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Preaching: Truth sharing as a prophetic voice¹

ABSTRACT

What kind of preaching and what kind of preacher will facilitate the cultivation of contextually relevant missional congregations? A main thesis in this search was and still is that integrating and coordinating all ministries are necessary to develop such missional congregations. But what role does preaching play as part of this whole? In this regard, interviews were held with 24 pastors and academics in the United States of America. In this and another team-research project, it was discovered how challenging it is to help congregations transform into intercultural sensitivity and cultivate a new missional culture. In this article, I intentionally explore the work done by Patrick Johnson. He explored the work of three homiletics and eventually brought them in conversation with the ecclesiology of Karl Barth – in developing a “missional homiletics of witness” (Johnson 2015:139) – which I observe to include prophetic preaching that will challenge communities of faith towards missional faithfulness and transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

I consider the invitation to participate in this *Festschrift* as an honour. My relationship with Prof. Kobus Schoeman goes back a long way. We have worked together in many ways. We published together² and shared many dreams for our subject field and ministry. He was a well-appreciated co-researcher in the project



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1 With reference to 1 Cor. 14:37 (NIV).

2 I can refer to more, but consider our articles Nel & Schoeman (2015; 2019).

referred to below.³ I participate in this *Festschrift* with a spirit of gratitude that I may consider him a friend. I have deep respect for his ability to read and analyse the context. May my attempt to challenge the “cultural-convenience captivity”, with a call to faithfulness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, contribute to his lifelong endeavours.⁴ I share with many others a deep respect for his lifelong contribution to empirical research concerning the state of the Dutch Reformed Church, in specific, and to many more denominations in South Africa over the past number of years.⁵

The background to this specific article lies in a personal Bible moment during four months of research leave in 2019-2020, working in the library at Princeton Theological Seminary. As part of a research team that I coordinated, I was working on my three chapters as part of the book on the place of worship and preaching in developing missional congregations. I was contemplating the role of developing the gifts of God’s people and equipping gifted people “for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Eph. 4:12 [NIV]). This led me to the trilogy of 1 Corinthians 12-14. As part of my research journey, I often wondered why some preachers who do “everything right” (according to the homiletic handbook) so often “do not make it” in the pulpit. They are a blessing to some without leading God’s people corporately and purposefully to God’s mission in context. And back I was to the gifts. And then 1 Corinthians 14 was right there, in my face. I refer to a few verses:

3 But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort ... 5 ... The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified ...

29 Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets ... 37 If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. 38 But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.

3 Schoeman & Wessels (2021:91-108).

4 See Schoeman (2020a:321-341).

5 See his crucial contribution in Schoeman (2020b). I refer in specific to the two chapters on “Developing contemporary ecclesologies” (93-106) and “An empirical exploration of the missional ecclesiology of congregations in the Dutch Reformed Church” (109-124).

39 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40 But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. (1 Cor 14:3-5, 29-32, 37-39 [NIV]).

The words “be eager to prophesy” (39) stayed with me. I believe that this was partly because of the more than 43 qualitative empirical interviews with pastors and academics in South Africa. My team researchers and I could not escape the reality that developing missional congregations is challenging, maybe all over the world but even more so in South Africa – to say the least. It is troublesome and demanding, often because culture has captured us into a state of convenience. Is prophecy needed to challenge this state of “cultural convenience”-captive? And if so, what would such a prophetic challenge encompass? What “truth” is to be prophesied?

In the second part of this article, I quote extensively from the book I am discussing (Johnson 2015). I am doing so, trying to do justice to the author and his way of stating his premises.⁶

As stated earlier, the main research question behind this research and article is: What kind of preaching and what kind of preacher will facilitate the cultivation of faithful and contextually relevant missional congregations? The purpose is to shed light on this question with insights from empirical and theoretical research.

