1995:84).

This is accomplished not primarily in the act of preaching but as a consequence of what has been brought about in the preacher's own life. In the early 1900s Methodist Bishop William Quail, quoted in Sangster, explains this point by asking and answering a rhetorical question: "Preaching is the art of making a sermon and delivering it?" he asked. "Why no, that is not preaching. Preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering that!" (Sangster 1962:271). The message must of necessity touch the heart of the preacher before it effectively reaches into the heart of the hearer.

4.2 Suggested practices of effective communicators

Aristotle designed the historic model of communication known as the Aristotelian triad, discussed in his work, 'The Rhetoric' (Pieterse 1987:23). There is a renewed interest in Rhetoric today, caused largely by the work of Kopperschmidt and Perelman (Pieterse 1897:25).

According to Pieterse (1987:30) a communication model for preaching founded on scientific understanding will include:

A sender and a receiver. The sender initiates the process. The preacher is trained to do this and has the commission to preach by virtue of his calling and ordination to this office... both the sender and receiver are part of the communication process, which is also affected by their relationship and situation. Communication can be said to have taken place only when the receiver has interpreted the message through the process of interaction, a dialogue or conversation, for example. This means that the sender and the receiver are on equal footing, that they exchange roles continually and that direct feedback is an acknowledged part of the communication process.

The message is one of Christian faith, implying that the preacher and the congregation together will listen to it and apply it to their lives.

The medium is the spoken word, transmitted comprehensively through a process of coding and decoding as well as accompanying non-verbal communication.

The channel consists of those complex factors which influence the communication process independently of the sender-receiver relationship, such as mood, atmosphere and noise.

From this it can be seen that there is the need to develop an approach that is not just a one-way movement of information, but rather a conversation or dialogue between the preacher and congregation.

4.2.1 A Dialogical Approach

The intention of this approach is to engage the congregation in meaningful communication. When preaching takes place as a one-way exercise then there is "...no dialogue, no listening by the speaker, no contribution by the hearer. If the congregation is on the team, it is as javelin catcher" (Craddock 1981:55).

The philosopher Socrates used question-and-answer dialogue as a method of engaging his pupils in a learning exercise, this kind of approach can add to the effectiveness of the Sunday message.

One of the most interesting revelations from our research has been how positively baby busters respond to evangelistic efforts that use the Socratic method of training ...the key to the Socratic method is for the teacher to have mastered the matter under consideration so that he or she may ask probing, directive

questions that don't manipulate the student as much as help clarify the truth conclusion sought by the student.

(Barna 1995:113)

As stated earlier Pieterse argues that the origin of Christian preaching teaches us something of the dialogic character of preaching (1987:7).

In the light of this it is the task of the effective communicator to get inside of the head of the listener. This entails anticipating objections and doubts, then surfacing these points in the flow of the message (Johnston 2001:150). This will assist the listener to feel as if the message involves them on a personal level and it allows them to work through the issues intelligently, on their own but in conversation with the preacher.

Then – and this is the key to effectiveness – the preacher is not an authority figure, telling someone the way it is, but is more a guide leading people through the processes on these biblical issues. When people are allowed, and even challenged, to interact with what is being said, they will experience the joy of discovering the truth for themselves. But when people are instructed what to believe and practice, they may deem the message as preachy or of little value ...a relaxed dialogue and demonstration of openness puts people at great ease and disarms negativity completely.

(Johnston 2001:150)

Pieterse confirms this by stating that non-verbal dialogue in the sermon to be effective the preacher must be authentic and congruent. "People pay attention primarily to how we say things, not to what we say" (1987:127)

The dialogue approach can be enhanced by the preacher being more mindful of conversation with his hearers in advance during preparation and by making use of "friendlier" voice and body language. Listeners will want someone to

engage them, not speak at them, concerning the things of God (Johnston 2001:151).

The preacher must in a very real sense read his audience, listening to them and respond in the process of communicating in the preaching process.

It requires the preacher to be in touch with the congregation while delivering his sermon in such a way that he will be aware of their reactions, whether in the expression of their eyes or faces, their postures or whatever. These are messages directed to the preacher by the congregation, for a person is always communicating something. The preacher for his part is also using body language. He must learn to be open to the people's reactions and to respond to them. To this end he must deliver his sermon fairly spontaneously and not keep his eyes glued to the script.

(Pieterse 1987:127).

4.2.2 Inductive Preaching

A key element to Jesus preaching was the recognition and involvement of the listener. Ralph and Gregg Lewis correctly show in *Learning to Preach like Jesus* that biblical preaching can no longer focus on the message at the exclusion of the listeners (1989:16).

The word "preacher" suggests, "having a message" which is of course true, but must extend beyond this to include the importance of imparting information that involves both the message and the listener (Johnston 2001:150). The preacher must therefore see himself and be equipped as an effective communicator.

Ralph L Lewis and Gregg Lewis propose that any strategy for winning listener involvement will have to encompass the three parts of communication as

identified by Aristotle; ethical – the speaker's part; emotional – the listener's; and logical – the speech's or message's role (1983:12).

4.2.2.1 The Speaker or Preacher

Involvement must start with the attitude of the preacher. He has to want involvement. The desire for involvement must grow directly out of the care felt for the people with the direct implication of understanding that no one cares how much we know until he knows how much we care (Lewis & Lewis 1983:22). This can be further developed by creating an environment in the worship service that is experienced, where the congregation participates and the event becomes a "happening" in which the church goer feels like participating (Janse van Rensburg 2002:49).

The true shepherd heart cares enough to identify with people just as the Good Shepherd lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11). Caring calls for a willingness on behalf of preacher to sacrifice in giving himself to his hearers who long for a listening, caring and growing preacher who relates to people. Most congregations would rather see a sermon than hear one any day of the week (Lewis & Lewis 1983:24).

4.2.2.2 The Audience

Involvement that begins with the speaker can only progress with understanding of the audience. It must be remembered that the people are the only reason for preaching. Homiletics must not ignore the audience (Lewis & Lewis 1983:25).

Ernst Lange has made a huge contribution the area of the place of the listener on the preaching process (Vos 1996:197). Lange is convinced that the preacher must at all times involve the hearer by relating the message to his (the listener) concrete life situation (Lange 1987:49). The every day reality of the listener must be considered in the delivery of the sermon (Lange 1987:127).

It is essential that the hearer himself become witness to the reality of Jesus Christ in the here and now, that is to say how the belief in Christ impacts his situation by illuminating, declaring, changing and filling with hope (Lange 1987:49).

It is not the official office or position of the preacher that automatically ensures relevance (Vos 1996:199). The hearer is not convinced simply because preacher is personally convinced about his convictions (Lange 1987:56). It is the hearer that ultimately determines if a sermon is relevant (Lange 1987:60). The hearer must experience the sermon as a faithful witness in his own situation (Van der Laan 1989:134). If this indeed is the case then the preaching has served as communication of the gospel into the concrete lives of people (Vos 1996:199).

4.2.2.3 The message

Over the years preachers have given much attention to this segment of the communication process yet few have dared experiment with the basic structure of the sermon preferring to use a basic structure that is deductive (Lewis & Lewis 1983:31).

In most deductive sermons the main point is stated at the outset declaring where the rest of the sermon is heading. This approach can easily alienate the postmodern listener as it may be interpreted as arrogant and dogmatic conveying the message, “Here’s my conclusion, and during my sermon I’ll prove that I’m right” (Lewis & Lewis 1983:31). Or as Johnston affirms, “The deductive approach, practices widely over the last hundred years of modernity, involves stating up front, the central or big idea as declarative proposition, then proceeding to justify the claim ...The deductive message works from the whole (this is what I’m telling your today) to the particulars (this is why), and from the known to the unknown (Johnston 2001:151).

That kind of start does not encourage cooperative response or group participation. The hope for involvement fades even dimmer when the thesis seems remote, egocentric, defensive or irrelevant to our listeners (Lewis & Lewis 1983:31).

Lewis & Lewis ask if there is some other structure that by its very nature could reflect the preachers attitude of caring servant hood and declare to the people that we all workers together? Is there an approach for sermons that can speak to cultural experience, emotional need and real life concerns while capitalizing on our listeners' learning habits and utilizing more of the potential of the incredible human mind? He further claims that inductive preaching can do all those things (1983:32)

Cradock raises the practice of inductive preaching in his book, *As one without Authority* (1981). He mentions three conditions, which are necessary for inductive preaching.

First, particular concrete experiences (of the listeners and the preacher) are ingredient to the sermon, not just in the introduction to solicit interest as some older theories held but throughout the sermon. On the basis of these concrete thoughts and events, by analogy and by the listener's identification with what he hears, conclusions are reached, new perspectives are gained, decisions made.

The second matter thus far stressed as fundamental to induction in movement of material that respects the hearer not only capable of but deserving the right to participate in that movement and arrive at a conclusion that is his own, not just the speaker.

This leads us to a third and final comment about the inductive method and the role of the listener: the listener completes the sermon ...What is suggested ...is that the participation of the

hearer is essential, not just in the post-benediction implementation but in the completion of the thought, movement and decision making within the sermon itself. The process calls for an incompleteness, a lack of exhaustiveness in the sermon. It requires of the preacher that he resist the temptation to tyranny of ideas rather than democratic sharing. He restrains himself, refusing to do both the speaking and the listening. To give both stimulus and response, or in a more homely analogy, he does not through the ball to catch it himself.

(Craddock 1981:62-64)

Induction begins with the particulars of life experience and points toward principles, concepts and conclusions (Lewis & Lewis 1983:32). In a later work they describe inductive preaching as “laying out the evidence, the examples, the illustrations and postpone the declarations and assertions until the listeners have a chance to weigh the evidence, think through the implications and then come to the conclusion with the preacher at the end of the sermon” (1989:43). Inductive preaching works from the particulars to the whole, from the unknown to the known and employs four valuable elements.

a) It involves the listener in learning

The approach starts where listeners are, then leads them to draw their own conclusions from the evidence presented.

Such a process involves listeners in giving them a part in the sermon process. It enables them to think along with and even mentally anticipate the implications of what’s being said. The teaching involves the listener. Thus, the sermon itself becomes a part of their experience, part of their familiar inductive learning style. The conclusions that are reached and the assertions made at the end of the sermon, bear the mark of personal conviction, arrived at and tested by personal thought and experience.

(Lewis & Lewis 1989:43)

By not employing deductive preaching and actively engaging the minds of listeners, not only is their attention captured, but they receive more through the joy of discovery as opposed to having ideas merely passed on to them (Johnston 2001:152) faced with the risk of alienating the listener.

You leave your listeners in that pitiful box of having only two alternatives of agreeing or disagreeing with you. It's all your work...but in inductive preaching, you unroll your idea in such a way that listeners have to work to get it themselves.

(Craddock 1998:16)

b) It takes on Dialogical Form

Inductive preaching tends to postpone pronouncements and assertions, instead using questions to stimulate thinking within the sermon. Since this is key to postmoderns, there is a need for the preacher to reorient his thinking from the role of sermon to give answers to see the role of the sermon rather to raise the right questions (Johnston 2001:152). The dialogical approach follows the realization that people will resist accepting statements as truth on face value and before claims have been tested.

Inductive methodology accentuates presence, persuasion, and proclamation more or less in that order ...Much of the persuading is done before the gospel is every verbally shared ...the inductive approach is more geared toward persons who are low in their receptivity to the Gospel.

(Phillips & Okholm 1995:379)

In the South African context H.J.C. Pieterse (1991) has developed a dialogical communication model for homiletics (Vos 1996:170). The communication model consists of conversation partners that strive to communicate in freedom and on equal footing (see Pieterse 1988:8-9).

c) It starts the Message where people are

Jesus demonstrated this skill with the woman at the well, the healing of the paralytic, the tax collector and Zacchaeus. Jesus moves from their place of understanding to the unrevealed world of the Father.