2. CORE CONCEPTS

In the more than 43 interviews with pastors (in congregations where the research team referred to observed the cultivation of a missional identity happening), many concepts came to the fore. An AtlasTi analysis of the transcribed documents helped us discern some 73 concepts and issues concerning this process of transformation. A theological reflection on these concepts and issues is part of another publication. The team that did this empirical research published a book on the relationship between worship and preaching and developing missional congregations (Nel 2021).

6 If this has been an article on preaching *per se*, one could engage with Johnson (2015) in dealing with other literature on preaching. The purpose of the article is to draw upon his research for the sake of understanding the challenge of preaching in a prophetic way to develop a new inclusive congregational and missional culture where “cultural intelligence” is taken seriously.

As part of this article, I briefly note some important concepts or findings during my interviews with 24 academics and practising pastors in the United States of America (USA). I have asked five questions to everyone interviewed. Out of this rich material, I want to note at least the following:⁷

- All of them agreed that what we observed in South Africa is also true in their context. Much is expected of preaching and they also observed that so often a preacher who does it “right” does not have any impact on the body, while “other preachers, who really seem to understand little of hermeneutics, homiletics and liturgy, move people, not even always sure of where they want them to go”.
- The answers to the second question were more qualified and diverse: What would then be the relationship (if any) between preaching and the liturgy, of which it is a part, and developing missional congregations? No one doubts the impact of worship and preaching on and in such transformation. Nearly all of them “immediately” started to share the “qualifications” for that impact to be optimal. A few expressions stayed with me:

The preacher has to be in it with his/her heart.

Preach with the expectation that they will become the imagined ‘we’.

Preaching as part of worship as a story of encouragement.

When worship and preaching reflect the pastor’s own spiritual life.

When worship is a history of salvation and the congregation ‘is made itself in worship’.

When worship and preaching create excitement about life.

When the congregation participates in sharing stories of God’s involvement in life during the week – often done by interviewing worshippers during worship. To refer to one remark: ‘Telling and celebration of stories; let them tell the stories themselves’.

- How do you see the impact of personality on preaching and liturgy?

Preachers embody texts – and specifically the corporate nature of biblical texts – liturgy should develop the ‘we’, as ‘we’ worship on behalf of each other and the world.

Thinking of personality from the understanding of the incarnation of Christ.

Integrity, honesty, truth, solidarity, compassion, and discovering the ‘power of vulnerability’.

⁷ I cannot but refer to some of the publications of academics I interviewed. See Elton & Hayim (2017); Lewis (2023); Rienstra (2019).

Triangle: Logos, pathos, ethos (personality).

The relationship with integrity and sincerity: Integrity being to be rightly aligned with your public role.

Seems like sometimes it is not the flashy person but the depth of spirituality and deep relationships – which develop over a lengthy time.

- As the fourth question was almost taken up in the previous three, I briefly report a few remarks concerning the fifth question: How would you describe the relationship between worship and preaching and the other ministries such as the *didache*, *paraklesis*, *diakonia*, *marturia*, and so on?

Connecting worship with the *marturia* of the members.

Pastors/preacher as a witness herself or himself.

Connecting *koinonia* (sharing) and *marturia*.

Preaching too often just takes ‘emotional temperature’ and not preparing ‘martyrs’.

Agree with a holistic approach and supplement preaching by all other ministries.

Correlation preaching and leadership.

Correlation relationship pastoral care and preaching. Nobody cares until they know you care, and ‘people should know you care, and they know whether you care’.

3. PREACHING AS WITNESS, TESTIMONY, AND CONFESSION

Space does not allow any in-depth discussion of the work of the three authors to whom Johnson (2015:139) refers in his book *The mission of preaching. Equipping the community for faithful witness*. In his search for what he calls a “missional homiletics of witness”, he discusses Long’s (1989; 2005) viewpoint on preaching as “witness”, Florence (2007) on preaching as “testimony”, and Lose (2003) on preaching as “confession”. I believe that the best way to do justice to my “reductionist approach” is to quote Johnson’s own summary of his research into the work of the three scholars.