Paul on Mars Hill used the same approach. He began with his listeners (Acts 17:22).

Alister McGrath identifies six points of contact for the Christian gospel that he sees within the present day listener: a sense of unsatisfied longing, human rationality, the ordering of the world, human morality, an existential anxiety and alienation, and an awareness of finitude and mortality (1992:51-73). Preachers are not to impose the human dilemma upon the text but to uncover the human need that exists within each passage (Johnston 2001:153).

The Preacher needs to present new ideas in such a way that it will, at least to begin with, fit in with ideas and techniques the audience already holds (Nash 168).

d) It keeps up the suspense so people will follow

One way this is accomplished is through the “process of reversal”.

The process of reversal as presented in a sermon can be likened to the action of pulling the rug out from someone. Often it is necessary to lay the rug before one pulls! Because the Bible stories are so well known it's imperative for the preacher first to cultivate the assumptions Jesus knew would be held by his listeners, and by which he then intended to rip away.

(Lowry 1975:56)

This narrative movement will result in what Lowry calls The Aha, Oops, or Yuck Factor. The parable of the two men who go to the temple to pray is an example of how Jesus uses this technique. Jesus pits the tax collector against the Pharisee, a clear moral mismatch but Jesus pulls out the rug when he declares that the tax collector is the one who went away forgiven by God, not the Pharisee. The listeners are startled because the message challenges their expectation by moving in an altogether different direction than what they'd anticipated. This holds their attention as well as causing people to think carefully about the nature of what's being said (Johnston 2001:154).

The above four valuable elements employed by inductive preaching are described by Lewis and Lewis as common ingredients of such preaching; he discusses these ingredients under the following headings: Narrative, Questions, Parables, Analogy, Dialogue and Experience (1983:36-46).

It must be noted that a study conducted by Lewis and Lewis of 411 sermons in *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching* includes ninety-six Inductive preachers from 20 Centuries revealing that all ninety-six of the notable speakers included in the thirteen volume work used some inductive ingredients and showed signs of the inductive process (Summary in Appendix 3 in *Induction Preaching* 1983).

4.2.3 Storytelling

Stories have the power to move people, because in hearing a story listeners instinctively place themselves into the setting and action, and experience what the character feels – thus learning on a first hand basis (Galli & Larson 1994:82). Peter Thompson makes the same point; “I don't think it's surprising that parable, anecdote and storytelling are the most powerful form of communication ...the audience is most easily able to project itself right into the story” (1992:37).

Jesus was a master storyteller who lived in a storytelling culture. In His day values, morals, and customs all rode on the narratives exchanged by the

fireside (Lewis & Lewis 1989:26). Jesus made use of parables, dialogue, simplicity, analogy, questions, comparison and contrast and common experience (Lewis & Lewis 1989:30). These are all elements compatible with, and integral to the inductive process.

The imaginative, even playful, retelling of biblical narratives is one of the oldest forms of Christian preaching, learned from the preaching of the synagogue. Synagogue preachers engaged in at least two distinct forms of proclamation: halakah (which means 'the way') and haggadah (which means 'story'). Halakah involves the application of the legal provisions of the Torah to new circumstances – a type of sermonic case law. Haggadic preaching, however, weaves the circumstances of the hearers into the biblical narratives.

(Vos 1994:95)

The preacher who is not a natural story teller can also make use of this tool, as the craft of story telling is a skill that can be learned and developed with practice, says Johnston giving six guidelines (2001:158-161) to be followed:

- Introduce the story with suspense
- Summarize your point
- Use specifics and vivid imagery
- Personalize
- Maintain the flow
- Internalize the emotion

It is not only useful to use story to reinforce or be part of the sermon but it is also useful to tell a story as the sermon.

Such a sermon takes on parabolic quality, depending upon a narrative about life to disclose the gospel. Preachers become

literary artists, crafting language into a story that can serve as an epiphany of God's presence in human life.

(Vos 1994:96)

But says Pieterse for the sermon to be narrative; it does not have to be story from the beginning to end. "Narrative preaching concerns the correct understanding of a narrative text from Scripture and the narrative character which the sermon assumes in developing the sense of the story" (1987:174).

4.2.4 Audiovisuals, Drama and Art

Calvin Miller asks a very challenging question about churches being resistant to making use of visual technology as method of conveying the timeless message of God. "Can the church become pictorial in order to live, or will it remain only audio and die?" (Miller 1995:115).

The usefulness of visual technology cannot be ignored as listeners know and are exposed to the media in the every day life. Johnston argues for the inclusion of visual technology because listeners know the media and the message in contemporary imagery and sound resonates with contemporary culture (2001:164-166).

4.2.5 Use Humour Appropriately

Humour that is done well can effectively increase communication. It functions best as a tool to lend insight and to hold interest. Edward de Bono, who has researched the mind, describes humour as an "asymmetrical" pattern of thinking. It's thinking that lacks symmetry or predictability (de Bono 1990:140). Humour directs people to see an idea or object from a different angle or new vantage point and then acts to reinforce what's known to be true on an unconscious level (Johnston 2001:167).

An unthinking or irresponsible use of humour can detract from the gospel message. John Piper advocated what he calls "The gravity and gladness of

Preaching” (1990:47-63). Humour appropriately used may reinforce a particular point but this must never ignore the seriousness of the issues sinful people face before a Holy God. Where solemnity and earnestness are ignored or minimized preaching results that is plagued by triviality, levity, carelessness, flippancy and a general spirit that nothing of eternal and infinite proportions is being done or said (Piper 1990:52). He summarizes his thesis as follows:

Gladness and gravity should be woven together in the life and preaching of a pastor in such a way as to sober the careless soul and sweeten the burdens of the saints. I say ‘sweeten’ because it connotes some of the poignancy of the gladness I have in mind, and sets it off from the glib and petty attempts to stir up light heartedness in a congregation. Love for people does not take precious realities lightly (hence the call for gravity), and love for people does not load people with the burden of obedience without providing the strength of joy to help them carry it (hence the call for gladness).

(Piper 1990:52)

4.3 The sacred Communicator of effective Communicators

With so much technology, skills training and development available to preachers in the 21st century there is a tendency and danger to forget the indispensable work of the Holy Spirit. It is futile to do the work of God apart from the truth and the power of the Holy Spirit of God. Like the disciples of old, we are powerless, in and of ourselves, to accomplish the “greater works” (Azurdia III 2003:29). The declaration of Jesus remains true to this day: “apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:5).

In John 14:16-17 Jesus assigns the name, Spirit of truth, to the Holy Spirit, a name that to which Jesus again refers on two subsequent occasions in the same discourse (15:26; 16:13). The burden of Jesus at this point is not so

much to emphasize the essential nature of the Holy Spirit. Rather it is to stress the unique action of the Holy Spirit. Not only is the Holy Spirit “truth” in the essence of his being; the emphasis here is upon the Holy Spirit as the source of truth, the deliverer of truth, the One who will make known the truth (Carson 1980:52). He is the sacred communicator (Azurdia 111 2003:34-40). Communication that takes place in two ways:

The Spirit of God communicates His truth in an objective and external way – in a non experiential way – this communication takes place by means of the inspiration of Scripture. Understanding inspiration to mean that every page of Scripture is a revelation of the mind of God, that even the tenses and verbs are an expression of his own breath. It must also be noted that a persons experience with or response to this objective revelation, whether positive or negative, has no bearing on its essential nature. William Still identifies the important distinction that exists between revelation and illumination:

Revelation is what God has made known once and for all by the inspiration of his chosen writers; illumination is the work of the Spirit in bringing the truth of the ‘closed book’ to light. The art treasures of London’s National gallery remain intrinsically the same during the hours of darkness when they cannot be seen. We remain as essentially alive during the hours of the unconsciousness in sleep as when we are awake. It is because we are alive that we can awake. It is surely plain error of fact to say that the Bible ‘becomes alive’ in the divine-human encounter, when what we mean is that it awakes and shines forth its light and truth in the dark mind of man. The revelation of Christ in the Holy Scriptures is a work of God established long before we were born, and owes nothing to us, nor can it be subtracted from or added to by us. It is the ‘word of the Lord which liveth and abideth for ever.

(Still 1957:8-9)

The Spirit of God communicates His truth in a subjective and internal way – in an experiential way – the communication takes place by directly applying the inspired Scripture to the human heart. John Calvin has written, “For as God alone is a fit witness of himself in his word, so also the word will not find acceptance in men’s hearts before it is sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit” (Calvin1960:79). John Owen arguing the same point refers to the Holy Spirit as the “principle efficient cause” (Owen vol 3 1979:124) of all spiritual understanding. The Puritan Richard Sibbes (1978:199) uses the following helpful imagery:

As the spirits in the arteries quicken the blood in the veins, so the Spirit of God goes along with the word, and makes it work ... The word is nothing without the Spirit: it is animated and quickened by the Spirit.

It must be affirmed that the unaccompanied Scriptures are not sufficient for life transformation. The word of God must be attended by the operative power of the Spirit of God if salvation and sanctification are to occur

(Azurdia III 2003:39).

These are not two different bodies of truth, rather that our relationship to a single body of truth can be defined from two different perspectives.

4.3.1 The weak link in the communicative process

The weak link or deficiency in the communicative process must be identified in order to see why the ministry of the Spirit is essential. Why is it that the objective and external revelation of God is insufficient to transform when unattended by the illuminating work of the Spirit of truth? Historically the Roman Catholic Church has concluded that the problem of spiritual understanding lies in the nature of the scriptures themselves; namely, that they are obscure and fraught with perplexities. Hence, an ordinary man with the Bible in hand is sure to miscarry the truth. Their answer to this dilemma is

an infallible interpreter, which they identified as the church. The response of the Reformers and their followers was that the problem of understanding the mind of God has nothing to do with the nature of the Bible as the Communicator of the Bible is perfect and true. His communication in the scriptures was without flaw and perspicuous. The problem in understanding the mind of God has, therefore, everything to do with humanity. The weak link in the communicative process is to be found in us (Azurdia III 2003:40). The Scriptures speak definitively concerning the capacities of fallen humanity:

...every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood (Genesis 8:21).

The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live (Ecclesiastes 9:3).

...because the sinful mind is hostile toward God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so (Romans 8:7).

...you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts (Ephesians 4:17-18)

These scriptures reinforcing the doctrine of "total depravity" saying that sin has affected the totality of our humanness (Azurdia III 2003:41). John Owen has stated most graphically:

...the hearts of all men are fat, their ears are heavy, and their eyes are sealed, that they can neither hear, nor perceive, nor understand the mysteries of the kingdom of God. These things belong unto the work of the Holy Spirit upon our minds.

(Owen vol 4 1979:124)

This is not to say that a person cannot absorb the scriptures on a purely intellectual level or even regurgitate concepts that have been communicated in a responsive fashion.

But to acknowledge that truth in his heart and conform to it in his will is altogether beyond his fallen capacities. He has been informed, but not illuminated. He has read words from a book called the Bible, but he has not heard the voice of God.

(Azurdia III 2003:42)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, for they are spiritually discerned

(1 Corinthians 2:14).

Pierre Marcel (1963:28) captures this concern:

Scripture clearly teaches that there is an operation of the Spirit in the soul, an operation independent of the sanctifying influence of truth and necessary if that influence is to be effective...He who is spiritually dead must be quickened by the almighty power of God before the things of the Spirit can have complete effect on him. He who is spiritually blind needs to have his sight restored before he can distinguish things which are revealed and offered by God. Being independent of truth, this action cannot be imputed to the truth. Hence, the innumerable prayers in scripture which refer to this specific work of the Spirit: prayer for God to change the hearts, open the eyes, unstop the ears of men; prayer that he will to give them ears to hear and eyes to see.