3.1 Tom Long

As we turn from Long's *Witness* to another homiletic proposal, I want to briefly highlight what I see as the strongest contributions of Long's work to a missional homiletic. First, Long surveys the field of homiletics and places the image of witness in relation to other images as one that embraces their various strengths and holds them together. In this sense he makes a strong case for the preacher as witness in the context of the wider field of homiletics and offers a sturdy bridge into the missional theological conversation. Second, he concisely and clearly lays out his understanding of the preacher as a witness, building his motif on Ricoeur's hermeneutics of testimony. This becomes a common thread that links the homiletical proposals we will consider and provides a hermeneutical basis on which to understand the preacher as a witness. Third, and especially important for this project, Long situates preaching firmly in the context of the Christian community, identifying the "reciprocal reality" that is the primary interest of a missional homiletic (Johnson 2015:41).⁸

3.2 Anna Carter Florence

In *Preaching as testimony*, Florence also understands the preacher as a witness and the act of preaching as bearing witness, or giving testimony, and she uses Ricoeur's Christian hermeneutics of testimony to develop her work. In this sense, her work shares a familial relationship with Long's. That said, Florence's vision of preaching as testimony is very different from Long's understanding of preaching as bearing witness to the gospel ... (Johnson 2015:41).

Note that this is different from Long's proposal, in which the formal authority of the preacher comes from the congregation sending the preacher to the text, a sending made explicit in ordination. Indeed, it is Florence's specific intention to remove ordination as a necessary source of authority for preaching ... (Johnson 2015:45).

Before I turn to my final homiletic proposal, I want to conclude this discussion of preaching as testimony by highlighting what I regard as its strongest contribution to a missional homiletic. By repositioning homiletic authority on the structure of testimony rather than education and ordination, Florence opened a homiletic path for breaking out of a clerical paradigm and authorising people who are not ordained, indeed all the baptised, to preach. What Florence mentions about preachers and preaching

⁸ For the full description of his interpretation of Long, see Johnson (2015:30-41). For Long's understanding of preaching as testimony, see Hoyt (2010:95) and Long (2004).

could easily be said of all Christians and all proclamation[s]. Indeed, I believe Florence has made a homiletical argument for what I would call the witness of the congregation. She argues that testimony is the essential form of Christian speech and that it is available to all Christians without educational or ordination distinction. This affirmation resonates deeply with a theology and homiletics that takes seriously the vocation of the Christian community in light of the mission of God (Johnson 2015:50).⁹

3.3 David Lose

Lose comes to his contribution after discussing the struggle between modernism and post-modernism. He aligns himself more with the post-modern question and questioning of what he describes as

unquestioned assertions of what is undeniably and self-evidently true, assertions that serve to undergird our sense that the world is, ultimately, a coherent, unified, and meaningful place (Lose 2003:13).

Back to Johnson's summary:

As I conclude this discussion of David Lose's work, I want to note the distinctive ways I think his project contributes to this missional homiletic. First and most importantly, he offers a sustained analysis of the epistemological challenges presented to homiletics by the postmodern situation and a creative response that provides a theoretical foundation for the possibility of preaching. Missional theology also self-consciously understands itself as a response to challenges presented by the postmodern situation, as missional theologians attend to the post-Christendom and postcolonial aspects of postmodernism as well as to the postfoundational challenges Lose addresses. Second, Lose's notion of confession brings a new dimension to the broad category of witness, specifically understanding confession as a response to a situation of duress and challenge, which is consonant with missional concerns. Finally, Lose addresses directly the relationship between the preaching ministry and the broader witness of the congregation. He acknowledges the limited nature of preaching and the multiform nature of the church's witness, and he identifies what he understands as the distinct contribution of preaching to the community's larger witness. Lose does not, however, discuss the nature of the congregation's witness, describing it only as "the larger conversation of the faithful" and alternatively as the appropriation of the preacher's confession by the hearer (Johnson 2015:63-64).