It is vital to see then that the deficiency in the process of spiritual understanding is not something inherent in the scriptures themselves, but endemic to the nature of fallen humanity. Consequently, immediate

intervention of the Holy Spirit is essential if the power of truth is to be experienced (Azurdia III 2003:43). The gospel advances via God's method and means: truth and power. People are brought to faith in Jesus Christ not because a preacher happens to be exceptionally dynamic or eloquent, rather, in a mysterious work that is both sovereign in expression and divine in origin (Bridges 1991:80).

The need of work of the Holy Spirit is essential not only in the life of the unbeliever being brought to faith but the Holy Spirit must continue to teach the child of God. Marcel (1968:28) rightly states:

His action is not limited to the single act that produces the initial change of regeneration, after which the renewed soul would be abandoned to the pure and simple action of truth and the commandments of God. The action of the Spirit is continual and cannot be compared with a uniformly acting force co-operating with truth. It is manifested more at one moment than at another. The help and intervention of the Spirit may be invoked and implored; it is possible to grieve the Holy Spirit and resist Him.

It is for this reason that the Apostle Paul prays for believers:

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. 18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord

Ephesians 1:15-19

Be it evangelistic or edificational, the context makes no difference. For the truth to be known, the Spirit of God must draw His sword (Azurdia III 2003:45).

David Eby (1996:84) supports the need for all preachers to understand and experience the power of the Holy Spirit in the task of preaching.

Everything in your preaching ministry depends on the presence, power and filling with the Holy Spirit. This was true of the apostles. The Spirit alone gave power for world-wide, world-changing preaching (Acts 1:8). When the Spirit came he filled the apostles and they began to proclaim boldly (Acts 2:4). Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit for fearless preaching ((Acts 4:8). The whole church prayed for boldness and were filled with the Spirit and began to speak the word of God with daring bravery (Acts 4:31).

Calvin (1965:31) commenting on Acts 1:8 says:

By saying 'Ye shall receive power Jesus advises them of their weakness, lest before the proper time they should pursue things which they are unable to attain...it expresses more fully their own inadequacy, until such time as the Spirit comes upon them.

On Acts 4:8 Calvin (1965:114-115) says:

It is with good reason that Luke expressly adds these words (Peter filled with the Holy Spirit), that we may know that Peter did not make such a superb utterance of himself. Surely, he who had been frightened by the voice of a mere woman and had denied Christ would have collapsed utterly before such an assembly at the mere sight of such pomp, unless he had been held by the power of the Spirit.

4.3.2 The unavoidable focus of Christ

According to Jesus own teaching the Holy Spirit will communicate truth concerning Jesus Himself (John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:13-15). Jesus will be the sum and substance of the Spirit's revelatory ministry. The predominant work of the Holy Spirit is to reveal and glorify Jesus Christ, a fact of which we must never lose sight if we are ever to anticipate the power of the Holy Spirit (Azurdia III 2003:51).

Having already established the need the preacher has of the Holy Spirit it follows that the preacher must focus on Jesus Christ in the content of his sermon. As John Calvin (1974:139) concluded:

The scriptures should be read with the aim of finding Christ in them. Whoever turns aside from this object, even though he wears himself out all his life in learning, he will never reach the knowledge of the truth.

Bernard Ramm (1983:80) argues that this focus on Christ must be applied both to the Old and New Testaments:

...the highest point of revelation (for Ramm this is the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ as revealed in John 1:14) should be the perspective from which all revelation before and after that event should be seen. By analogy, a sailboat is built up board by board. But the design was not made up as the boards were set in place. The complete drafted plans were in hand before one board was laid hold of. Hence the finished draft of the ship guides the placement of every board. The incarnation of God in Christ is like the finished draft of the ship. The Old Testament in anticipation of the incarnation was so written as to prepare the way for the incarnation. Hence it is not wrong to bring Christ into the Old Testament, because...the Old Testament was written christologically...If the Old Testament is not a Christian book, then it is a very odd book. It has many eschatological dimensions that anticipate some great action of

God in the future – a kingdom of God, a new covenant, a Messiah, a resurrection from the dead. If the Old Testament is understood only as a body of ethical, national and cultural teachings, then these eschatological promises stick up like so many unfinished stumps asking for completion but being denied.

It was for this reason the Old Testament became the Bible for the early Christians. They were persuaded that the Old Testament scriptures pointed them to Jesus Christ. Phillip's testimony during the earliest days of Jesus ministry is evidence of this mindset.

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." 44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

John 1:43-45

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 45 "But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

John 5:39, 45-46

Azurdia (2003:61-63) concludes:

...preachers can rightly anticipate the Holy Spirit's power only when they are resolutely wedded to the Holy Spirit's purpose. What is His purpose? To glorify Jesus Christ through the instrumentality of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, both of which point to Him...the vitality of the Spirit in His effectual

work of glorifying Jesus Christ through fallible men who faithfully proclaim the Christocentric scriptures.

4.3.3 Critical Fideism and Preaching as confession

In the postmodern context where truth and reality are viewed as relative and constructed there is some value in raising what Lose calls Critical fideism (cf. Lose 2003:34-44). He contends that while Critical fideism cannot prove the truth of its ultimate claims, it nevertheless seeks to make a case in the public arena for their utility and soundness (2003:40). The task then is to identify a means by which to make such a case.

Of the several options that avail themselves, postmodern theorists often seize upon justification first. At issue in justification is the not the external verity of one's claims but rather their internal consistency and coherency. The criteria used to assess claims from this point of view are those of categorical adequacy, assessing whether the claims prove adequate to the categories of meaning and validity established by the overall system. In this way one avoids the appeal to external, extra textual, or extra-systemic standards and looks instead to the internal logic of the system in question for legitimating.

(Thiemann 1985:389-94)

Lose in his book, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World*, reaches the conclusion that the task of making such a case can be done by seeing preaching as confession.

This he maintains is a means of responding to the opportunity provided by the postmodern context:

...claiming that there exists before us an unprecedented opportunity to clarify the nature and import of our preaching, as,

robbed of the modernist foundations to which the church too eagerly clung, we now live and preach, as it were, by faith alone". What postmodern thought lends to Christian theology, ultimately, is a clarification of its essential nature, Christian claims can rest upon no ultimate foundation, not even that of non-foundationalism; rather, Christianity exists solely by confession, the conviction and assertion of truth apart from any appeal to rational criterion. But while a "confessional" understanding of Christian faith and theology may certainly gain something from post modernism, it also has something to contribute by calling us to refuse postmodernist nihilism and silence by speaking forth our deepest convictions.

(Lose 2003:233).

Lose advocates the reclaiming of the Christian practice of confession as the most suitable way of understanding preaching in the postmodern context. He goes on to describe the function of this approach:

Because confession is the assertion of faith's deepest convictions, prompts the conversation of the faithful, and functions as both (1) a summary of the "essential" Christian tradition and (2) the articulation and actualization of that tradition in response to the proclaimed Word and the immediate circumstances of our hearers and world, it offers a unique way to re-envision preaching that is both faithful to the Christian tradition and responsive to our present context.

(Lose 2003:233-34)

For proclaimers of the Word, preaching should not be limited to confession as there needs to be instruction, exhortation, and even inculturation but to see every element of preaching stemming from the primary confession of faith, "Jesus Christ is Lord".

As Luther (1955:33:20-21) once responded to Erasmus' contention that pious Christians should avoid assertions in matters 'uncertain',

One must delight in assertions or he will be no Christian. And by assertion...I mean a constant adhering, affirming, confessing, maintaining, and an invincible persevering...to dissent from confessing those things one cannot prove would be nothing but a denial of all religion and piety...

5. AN ADJUSTED THEORY OF PRAXIS

The emphasis of the previous chapter was to identify those elements of preaching that will enable or better equip the preacher to more effectively engage the postmodern influenced listener with the preaching of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is now important to establish to what extent the Central Baptist Church Pretoria's worldview has been influenced by postmodern trends. In addition to this to ascertain what elements of the current preaching praxis are relevantly addressing their relationship with God and man, thus useful in their coming to and maturing in faith or as the case may be irrelevant in the usefulness of growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This will be carried out by means of an empirical study making use of a questionnaire to survey the various categories of listeners at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria.

After considering the outcomes of current positive and negative experiences of the listeners and comparing these to what has been gleaned from the above research as helpful in engaging the postmodern influenced listener the goal of this chapter will be to present an adjusted theory of praxis of the preaching at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria.

5.1 Method of survey

A questionnaire was compiled under the heading of 'Preaching at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria'. The questionnaire was compiled with the intention of identifying relevant biographical details of each respondent. In addition to this a variety of questions were drawn up relating to their beliefs and experiences as listeners to the preaching at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria. The completed questionnaire has been attached as Appendix 1.

The population for the survey included members (those who have officially applied), adherents (those who regularly attend) and visitors (occasional attendance). The total number of people identified in these categories from the church's database was 571. The population was then sorted into the following age categories: 25 and under, 26 to 39, 40 to 59 and 60 and older. Using random sampling a sample population of 150 people were identified in the relevant proportions of status and age to the overall population.

Field workers maintained a name list of all those approached in the survey. Records were kept of the sample population receiving questionnaires as well as when they were returned. The questionnaires were at all times unmarked as to the identity of the respondents and therefore anonymous. Of the 150 questionnaires handed out a total of 121 (80.6%) were returned by the closing date of the 12th of September 2004. The returned questionnaires were then captured for analysis.

5.2 Analysis of the survey

The first phase of analysis consisted of a one-way analysis of all the variables contained in the questionnaire.

5.2.1 One-way frequency analysis

5.2.1.1 Biographical details

Of the 121 respondents 11% were under the age of 25, 28% were between the age of 25 and 39, 31% were between the age 40 and 59 and 30% were 60 years and older (V2). There was a fairly even distribution of men and women with 48% and 52% respectively (V3). There were 84% who indicated that English was their home language with 16% of those surveyed having another home language including Afrikaans, Sotho and French. 87% were white and 13% other than white (V4). Those surveyed included 64% members, 36% adherents and visitors (V6).

The survey revealed that 15% of the respondents have been attending (V7) Central Baptist Church Pretoria for 2 years and less, 20% more than 2 and under 5 years, 31% between 5 and under 15 years, 17% between 15 and under 25 and 17% longer than 25 years. It was further reported that 21% of the respondents have been members (V8) of the Central Baptist Church Pretoria for 2 years and less, 11% longer than 2 and under 5 years, 29% between 5 and under 15 years, 18% between 15 and under 25 years and 21% longer than 25 years.

Two percent of the respondents stated that they had been born again believers for 2 years and less, 4% for longer than 2 years and less than 5 years, 20% for 5 years and less than 10 years, 31% for 10 years and less than 25 years and 43% for 25 years and longer (V49).

5.2.1.2 Experiences and spiritual disciplines reported by the respondents

Seventy one percent of the respondents indicated that the hearing of sermons are always an essential part of their lives as Christians whereas 27% saw this as what they usually do and 2% indicated that this was something they seldom did (V9).

In answer to the question as to whether preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria is relevant (V10) to the world the respondents live in, 2% indicated this was seldom the case whereas 48% usually found the preaching relevant and 50% always felt that the preaching was relevant.

Comments were invited as to the relevance of preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria (V11). Forty eight percent of the respondents simply confirmed their response made in V10, 26% commented as to the relevance of the preaching in addressing solutions to problems encountered in current trends in society, 5% felt that the preaching was topical, 6% said that the preaching was not relevant and the remaining 25% consisted of a broad variety of comments (See appendix 2).

Sermons were always followed meaningfully (V12) by 52% of the respondents, 45% usually followed meaningfully whereas 3% seldom felt they were able to follow the sermons meaningfully.

Respondents were invited to comment on their ability to follow sermons meaningfully; 28% felt that the preaching was coherent making use of simple language, 18% confirmed their response in V12, 11% felt that the sermons preached were complicated, 13% said that the sermons were well organized with specific points to follow, 10% felt the sermons had a personal relevance, 1% commented on the poor public address system with the remaining 19% including a variety of other comments. (See appendix 2)

As to the teaching received about God (V14), the world (V15) and self (V16), 58% said that they always, 41% usually and 1% said they seldom learned more about God, 15% said that they always, 61% usually and 24% said they seldom learned more about the world and 20% said that they always, 69% usually and 11% said they seldom learned more about themselves.

Fifty four percent of the respondents indicated that they always grew (V17) in their relationship with God as a result of sermons heard at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria 42% usually and 4% seldom experienced any growth.

When questioned about their response to whether sermons at Central Baptist Church Pretoria are confrontational affecting their relationship with the preacher either making them feel alienated (V18) or antagonistic (V19) toward the preacher, 60% of the respondents never, 39% seldom and 2% felt alienated from the preacher. Eighty three percent never and 17% seldom felt antagonistic toward the preacher.

Eighteen percent responded by saying that they always, 69% usually and 13% feel that God has spoken to them after hearing a sermon (V20).

The use of the data projector (V21) always helps 49%, usually helps 40%, and seldom helps 11% of the respondents.

Twenty percent always, 56% usually, 24% seldom or never felt as if they were participants (V22) when a sermon was being preached.

Respondents were invited to comment on whether they felt like participants; Twenty percent experienced engagement with the preacher during the preaching of the sermon, 14% saw their participation as being spiritually affected, 10% were able to visualize themselves into what was being presented, 12% did not think it possible to be a participant as they saw preaching as a one way communication and 44% included a variety of other comments. (See appendix 2)

Stories (V24) always help 37% of the respondents to understand the sermon better. They usually help 55% but seldom, help 8% of the respondents understand the sermon better. Forty six percent always, 48% usually and 6% seldom found illustrations (V25) helpful while listening to a sermon.

In answer to whether an authoritarian (V26) approach evoked resentment; 50% never felt this to be problematic, 40% seldom and 11% did resent this approach.

Forty eight percent always, 48% usually and 4% seldom have a sense of purpose (v27) in their lives.

Respondents were invited to make comments on their sense of purpose in life; 27% confirmed their answer in V27, 13% saw as their sense of purpose the to know God and do His will, 12% to bring honour and glory to God, 17% felt that their current circumstances distracted them from their sense of purpose and 31% consisted of a variety of other comments. (See appendix 2)

In seeking to establish the role of biblical truth in decision making 59% always, 38% usually and 3% seldom allow biblical truth to govern decision making in the church (V29) whereas 35% always, 56% usually and 9%

seldom use biblical truth to govern their decision making in the work place (V30).

Thirty nine percent of the respondents never found sermons simply the sharing of information (V34) with 41% seldom finding this to be the case whereas 20% usually experienced preaching as sharing of information.

In answering questions relating to the work of the Holy Spirit the following outcomes are noted: Fifty two percent always, 45% usually and 3% seldom sense the preacher's dependence (V35) on God the Holy Spirit. Eighty three percent always and 17% usually see the need of God the Holy Spirit in their own work (V36) with God. 55% always, 37% usually and 8% seldom pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in their own lives (V37). Thirty nine percent always, 38% usually, 23% seldom or never pray (V38) for the work of the Holy Spirit in the church.

In assessing whether preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria is from the Bible 89% indicated that this was always the case with 11% indicating that this usually happens (V43). Thirty eight percent never, 51% seldom and 11% usually find sermons are too long (V44) at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria. Three percent always, 46% seldom and 51% of the respondents never found preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria boring (V46).

As to change that has come about the following is noted: seven percent always, 58% usually and 35% seldom experienced an improvement in their relationships (V45) at home as a result of being challenged by a sermon. Fourteen percent seldom, 69% usually and 17% always experience change in any way (V47) as a result of listening to a sermon at Central Baptist Church Pretoria.

Asked to comment on the matter of experiencing change in any way; 33% confirmed their answer in V47, 18% experienced behaviour change, 13% experienced growth and 36% consisted of a variety of other comments. (See appendix 2)

5.2.1.3 Beliefs held by the respondents

Seventy three percent of the respondents believed that preaching should not be entertaining (V31) with 27% thinking it should.

In answering whether people are basically good, 65% did not think they were and 35% believed that people are basically good (V32).

Eighty one percent of the respondents did not believe there was any cause for scepticism (V33) about some of the content of the Bible, whereas 17% indicated that there may be cause for concern in some cases and 2% said that there was definitely cause for scepticism about some of the content of the Bible.

Asked about whether preaching should be humorous (V39), 6% said always, 27% usually, 60% seldom and 7% never. 17% believe drama (V40) would usually assist the preacher whereas 52% said that this was seldom the case with 31% believing that this is never the case.

Ninety eight percent of the respondents believe that the Bible (V41) is the inspired word of God with 2% claiming that the Bible contains teaching about God. Not one respondent indicated that the Bible is a collection of religious writings or Men's description of their experience with God. Seventy seven percent believe that God always speaks to them (V42) through the Bible, 22% believe that God usually does this with 1% believing that God seldom speaks to them through the Bible.

5.2.2 Two-way frequency analysis

This was done in two distinct areas; firstly, a two-way frequency analysis of some of the data collected using age (V2), length of attendance at Central Baptist Church Pretoria (V7) and length of time being a Christian (V49). This is known as a breakdown analysis. This breakdown analysis divides the time

variable into various age ranges and then compares this with experiences or belief related variables. This would be helpful in assessing to what extent, if any, postmodern influences are spread over the biographical categories.

Secondly, two-way frequency tables were compiled with the intention of establishing the nature of relationship or association, if any, of some of the experiences and beliefs of the respondents. The association, when identified, will show whether or not the variables are connected in some way or whether they go together in some relationship. Those included in this analysis were association between: “Is there cause for scepticism about some of the content of the Bible?” (V33), “What kind of the book is the Bible?” (V41), “Do you find sermons simply the sharing of information?” (V34), “Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?” (V20), “Have your relationships at home improved as a result of being challenged by a sermon?” (V45) and “Is the preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria relevant to the world you live in?”(V10).

5.2.2.1 Breakdown analysis

An examination of the reported chi-squared values indicated no statistically significant differences in the biographical categories for the following two-way frequency tables:

- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?” (V20).
- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do you feel like a participant when a sermon is being preached?” (V22).
- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do stories help you understand the sermon better?”(V24).

- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do illustrations help you understand the sermon better?” (V25).
- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do you think preaching should be entertaining?” (V31).
- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do you think people are basically good?” (VV32).
- “Age” (V2) of respondent with “Do you find sermons simply the sharing of information?” (V34).

No statistically significant relationship between age and sermons simply being the sharing of information was evident, although there appears to be some indication that age and sermons simply being the sharing of information are related.

- “Age” (V2) of the respondent with “Do you think preaching should be humorous?” (V39).
- “How long have you been a born again believer?” (V49) with “Do you think people are basically good?” (V32).

No statistically significant relationship between the length of time someone has been a believer and those who think people are basically good was evident, although there appears to be some indication of length of time as a believer and those who believe that people are basically good are related.

- “How long have you been a born again believer?” (V49) with “Has your life changed in any way as a result of listening to a sermon at Central?” (V47).

- “How long have you been a born again believer?” (V49) with “Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?” (V20).
- “How long have you been a born again believer?” (V49) with “Do you think people are basically good?” (V32).

It needs to be noted that the absence of statistical significance does not necessarily indicate that there is no practical or theological significance.

5.2.2.2 Association analysis

An examination of the reported chi-squared value indicated no statistically significant association between the factors in the following two-way frequency tables:

- “Is there cause for scepticism about some of the content of the Bible?” (V33) with “What kind of the book is the Bible?” (V41).

There were however a number of instances where the reported chi-squared value did indicate statistical significance in the association. This shows that there is a relationship that exists between the two variables under consideration. In all of these cases a log linear analysis was carried out to establish the nature of the relationship between the two variables.

- “Do you find sermons simply the sharing of information?” (V34) with “Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?” (V20).

The log linear analysis revealed a statistically significant higher than expected frequency for people who leave church after hearing a sermon and always feel that God has spoken to them and those who never find sermons simply the sharing of information. The lower than expected

frequency for the category of people who seldom leave church after hearing a sermon and feel God has spoken to them and those who never find sermons simply the sharing of information confirmed the opposite trend. Therefore it can be seen that there is a relationship between those who leave church after hearing a sermon and those who never see the sermon simply the sharing of information.

- “Have your relationships at home improved as a result of being challenged by a sermon?” (V45) with “Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?” (V20).

The lower than expected frequency in the log linear analysis revealed that among those who sometimes experienced an improvement in their relationships at home after being challenged by a sermon leave church after the hearing of a sermon do not always feel that God had spoken to them. Whereas the higher than expected frequency showed a tendency of those who always felt God has spoken to them after hearing a sermon was that relationships at home always improved as a result of hearing a sermon. Therefore, it can be seen that the experience of hearing a sermon, feeling that God has spoken and that of improved relationships at home as a result of hearing a sermon go together.

- “Have your relationships at home improved as a result of being challenged by a sermon?” (V45) with “Is there cause for scepticism about some of the content of the Bible?” (V33).

The higher than expected frequency in the log linear analysis showed a tendency among those who had no cause for scepticism about some of the content of the Bible usually experienced improved relationships at home as a result of hearing a sermon. The lower than expected frequency among those who expressed concern in some cases over the content of the Bible and usually experiencing improved relationships at home as a result of hearing a sermon revealed the opposite tendency. This means

that the tendency for improved relationships at home as a result of hearing a sermon is associated with the respondents belief as to cause for scepticism about some of the content in the Bible.

- “Is the preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria relevant to the world you live in?”(V10) with “Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?” (V20).

The log linear analysis revealed a statistical significance in the higher than expected frequency for the ‘always’ category of is the preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria relevant to the world you live in and the ‘always’ category of do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you. A lower than expected frequency was reported for the ‘not always’ category of is the preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria relevant to the world you live in and the “always’ category of do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you. Therefore the experience of hearing a sermon and feeling that God has spoken to you and relevant preaching go together.

- “Is the preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria relevant to the world you live in?”(V10) with “Have your relationships at home improved as a result of being challenged by a sermon?” (V45).

The higher than expected frequency among those who seldom had the experience of improved relationships at home as a result of being challenged by a sermon did not always find preaching at the Central Baptist Church relevant to the world they live in. The lower than expected frequency among those who seldom had the experience of improved relationships at home as a result of being challenged by a sermon and those who always find preaching at the Central Baptist Church relevant to the world they live in indicated an opposite trend. Therefore, the experience of relevant preaching and the experience improved

relationships at home as a result of being challenged by a sermon go together.

5.3 Interpretation of results

5.3.1 The extent of postmodern influence

The first intention of the empirical research was to assess to what extent postmodernism is affecting the worldview of the congregation at Central Baptist Church Pretoria. In chapter 3 of this thesis various characteristics describing the postmodern influenced person was identified. Some of the questions in the survey were designed to establish how the congregation at Central Baptist Church Pretoria either conformed or did not conform to these expected characteristics.

It was significant to note that the congregation still holds to a high view of Scripture. Almost all of the respondents (98%) still believe the Bible is the word of God with not one respondent indicating that the bible is a collection of religious writings or man's description of his experience with God. It was further revealed that 81% of the respondents did not believe there was cause for scepticism about some of the content of the Bible. The 19% who indicated that there may be some cause for concern may well represent a portion of the congregation who are being moulded by current postmodern trends.

The scepticism present in some of the respondents does indicate some consequence in their lives, as the analysis showed that they were less likely to show improvement in relationships at home. Whereas where there was no scepticism reported there was a greater incidence of change taking place in relationships at home.

The literature study revealed that people with a postmodern worldview have blurred morality and are pragmatic. The opposite trend was apparent from the survey conducted. A significant number of the respondents (97%) make use

of biblical truth to govern decision-making in the church and 91% do so in the work place. This does indicate a strong reliance on the Scriptures to guide them in decision-making.

Where it was expected to see a growing scepticism and suspicion of authority the opposite was noted. Only 11% of the respondents resented an authoritative approach in preaching with the others usually not finding this to be a problem. Almost all of the respondents indicated that preaching at Central Baptist Church Pretoria is usually from the Bible. In spite of this being the case only 11% felt sermons were too long and 97% did not find preaching at Central Baptist boring. The respondents did not find the preaching to be confrontational leaving them alienated or antagonistic toward the preacher thus indicating a more dialogical methodology in the week-by-week preaching.

As postmodernists are on a quest for community it was expected to see the need for a growing sense of participation. At least three quarters of the respondents experienced a sense of participation. In the comments that were made it was clear that all the respondents did not understand 'participant' in the same way. There were those who felt their participation did involve engagement with the preacher while others saw it as verbal exchange. These respondents did not feel like participants, as they perceived preaching to be a monologue. This understanding was confirmed in that 20% usually found sermons simply the sharing of information.

5.3.2 Current relevant preaching praxis

The second intention of the empirical research was to ascertain what elements of the current preaching praxis relevantly addresses the congregation's relationship with God and man, thus useful in their coming to and maturing in faith.

Most of the respondents indicated that preaching at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria is relevant to the world in which they live with only 2% indicating that this was seldom the case. This together with the comments

made (see Appendix 2) is a general indication that most people in the congregation find preaching relevant and useful in their lives. A mere 3% were unable to follow sermons meaningfully. Comments were generally favourable (see Appendix 2) except for the 11% who felt the sermons were complicated.

Ninety six percent of the respondents indicated that they at least usually grew as a result of sermons heard at Central Baptist Church Pretoria. This due to the fact that most (87%) believe that God speaks to them in the preaching of the word. Only 65% indicated growth and change in relationships and 86% indicated change in any way. This does show that some effectiveness in preaching is taking place but also indicates the need for greater life affecting change as a result of the preached word. The comments (Appendix 2) do reveal some meaningful behaviour change and growth.

The use of the data projector, stories and illustrations were helpful to most of the respondents.

The research revealed that the issue of relevance cannot be ignored or taken lightly. It was clear that relevant preaching has direct bearing on the degree to which the respondents are changing in their lives as indicated by the improvement in relationships at home as a result of relevant preaching. In addition to this it must be noted that those who felt that God had spoken to them as a result of listening to a sermon were mostly those who experienced preaching at the Central Baptist Church as being relevant.

5.3.3 Current irrelevant preaching praxis

An overview of the results shows a favourable response to the preaching at the Central Baptist Church. However, it is never the less true that there were some negative responses and comments made by some of the respondents. This discussion will therefore take note of critical and negative comments made in the current preaching praxis at Central Baptist Church Pretoria.

As to relevance the following critical comments were made:

- The preaching could be more topical addressing issues such as dealing with disability, death and relationships.
- The pastors could greet people as they come into the sanctuary and find out what the needs of the people coming into the service and be able to minister more effectively to where people are.
- Preaching is relevant but absent of cultural realities (the worshiping of ancestors and adherence to traditional African beliefs)
- Preaching needs more emotion and connection with the listeners and a balance between heart and mind.

As to being able to follow a sermon meaningfully the following critical comments were made:

- It is difficult to pay attention all the time as a persons mind has a tendency to drift.
- Some sermons are more theological that practical.
- I am easily distracted.
- Often family distractions.
- If there are too many complicated terms then no, otherwise yes.
- Sometimes the outline is hard to follow – too many words and points.
- Could be more practical and communicate in a more contemporary style – less academic and more relational.
- Poor public address system.

As to feeling like a participant when a sermon is being preached.

- Sometimes it feels as though sermons don't relate to a person in my age bracket, a bit over my head in the way the sermon is conducted.
- Sometimes gets bogged down in the middle when it gets a bit analytical and then more illustrations, stories, quotes could add a window to the sermon.
- A bit too intellectual.
- If the preacher's words are lost through poor amplification one cannot be a participant.
- We still remain in church and that means quiet

As to has your life changed in any way as a result of listening to a sermon at Central Baptist Church Pretoria?

- The preaching as I have said aims too much to the mind and not to the heart

From the above comments it can be seen that the preacher can always improve in the task of preaching. Particular note must be taken of the relational, cultural, simplicity and heart matters in the praxis of preaching.

5.4 Conclusion

There does appear to be some postmodern influences on the Central Baptist Church congregation. This is particularly evident in the number of respondents expressing scepticism (19%) over some of the content of the Bible. This postmodern influence can also be seen in the number of respondents believing that people are basically good (35%) also is an

indication of views contrary to the reformed understanding of human depravity.

The influence at this point in time is not overwhelming, as the church appears to be in a healthy condition. People have continued to join the church with 15% growth in the last two years and 35% growth in the last five years. A concern is noted over the growth that has taken place in that only 6% of those who have joined the church over the last five years were converted to Christ in that period. This may indicate a weakness in the area of reaching the surrounding postmodern influenced community with outdated or irrelevant evangelistic methods. This is a clear indication that the preachers and leadership of the church take seriously the above chapter on “Engaging the postmodern influenced audience”.

There are clear indications that the preaching praxis among those who are “already believers” and present in the congregation seems to be relevant and useful in their walk of faith. There is a strong commitment (98%) by the respondents who at least usually make preaching an essential part of their lives as Christians. Ninety eight percent of the respondents also indicated that preaching at Central Baptist Church is at least usually relevant to the world they live in. Generally (97%) they were usually able to follow the sermons meaningfully and mostly (96%) grew as a result of listening to sermons at Central Baptist Church Pretoria.

Relevance in preaching to the world that the listener lives in is essential as this does appear to have a direct bearing on growth, change and sense that God is speaking to them. When preaching is perceived to be the sharing of information alone the study showed that there was little or no impact in terms of hearing God speak, growth or any improvement in relationships at home.

There was some confusion as to what it meant to be a participant in the preaching process with 24% of the respondents at least seldom feeling like participants. Changes in preaching praxis in the areas of dialogue and inductive preaching as opposed to the regular deductive approach will assist

in the listeners becoming more aware and involved as participants. The ongoing building of relationships can only enhance the effectiveness of preaching.

According to the listener stories and illustrations at least usually help to understand the sermon better. The preacher needs to work hard at giving listeners these windows to see more clearly the message being conveyed

Both the literature study and the empirical research confirmed the importance of the work of God the Holy Spirit in lives and work of preacher and listener.

In spite of some of the respondents expressing some cause for scepticism over some of the content in the Bible almost all (98%) believe that the Bible is the word of God and at least 99% of the respondents usually believe that God speaks to them through the Bible. The Bible and its direct connection with God speaking to people did have a direct impact on people experiencing change in their lives.

The empirical research confirms that the congregation at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria is at least to some extent being influenced by postmodern thinking. Every effort must therefore be made by the preachers to meaningfully engage the listeners by facing the challenge before them.

This thesis tested the transforming power of gospel preaching to an audience influenced by post modernism and has confirmed the usefulness of preaching. In summary, in the light of the above literature study and empirical research conducted at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria, the following adjustments in preaching praxis and ministry needs to be prioritized:

5.4.1 Preaching style and focus

Seek to make more use of the inductive rather than deductive approach in preaching, particularly in the area of evangelism but not exclusively, thereby consciously developing clearer dialogue with the listeners participating in the

process reaching conclusions together. This carried out with the clear intention of proclaiming the full counsel of God making use of expository preaching with a focus on Jesus Christ.

5.4.2 The need for hard work and the help of God the Holy Spirit

Skill in delivery must be developed to engage both heart and mind of the hearer. Preachers need at all times to build meaningful relationships with their listeners making every effort to understand the world they are living in. In as much as there must be concentrated effort and hard work in the area of methodology and technique the preacher must perpetually cultivate a greater dependence on God the Holy Spirit who ultimately is the Sacred Communicator.

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7. SUMMARY

In an age where there seems to be a loss of confidence on the transforming power of gospel preaching this study addresses the following hypothesis: “The transforming power of gospel preaching to an audience influenced by post modernism”.

The following methodology was used in this study:

- A Literature study
- Practical-theological method

A Theological Model for Preaching

God has spoken, it is written and preach the word are identified as three essential theological foundations for preaching. Expository preaching is explored as a model that understands the seriousness of the task of accurately and relevantly proclaiming the revealed Word of God. Expository preaching is not a matter of style at all. In fact, the determinative step that decides whether a sermon is going to be expository or not takes place before a single word has been actually written or spoken. First and foremost, the adjective ‘expository’ describes the method by which the preacher decides what to say, not how to say it. The key principles of expository preaching are then discussed.

The Postmodern Audience.

People from all walks of life are exposed, at least to some extent, to the trends and influences of their particular day. Those present in Church services week by week are not exempt from these new ideas, trends and pressures. The intention here is to understand the person influenced by postmodernity. Ten distinct features of postmodernism are explored to understand the impact that they may have on a postmodern influenced congregation. In addition to the distinctive features of postmodernism some of the common features of people from all cultures is explored.

Engaging the Postmodern Audience

Preaching the gospel may involve confrontation but there are ways to confront and effectively challenge both postmodern beliefs and biblical unbelief. Methods of effective engagement like building relationships, tuning into the secular world and a more apologetic approach are discussed. In addition to this, various practices of effective communicators like a dialogical approach, inductive preaching, storytelling, the use of media and humour are explored. The study recognizes the essential work of the Holy Spirit and an unavoidable focus of Jesus Christ in preaching.

An Adjusted Theory for Praxis.

The thesis tested the transforming power of gospel preaching to an audience influenced by post modernism and confirmed the usefulness of preaching. In the light of the literature study and empirical research conducted at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria, some adjustments in preaching praxis and ministry needs to be prioritised:

One, Make more use of the inductive rather than deductive approach in preaching, particularly in the area of evangelism but not exclusively, thereby consciously developing clearer dialogue with the listeners participating in the process reaching conclusions together.

Two, In as much as there must be concentrated effort and hard work in the area of methodology and technique the preacher must perpetually cultivate a greater dependence on God the Holy Spirit who ultimately is the Sacred Communicator.

Key words: Preaching, postmodern, expository, listener, communication, engagement, dialogical, induction, Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ.

8. APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Preaching at the Central Baptist Church Pretoria

Respondent number

V1 1

Thank you for taking the time and trouble to fill in this questionnaire, the results of which will be used for a Masters thesis in Theology of Charles De Kiewit. The purpose of the thesis is to examine *“The transforming power of gospel preaching to an audience influenced by post modernism”*. The questionnaire will not take more than 15 minutes to complete.

Your contribution will greatly benefit preachers of the gospel seeking to honour God and make a difference in the age we live. It is not necessary to supply your name. Please note this is an anonymous questionnaire; kindly answer all questions as honestly as possible.

Answer all the questions by drawing a circle (O) around a number in a shaded box or by writing your answer in the shaded space provided

1. What is your age in completed years?

--

V2 4

2. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

V3 7

3. What is your home language?

English	1
Afrikaans	2
Sotho	3
Zulu	4
French	5
Other (specify)	

V4 8

4. To which population group do you belong?

Asian	1
Black	2
Coloured	3
Indian	4
White	5
Other (specify)	

V5 10

5. How would you describe your relationship with Central Baptist Church Pretoria?

Member (officially applied)	1
Adherent (in regular attendance)	2
Visitor (Occasional attendance)	3

V6 12

6. How long have you been attending the Central Baptist Church?

Years months

V7 13

7. How long have you been a member of the Central Baptist Church?

Years months

V8 16

8. Is the hearing of sermons an essential part of your life as a Christian?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V9 19

9. Is the preaching at Central Baptist relevant to the world you live in?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V10 20

Please comment on your answer (ONE COMMENT ONLY)

V11 21

10. Are you able to follow the sermons meaningfully?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V12 23

Please comment on your answer (ONE COMMENT ONLY)

V13 24

11. Do the sermons preached teach you more about God?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V14 26

12. Do the sermons preached teach you more about the world?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V15 27

13. Do the sermons preached teach you more about yourself?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V16 28

14. How much have you grown in your relationship with God as a result of sermons you have heard at Central?

Not at all	little	moderately	Much
1	2	3	4

V17 29

15. Do you find the sermons confrontational, leaving you feeling alienated from the preacher?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V18 30

16. Do you find the sermons confrontational, leaving you feeling antagonistic toward the preacher?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V19 31

17. Do you leave church after hearing a sermon and feel that God has spoken to you?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V20 32

18. Does the data projector help you to follow the sermon?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V21 33

19. Do you feel like a participant when a sermon is being preached?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V22 34

Please comment on your answer (ONE COMMENT ONLY)

V23 35

20. Do stories help you to understand the sermon better?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V24 37

21. Do illustrations help you to understand the sermon better?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V25 38

22. Do you resent an authoritative approach in preaching?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V26 39

23. Do you feel that you have a sense of purpose in your life?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V27 40

Please comment on your answer (ONE COMMENT ONLY)

V28 41

24. When you participate in the making of decisions in the life of the church does biblical truth govern your ultimate choice?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V29 43

25. When making decisions at work does biblical truth govern your ultimate choice?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V30 44

26. Do you think preaching should be entertaining?

Yes	1
No	2

V31 45

27. Do you think people are basically good?

Yes	1
No	2

V32 46

28. Is there cause for skepticism about some of the content in the Bible? (E.g. Creation, parting of the Red sea, Jonah swallowed by a fish, Jesus born of a virgin)

Not at all	In some cases	Definitely
1	2	3

V33 47

29. Do you find sermons simply the sharing of information?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V34 48

30. Do you sense the preacher's dependence on God the Holy Spirit?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V35 49

31. Do you see the need of God the Holy Spirit in your own work with God?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V36 50

32. Do you pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V37 51

33. Do you pray for the work of the Holy Spirit in the church?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V38 52

34. Do you think preaching should be humorous?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V39 53

35. Do you believe that drama would assist the preacher?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V40 54

36. What kind of book is the Bible?

Collection of religious writings	1
Men's description of their experience with God	2
Contains some teaching about God	3
The inspired word of God	4
Other (specify)	

V41 55

37. Do you believe God speaks to you thorough the Bible?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V42 57

38. Do you find preaching at Central is from the Bible?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V43 58

39. Are sermons too long at Central?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V44 59

40. Have your relationships at home improved as a result of being challenged by a sermon?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

V45 60

41. Do you find preaching at Central boring?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V46 61

42. Has your life changed in any way as a result of listening to a sermon at Central?

Never	Seldom	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4

V47 62

Please comment on your answer (ONE COMMENT ONLY)

V48 63

43. How long have you been a born again believer?

Years months

V49 65

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire. Your assistance in this is greatly appreciated

Charles De Kiewit

9. APPENDIX 2

QUESTION 9

IS PREACHING AT CENTRAL BAPTIST RELEVANT TO THE WORLD YOU LIVE IN?

(VV11 Comments on V10)

1 – Respondents Confirming their Answer

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
001	The preacher explains how to apply it in my life.
003	Issues of this day are related to Biblical examples and Biblical ways of dealing with them are explored.
005	The Bible is always applicable, but the preachers take care to provide relevant applications.
009	Not too spiritually orientated.
011	Generally pastors are very up to date with current affairs.
012	It keeps your mind focused.
014	The Word of God is always relevant and Charles is very real and brings out the realities of the world we live in and how to live as Christians.
015	Application of Scripture is generally very good.
016	There is always at least a part of a sermon that I can apply in my spiritual and secular life.
019	Relevant to day to day living.
024	The Bible is always relevant when preached with passion.
025	My experience is that Christ is exalted in the preaching ... Old Testament or New Testament passage. This relates to me and other students.
031	Explaining is practical.
037	Great messages.
039	It is Bible based.
040	I find the preaching to usually be meaningful to everyday life and in most cases to hit points that are relevant to me or people close to me.
041	Not at the moment.
042	Other facets of my Christian life are just as relevant.
043	I sometimes wonder how the pastor, if he does a series, can make every part of the series applicable to real life! He does.
044	The preaching focuses on the mode of living and the emphasis on what is expected to be a real Christian life.
045	Preach the Word and don't vary.
051	I hear God speaking to me from behind the lectern.
055	Application.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
060	Especially when a relevant issue raises itself in the consistent preaching of a particular book.
061	Truth.
066	The preaching meets my spiritual needs.
067	The truth will set you free.
068	Yes.
071	The Word of God is taken as the supreme authority in all preaching.
072	Because the Word of God teaches all the time.
073	The application is very relevant to the days in which we live.
075	There is no dichotomy between my spiritual life and my every day living.
077	Bible based truth.
078	More occasions than not.
079	According to Scripture – yes.
080	They tell you the truth.
082	I would say 95% is a more accurate rating. Occasional sermons have only historic interest.
084	Expository preaching makes the Bible relevant to my life.
089	Pastor Charles is an excellent teacher and applies the Word of God in a clear manner.
091	Depends on the preacher.
093	Practical.
094	There may be the odd occasion where the topic is not relevant to me personally eg. Divorce. I understand what God requires of me. This will be relevant to others who may be considering divorce.
096	Yes – give you quick lines to follow.
097	I must say all the messages I've heard applied to my life or to the world around me.
101	Each Sunday when I leave church I know I have heard a Word from God I need to apply to my daily life.
113	Sometimes I don't find the preaching relevant, but mostly it is.
118	Depending on who is preaching.

2 – Topical Preaching

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
002	The pastors address topics which are relevant to me as a young person as I seek God's will for my life and where I should be going and how I should be living my life in a Godly way.
026	Usually deals with relevant spiritual issues but could address more topical issues such as dealing with disability / death, relationship issues.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
083	The subject matter is topical and pertinent to life today.
107	Most topics are very relevant – occasionally a bit way out – usually visiting preachers.
108	The preaching tends to cover current issues Biblically.

3 – Other Comments

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
010	I think perhaps the pastors could greet people as they come into the sanctuary and find what the needs are of the people coming into the service and be able to minister more effectively to where people are at.
022	Sometimes the topics are more theological, but very necessary.
023	In terms of spiritual realities, but absent of cultural realities (the worshiping of ancestors, and adherence to traditional African beliefs).
046	The preaching has a high Biblical content and normally some application but is often aimed primarily at the mind and not at the heart. Needs more emotion and connection with the listeners and a balance between heart and mind. The question needs to be asked, “what difference does this message make for my life on Monday morning?”
047	It is meaningful and gives warnings towards the time we are living in.
052	Could be more relevant if specifically directed at the difficulties that being a Christian today poses.
054	It is understandable that the church is predominantly white and that the pastor is not totally exposed to Black social issues.
057	Verse by verse, expository preaching is great whereby the Holy Spirit is allowed to work in the hearts through the passage being expounded.
069	Faithful preaching against evil in the world.
070	It is essential that we constantly need to be alerted to the ways of this present evil world.
076	It is a spiritual guidance.
087	Very often more relevant to life in the church context rather than life in the world as a Christian.
090	Guidance to Christian values.
102	I sometimes would like to hear more sermons on discipleship.
111	Relevant to members and cultural needs.

4 – Not Applicable

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
033	The church leadership lead by example.
056	The Scripture goes hand in and with what is happening in the world today. Christians will face more and more tribulations today.
063	An occasional visiting preacher need not necessarily meet my need.
092	As in the case of addressing “women covering their heads while worshipping”
100	Sometimes more application will be appreciated.
114	My world is fast shrinking into a close-knit family world. My world is not a young peoples world. Contemporaries are dying off and I am finding myself more and more seeking solace in the Word of God.

5 – Solutions to Problems / Trends of Today / Relevancy

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
004	Most of the teaching is applicable to situations faced in every day life.
006	Some sermons help you to understand and deal with certain situations in the world.
007	Sermons which are preached give solutions to worldly problems concerning a Christian point of view.
013	The world we live in is ungodly. These sermons teach us how to live in this world and how to address these issues in a God glorifying way.
017	Current issues are dealt with. Issues that Christians battle with today ie. Living victoriously despite hardships, sex etc.
018	Yes because the Word of God brings light to the issues of life – like marriage in present times.
021	Sermons are not only for Christians but also for those who are not.
027	The sermons focus on or provide direction regarding issues in my own life, from time to time.
028	Always relevant because the preacher always relates the Bible reading of the day to the life style of people in the present.
030	Today’s way of life is almost always referred to which is very important.
032	The preaching usually covers topics relevant to my daily needs.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
035	The application of each message usually relates to the world within which we live.
038	I get Biblical teaching that enables me to see popular trends and opinions for what they are.
053	There are often references to the world situations and to the way the message can practically be applied in the day to day part of living in the world also.
058	I live on planet earth, it is full of sin and so the preaching at Central teaches me and holds me together throughout the week, throughout the year as I journey through this planet.
059	The sermons often relate to every day events.
074	It is Biblical and addresses issues of today.
098	The sermons challenge me to evaluate my interaction in the world, my attitudes and expectations.
105	Sometimes the preaching applies directly to the world I live in and sometimes a reflection of the world I live in.
106	Vind dit baie toepaslik in vandag se situasie.
117	Reference is almost always made to everyday examples of Christians walk.
119	Speaks to all age groups.
120	I find not only encouragement but many times awareness for a call to pray for others due to a sermon.
121	Real life analogy

QUESTION 10**ARE YOU ABLE TO FOLLOW THE SERMONS MEANINGFULLY?**

(VV13 Comments on V12)

1 – Specific points / organized

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
001	Sermons are structured. Points easy to follow.
002	The sermons are structured, there's a beginning, middle and an end and there's a message I can take away at the end of it.
003	The logic format of the sermons is easy to follow and think about.
004	It is easy to follow when there are specific points to the sermon – a practice often followed and Central.
014	Very clear and organized.
051	Its clear and structured.
060	I enjoy following definite points, it helps one digest the sermons and understand them easily.
084	The preaching is usually systematic and follows the passage being examined.
098	With regards to the structure of the sermons – yes the structure is usually clear and it is easy to follow the main points made.
102	The outline on the screen helps me to focus on God's message.
104	The layout of the sermons is very clear and they follow a logical sequence.
108	I like to follow outlines and I take notes.
117	Sermons clear and concise, displayed point form on screen.

2 – Simple Language / Coherent

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
012	They are meaningful because they are understandable.
017	The sermons are structured (points), focused (ie do not deal with side issues). Messages are always very clear.
019	Presented in manner easy to understand.
025	The sermons are easy/coherent to follow yet still challenging to the believer.
030	Easily understandable terms are used.
038	The sermons are well prepared and Biblical and the message very clear.
039	Communicated clearly with many applications.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
043	Yes, I find the messages good and understandable and I can listen throughout without thinking about other things.
053	Clear, easily understandable language with relevant examples etc.
056	Sermons are clear and audible.
058	They are quite simple and understandable and straight to the point.
064	Yes, they are easy to understand.
070	Yes, certainly. Our pastors have the special gift of setting out the Scriptures in a way that even the simplest of us should be able to understand.
071	Not too theological.
073	I have no problem in following the sermons because the preachers are very clear and precise in explaining everything.
074	Very clear.
075	The preaching is 'lucid'.
080	Yes I do follow the sermons meaningfully, and the Bible Study on Tuesdays by Charles De Kiewit is very good, we learn a lot.
087	The expository style is good, straight forward, clear and basic.
088	I don't need to have a dictionary on hand to understand pastors sermons.
090	The pastor explains clearly.
101	The sermons are well presented and easily understood.
110	There is always a message for me.
111	Taught in a clear way.
113	Pastor is clearly understood and brings his point across well.
119	Clear and practical.
121	Very clear and direct.

5 – Other Comments

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
007	It is difficult to pay attention all the time as a persons mind has a tendency to drift easily.
009	Sermons are logical and based on the Bible so it is easy to understand the preacher.
010	There needs to be a better outline on the screen.
015	Sometimes the sermons can be a little long.
022	Sometimes the topics are more theological, but very necessary.
023	Some sermons get more theological than practical.
026	Easily understood with challenging material.
036	I am easily distracted.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
050	Because of a concentration problem, I have to take notes.
057	A special hand out for filling in for taking notes would be especially helpful for individuals to follow the sermon.
063	Biblical and well prepared by our pastors.
066	Sermons are clear and Scriptural.
072	Sometimes find it difficult to concentrate – my fault.
089	Interesting, Biblical and relevant.
100	Often family distractions.
103	Sometimes concentration levels vary.
106	Wyk nie van die Bybel af nie en is tot die punt.
118	The notes on the screen help a lot.

6 – Confirming Answer

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
013	Yes. In all honesty though, I wish we used a better or more accurate translation than the NIV.
016	I always understand the sermon and its application.
035	On occasion when tired portions are not easy to follow, but generally each message is more than understandable.
040	Some are more powerful than others therefore I tend to consider them more.
044	The sermon is followed in order to learn from it and live a meaningful life devoid of sin.
045	Keep it simple but to the point.
047	The teachings we receive are eye opening to the times we are living in.
059	Most sermons preached are significant in that they are relevant to today's events.
067	Our pastors definitely.
069	They agree with what I have been taught from my youth according to the scriptures.
078	More so if the preachers are known to me.
082	I would say almost always.
091	This depends on who is preaching.
092	As in the case of thousands of people who attend the rugby in Durban, that they were strong fans of rugby before the match. The analogy was authentic.
097	There are moments when I loose track, but seldom, usually in such a case it is due to a very hard/difficult subject – or a subject where there is no polite way of putting it but the preacher tried to be polite. I have no difficulty in following the sermons.
105	I usually get a lot out of them.
120	During and afterwards there is usually soul searching and self-examination.

7 – Complicated

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
005	At times the organisation of the sermon seems a little off, but I am usually able to follow.
011	If there are too many complicated terms then no, otherwise yes.
021	Sometimes just takes me a little time to take it in.
027	I can normally follow the sermon, but sometimes the arguments which are put forward are difficult to grasp especially if the sermon deals with a difficult topic and then I tend to lose the trail of the sermon.
029	Yes – but sometimes the outline is hard to follow – too many words and points.
037	Sometimes lose the flow of thought.
041	Too much content at once.
046	Pastor Charles has a skill of communicating clearly and precisely so that you understand what he is communicating. His outlines are logical, but could be more practical and communicated in a more contemporary style – less academic and more relational.
076	Sermons are 'academically' presented.
094	There may be times that theological concepts are discussed and this may not be very clear and thus detract from the message being preached.
096	Not always – sometimes find it difficult to grasp.

14 – Poor Public Address System

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
114	Poor public address system

QUESTION 19

DO YOU FEEL LIKE A PARTICIPANT WHEN A SERMON IS BEING PREACHED?

(VV23 Commenting on V22)

1 – Spiritually Affected / Holy Spirit Speaks

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
016	Although the whole church (congregation) is addressed, I realise that God is speaking to me personally
017	I do not know my gifting in the church and for God. Sometimes feels like day to day living without accomplishing anything for the Lord.
018	As God the Holy Spirit convicts and speaks through the preacher – yes I do feel as a participant when a sermon is being preached.
028	Because I am spiritually touched.
033	The Holy Spirit speaks to me.
045	When one endeavours to walk with the Lord and the help of His grace. The relevance of Scripture challenges and encourages us to persevere.
047	During preaching I receive more revelation and understanding.
071	I come prepared to interact with God and His church.
084	The preachers usually come across as being in the Spirit of the Lord, in a way that my spirit agrees with them.
087	Subject relevance to spiritual / experience and identity from the expository style is amazing
089	Feel that God is speaking to me directly.
097	Yes, if the sermon talks to my life or the world, I am a participant in my life and the world, hence I am participant in the sermon.
098	I think one has different specific purposes for different stages in one's life, but always the general purpose of honouring God.

4 - Visualize Self in what is Presented

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
003	Questions are often asked which make you think about your life (which includes you in the sermon) and examples are given which I can relate to.
011	Especially when relevant to me.
039	I apply it to myself.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
057	We should always be a participant as a meaningful listener, who is constantly looking for areas of application in ones life. James 1:22
060	When I can apply the sermon to my own life.
081	I feel that the message is for me.
083	I can visualize my own self in the situations presented.
092	If Christ said to His 'future disciples', "row to the deep", I feel I should be the obeying disciple and not argue that I fished in the deep all the night.
101	I feel I am there to listen attentively to the Word of God and absorb it and apply it to my daily walk in life.

5 – Other Comments

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
002	I'm not sure about what the question is asking for but I guess I feel like a participant in that the sermon is not only for me as a person but also to help me grow for the good of the church body.
004	The preachers in this church have a humble, caring attitude when they preach, unlike some who elevate themselves.
007	Sometimes it feels as though sermons don't relate to a person in my age bracket, a bit over my head in the way the sermon is conducted.
010	I sometimes don't have the sense that I need to look back at the Word, what would be more beneficial is if the preacher preaching expositionally would create the effect that He makes the congregation look in the Bible at verses being preached on and looking up wanting it to be expounded, and this to go on makes us (the congregation) see where he is getting his points from in the Scriptures.
012	Pastor Charles relates it to today's world and tells of the history.
014	Sometimes I might be sleepy – it is more me than the preaching.
015	Occasionally I lose the train of thought and am no longer participating.
019	Yes, relaxed atmosphere.
022	Especially when it is a practical sermon.
023	Only practical testimonies or experiences shared can help me identify with and be a participant to the sermon.
040	I try to put myself in what is being preached and asses how it affects my life and how I can improve my life and affect others.
041	Our church does not lend itself to participation.
042	As a hearer of the Word, I do.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
043	Usually messages are relevant, understandable and applicable.
044	The sermons are always meaningful and make one to listen to impact on ones life.
046	Charles often begins well and draws you into the subject. When he uses illustrations they are usually well chosen and original and help set the stage for the topic. It sometimes gets bogged down in the middle when it gets a bit analytical and there more illustrations, stories, quotes etc. could add windows to the sermon.
051	Can identify with the content.
052	The sermons are approached from an academic point of view and I would prefer a more 'human' approach.
053	In communication, the listeners an active participant and in that light I may say 'always'.
055	If this means being taught and built up – certainly.
056	God can only speak to us through His Word, therefore careful attention must be given to the Scriptures. Spiritual growth comes from the Word.
058	The level at which the sermons are preached is mine. I understand very well and so feel blessed, always.
061	Sermons are applicable and meaningful.
067	Depending on the subject matter.
068	Usually.
069	As the Word is preached faithfully, I rejoice.
070	I think my answer is honesty in so far as the preaching of our own 'pastors and teachers' are concerned.
072	The preaching is practical and true to life.
074	A bit too intellectual.
077	Sermons are relevant to my life and experience.
078	Most times, particularly if it is in the New Testament.
079	I am in full agreement with doctrine being taught.
082	I do not fully understand the meaning of 'participant'.
088	More often than not I am challenged to get up and DO by the sermon content.
096	When I can understand it.
100	Personally, family distractions often affect continuity of sermon.
103	Sermons are not interactive.
104	The nearer I sit toward the pulpit the more of a participant I feel.
114	If the preachers words are 'lost' through poor amplification one cannot be a participant

8 – Engagement by Preacher

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
005	I'm not sure how one would be a participant, but I usually feel engaged by the preacher.
025	Stories, illustrations, humour, engaging questions help me feel like a participant.
026	I feel as if the pastors engage the congregations.
035	Each message encourages my active participation so as to keep pace with what topic the message addresses.
037	Engaging messages.
038	I am always able to apply the message to a particular situation or experience.
050	The nature of a sermon is such that the preacher is active and the listener is passive, but if listening and absorbing = participating, then I am a participant.
059	The sermons preached are often almost participatory in many facets.
066	The sermons include the congregation.
073	The preacher draws his listeners into his sermons.
076	I feel involved and eager for more!
090	I do, when I am fully in agreement.
093	Can identify with the preacher.
094	Examples are used and one can identify with the topic and thus feel part of the sermon.
106	Jy word ingetrek by die boodskap wat gepreek word.
107	More times the application is clear and I feel involved.
108	I don't feel 'preached at' rather a two-way street.
113	Eye contact helps you to feel as if the pastor is including you in the message.
117	Pastors usually make good eye contact with congregation.

9 – Perceive One Way Communication

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
009	I only participate by receiving, sermon seems only one way.
027	I basically sit and absorb passively what the preacher conveys to me, but I suppose it comes with the territory.
030	We still remain in church and that means 'quiet'.
032	Non-interactive.
075	There is seldom 'audience participation' during sermons.
091	By its nature, a sermon is not an interactive vehicle / format and does not allow for active participation.
105	Most of the time I just sit and listen.
116	The set-up does not allow for real participation. You sit still and listen.
118	Participant as if I am spoken to.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
120	I may at times have to remind myself not to make a loud comment of agreement during a sermon.
121	How do you participate during a sermon?

11 – Question and Answer Session

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
036	Questions and answers sessions are an excellent idea.

12. Take Notes

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
064	Take notes and praise and worship.

QUESTION 23**DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE A SENSE OF PURPOSE IN YOUR LIFE?**

(VV28 Comments on V27)

11 – Other Comments

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
001	Have no talents. Do not understand why God put me on earth.
017	I do not know my gifting in the church and for God. Sometimes feels like day to day living without accomplishing anything for the Lord.
018	God created us to live life to the fullest in Him as His children.
021	Yes. To share than which I have learnt and sharing it with someone in need of help.
040	To improve my and my family's current life and my after life as I feel God must have put me here for some reason.
045	One is constantly reminded of Gods faithfulness in all ways, His mercy and goodness instils purpose to strive for higher things in service and being His light and salt.
051	Sometimes, as in many a 'Thomas'
053	Strive to live a life pleasing to God and bring my children up to love Him and look to Him for guidance.
054	To live according to God's standards and paramountly reach out to bring the lost to God.
056	We are the ambassadors for Christ here on earth. God can also reach the world through His servants. Therefore we have to live Christ and Spirit filled.
061	Faith and works.
063	The Holy Spirit is always there to help me press on.
067	That the Lord is using and directing us to assist people to get along in life through the gift that has been given us.
073	I feel more and more that I am relating to people and their problems.
078	To help and love others.
082	To be more accurate I would say that I have a feeling of satisfaction in having contributed something to the welfare of others (family, friends and acquaintances)
083	To be more Christ-like in the way we live.
088	To pass on to others the blessings of being taught.
089	To be used of God.
092	There are numerous issues that I can help alleviating in South African communities. The stability in the faith of Christ, the patience in Education Studies, the perseverance in hard work to live – I owe minister these to people.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
093	I would like to make a difference.
096	Yes because Jesus Christ died on the cross for me!
097	I am still hopeful for 'calling' from God to work for Him only but till then I take that I am still in training for God purpose and hence my life has purpose.
100	Something I currently battle with.
101	My purpose in life is always to be like Jesus. I will never attain it but I will strive for it.
105	I believe God put me on earth for a reason that He only knows so most of the time I feel a sense of purpose.
106	To become more like Christ and to inspire that in other people.
110	To be in prayer for people when they need it.
119	We are here to serve God.

2 – Know God and follow His leading / Will

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
028	Always because I feel I need to be God's child by following His ways. I need spiritual growth.
030	We are all here with a purpose, it just does not always feel like it, this is when I ask God for direction.
055	In step with the Lord in daily walk.
069	As seeking to be in the will of God.
070	My desire is that through the reading of the Scriptures, and sitting under the preaching and teaching of faithful men of God I may, with the help of the Holy Spirit, come to know a little more of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" – Eph 3:8
072	I am always learning, Gods teaching is always new.
074	I have found my purpose in God's Word, but worldly purpose still surfaces regularly.
075	There is no need to worry about this at all for the Word of God promises me that He will fulfil His purpose for me and I will hear Him if I stay close to Him.
079	According to God's daily leading.
080	Yes, my sense of purpose is to follow Jesus.
086	I have had the priceless privilege of knowing from early childhood that the only valid and lasting purpose to have in life here and now and on through eternity, is to know God, to please Him and follow His leading.
094	Learning from God's Word will give you purpose in life.

3 – Current Circumstances Distract from Purpose

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
007	It's difficult to feel positive about life all the time as hardships are bound to happen and feeling as though life isn't worth it could occur at times.
009	Always know so, but do not always feel the same.
010	Sometimes I feel that I don't know what the point is, mainly when I am discouraged.
023	But not very consistent and alive throughout the week, I always have a Sunday reawakening and not a weekly.
027	There are times when I really feel that I have a clear sense of purpose, but I also experience stages where my life seems to lack a definite purpose.
032	I know God as a purpose for my life but I don't always feel that way.
035	At certain times I have a better sense of purpose than at others. Messages preached help refocus one on a worthwhile sense of purpose.
041	Real life is a series of ups and downs.
042	I do sometimes doubt and become down-hearted.
043	Nearing retirement makes me scared, unsure, anxious, but for the moment answer 3 will do.
050	At this stage of my life, my feelings depend very much on my hormones, which is not trustworthy.
058	Sometimes when there is a problem in my life, I lose my footing, that's why my answer is not A-L-W-A-Y-S
059	Not often enough as events are mostly beyond my control.
060	This depends on the 'phase' I am going through eg. The purpose is not so clear while raising small children - that then becomes the purpose.
076	I am on an exploratory mission!
087	Lack of time and hence commitment to regular church activity (prayer meetings and Bible Studies) tends to rob me of that sense of purpose.

10 – Confirming Purpose

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
002	Sometimes I don't know where I'm going with my life – what is God calling me to do. But what I am sure of is that God has a divine plan for my life and my purpose is to continue in Him until He reveals it because He will reveal it.
005	I know who I am in Christ what He has called me to do – in the "spiritual" realm as well as the "day-to-day" world in which I live.
011	I feel happy in the ministries I'm involved in.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
012	I believe everybody has a purpose in life.
016	Strong sense of purpose in serving God.
019	Yes
022	Especially after a good sermon.
026	Most of the time I have a clear sense of my life being worthwhile because of my relationship with God.
033	That is the reason God saved me.
039	God has a plan for my life – I am important to Him.
044	God has a reason for sustaining me and keeps me among the living in a sinful world.
046	Yes, I have found the purpose for my life in Christ and I am fulfilling that purpose in ministry through the Spirit's leadership and direction.
052	Since I accepted the Lord as Saviour and trust Him to show me His will.
066	I believe God made us for a purpose.
068	Yes
077	Every day and experience has a value.
090	I am always satisfied with God's being.
091	All our lives are for a purpose even if we are not fully aware of that purpose or of the influence we may have on others.
102	By trusting in God, He reveals His purpose in my life.
103	I am a task orientated and purpose driven person.
107	Yes, as I trust God daily, He leads and gives meaning to my life. I believe He has purpose and will use me.
108	I feel God always has a plan for my life even when I don't see it at the time.
114	Timothy 2:11-14 Living soberly, righteously and godly, and looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus.
118	God has a purpose for everybody.
120	If I cannot help otherwise I feel urged to pray and bring others before the throne of God.

4 – To Bring Honour and Glory to God

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
003	My purpose in life is to glorify God in everything that I do.
013	I was created to glorify God.
014	My purpose, as reminded through the preaching, is to glorify God, love him with all of my heart, soul and mind and strength and to love others.
025	Of course I have my days, but feel God has made me for His glory and has specific plans for me.
038	I know that I do all things by the grace of God for His glory.
057	To bring honour and glory to God; although we fail miserably at times.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
071	I was created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
084	I know that my main purpose is to glorify God in all of my life, but at the moment I am seeking specific areas of purpose.
098	I think one has different specific purposes for different stages in one's life, but always the general purpose of honouring God.
113	I'm here to tell others about God, do His will and glorify Him through all of life.
117	Glorify God.

QUESTION 42**HAS YOUR LIFE CHANGED IN ANY WAY AS A RESULT OF LISTENING TO A SERMON AT CENTRAL?**

(VV48 Comments on V47)

1 – Confirming Answer

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
001	Sermons not always focused on saving people but on the growth of saved Christians.
005	I decided to attend Central based on De Kiewit's preaching and the fellowship and joy I've received since then have blessed me immeasurably.
007	There have been a few which have, where I feel God speaking to me through the sermons and I decided to listen and react upon the words spoken.
009	I have understood a principle and tried to apply it, like glorifying God in all things.
018	Some sermons are really inspiring.
019	Yes, times when sermon is relevant to experiences of life at that time in your life.
024	I haven't been here long enough to make a truthful comment.
040	Normally a sermon touches on some part of my or someone close to me, life.
042	The preaching of the Word of God never returns void to those that hear it.
044	Most of the sermons focused on the need for a meaningful Christian life.
046	The preaching as I have said aims too much to the mind and not the heart. It is too emotionless which tends toward a Bible lecture and is not aimed at bringing about a change in ones life, except in our ministry. Both have to be addressed. It needs to be more dynamic and powerful. Charles is capable but seems to be inhibited and not free.
053	One shudders to think what it may have been like if it was not for the guidance and direction received as a result of the sermons one has heard and the truth learnt.
056	The preacher has an excellent knowledge of the Word of God. He is honest in associating himself with daily issues we are confirmed with.
057	There is always an application when the Word of God is preached or taught.
058	The sermons are so much a source of inspiration for me and my life has changed completely

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
059	Sometimes a sermon touches my life significantly.
063	The challenge to live daily according to Biblical terms is always brought into the sermon.
065	In many ways, sometimes difficult to detect at first.
066	Many sermons at Central have had a life changing affect on me.
068	Yes
070	See Eph 4:13-16
072	God has spoken to me specifically through the preaching of His Word.
082	Question and answer box do not match. The question obviously refers to instances when such an experience took place and answer box should be 'yes' or 'no'. My answer would be 'yes'. The above refers to my early life as a committed Christian in the '50's'
083	I have been challenged and motivated.
087	God's Word presented clearly and received honestly can only be life changing.
091	The sermons are often a confirmation of my way of life.
093	Able to apply to my own life.
103	Because I was a born-again Christian when I joined Central, my life had already changed. My life is often blessed by a sermon at Central.
114	When the Lord controls one's life any changes are rare, indeed.

2 – Other Comments

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
002	I really came to know Christ and what it means to be His child and have a relationship with Him at Central and I am forever grateful to God for bringing me to this Church.
006	Some sermons helped me find my purpose / direction in life.
010	Well I personally believe that it was the Word of God that changed my life by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, through the obedience of God's servant.
011	I was convicted to give more to others.
014	I am challenged and convicted by the Holy Spirit and encouraged to press on in faith.
016	Often but not always, a sermon has challenged me in a particularly relevant area of my life and encouraged me to work on a problem – changed my life.
022	It gives you new perspective of what your priorities should be and helps you to correct it.
026	It's more about small changes that occur with each sermon rather than a large change as a result of one particular sermon.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
030	I have learnt that life not all about me and I have so much to be thankful for.
037	Greater need for God to work in my life.
038	I am usually reminded that life is not about me and what I want, but what God wants. His plans and purpose are central in my life.
043	I try to be more loving and forgiving – even if my whole life did not change my outlook has.
045	No so much changed but with the faithful preaching one is always challenged to strive greater in ones walk and relationship with our Lord.
050	For me, the sermons mostly are gentle prods in the right direction, not 180° turnover events.
054	I learnt that not becoming a member of the church officially may be disobedience to God, through a sermon!
069	As we are challenged in our relationship with others.
073	I have not arrived yet, but I feel a deepened sense of yearning of the holiness (and I know the devil is going to attack me because I said that!)
074	I have a stronger conviction in absolute values.
076	Some sermons are road maps.
077	Romans 10-14, Hearing has resulted in believing, believing has resulted in Salvation and a new life.
079	A challenge frequently drives one to seek the Lords help.
080	Yes, I have received the Holy Spirit.
084	The preaching at Central because it is Bible based has helped me to formulate a Christian world view and understand how a Christian should live.
088	Yes, I received confirmation of the way God wanted me to go through listening to a sermon.
089	More compassionate.
090	Sermon guides and encourages.
094	Applying what I hear from God's Word does / will change my life. Challenged to live my life for God.
097	If it did not then I should stop attending Central but in general I hope I am a better person each year due to a deeper more personal relationship with God.
104	There have been specific sermons that have really impacted my life, however it's been more a thing of many sermons over the years that are constantly challenging me in certain areas of my life.
110	I have learnt to forgive.
111	In some way every time.

3 – Behavioural Change

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
003	I've been challenged to work on areas of my life that are not where they should be in my Christian walk.
004	More focused dependence on Gods Word for guidance in life.
013	Yes, God's will and what He requires from us is continually revealed to us from His Word. I always adjust my lifestyle to what I have been taught from His Word.
017	Especially ones thinking is challenged eg. Victorious living is dependent on our spiritual discipline.
025	The sermons have helped shape my perspective in discipleship, Christian Freedom, and seeing Christ in the Scripture. The times I feel nothing is gained from a sermon is usually a case of my own personal preparation.
027	If the sermon addresses an issue that I am facing in my own life, then it tends to have a positive affect in my own life.
028	Some sermons are usually against my behaviour. This makes me to change for the better.
031	Convicted to change.
035	My life has changed after the preaching of sermons, which practically addresses how we should live as Christians in the world, as examples of Jesus.
051	When God convicts the soul, there is normally reaction.
071	I try to apply the Word of God preached on Sundays to my life from day to day.
078	Greater obedience and understanding
081	Yes, in so much that I try to live the way that the sermon has told me.
098	Serves as reminders in areas where I have been negligent.
101	I have become more aware that I need to be more responsible in my walk with the Lord Jesus.
118	Every time God speaks to me through a sermon it helps to handle temptations and get rid of sin.

10 – Growth

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
012	The Bible has been more clearly set out and I have a better understanding.
015	I have grown as a believer in my love of God, His Word and His people.
023	Especially at the level of knowing the Lord. His live, His grace, Deity.
039	There is a continuous moulding taking place as I grow in the Lord. Many sermons have contributed towards this moulding.

RESPONDENT	COMMENT
047	Learn to have a closer relationship with God Father Son and Holy Spirit.
055	Challenge – growth.
060	I have grown in my relationship with God.
061	Learning and being challenged by God.
067	Encourage to better sanctification.
113	I have grown in a deeper walk with God as a result of some of the sermons preached. One particular sermon from 3 years ago is still stuck with me – one on prayer.
119	Grown in knowledge of the Bible through comprehensive preaching through a Bible book.