9 For the full description of his interpretation of Florence, see Johnson (2015:41-50).

3.4 In conversation with K. Barth

As Johnson (2015:139) develops a “missional homiletics of witness”, he draws Barth into this conversation. This dimension is important for my argument on preaching as prophesy, as referred to in 1 Corinthians 14. Although there is no way of doing justice to either Barth or Johnson, I briefly summarise what Johnson makes of Barth’s ecclesiology as basically missional in essence.¹⁰ He does so by building on the well-known work of Bosch (2011:373), who writes:

Johannes Aagaard calls him (Barth MN) ‘the most decisive Protestant missiologist in this generation.’ In light of Barth’s magnificent and consistent missionary ecclesiology, there may indeed be some justification for such a claim ... Indeed it is Barth’s ‘missionary ecclesiology’ and his extraordinary treatment of the sending of the Christian community that makes him an ideal resource for the development of a theory of preaching as a missional practice (Johnson 2015: 70).

Barth connects his ecclesiology with soteriology and the mission of the church (see Johnson 2015:71).

To summarize, in the flow of Barth’s ecclesiological development, each act of reconciliation leads to an understanding of the Spirit-initiated community. The doctrine of justification leads to the doctrine of the gathering of the community, the doctrine of sanctification leads to the doctrine of the upbuilding of the community and the doctrine of vocation leads to the doctrine of the sending of the community. The community is composed of individuals, and the individuals are understood in light of their place in the community (Johnson 2015:73).

The first and fundamental form of oral witness is the praise of God: the affirmation, approval and extolling of God for who God is and what God has done ... The second basic form of oral witness is preaching ... In a sense, Barth argues that preaching does in a regular and specific way what he has been doing in this section on the Holy Spirit and the sending of the Christian community: reminding the community that it exists for the world, that it is charged with a task that has specific content, and that this task comes with a promise. To frame it in terms of the whole ecclesiology, preaching reminds and confirms the community of the vocation to which it owes “its gathering and upbuilding and indeed its very existence” (Johnson 2015:97; Barth, CD IV/3.2, 868). The third form of the community’s witness is the instruction given to its own members and to

10 For a contribution on “missional ecclesiology ‘after Barth’”, see Laubscher (2020:37-56).

the world. Barth argues that every Christian must remain a catechumen throughout life ... The fourth basic form of the community's witness is for the most part directed towards the outside world, which Barth calls its "evangelization" (Johnson 2015:96-97; cf. Barth 1958, CD IV/3.2, 873). Fifth, the community has to speak to the world in the more specific and traditional sense of "mission", in which the community extends beyond itself and its borders and proclaims the gospel to those who have never heard it ... He lays seven criteria for "missions":

1. It is pursued in the belief that everything necessary for the salvation of these people has already been accomplished.
2. The Christian community – and not a special society – is the acting subject.
3. The purpose is to make known the gospel, not teach Western culture.
4. It must take serious other religions while sincerely recognizing them as false gods.
5. It must be concerned with the establishment of the whole ministry of the church.
6. The goal must be to bear witness and not to save or convert, which is in the power of God alone.
7. Missionary work cannot take the form of mastering but only of serving (Johnson (2015:96-98; cf. Barth 1958, CD IV/3.2, 873).

In his understanding, witness is the genus and preaching is the species. *For Barth, witness is not a way of preaching, but preaching is a way of witness. (Ital his)* Barth argues that every activity in which the church is engaged is an act of witness. Moreover, each act of witness participates in the common task of the community and of every Christian, and every form of witness is united to the other forms by its common content and purpose: to confess Jesus Christ. Homiletically, when witness is a supercategory that includes every activity of the church, preaching is thus set in an interconnected relationship to those activities ... in Barth's understanding the church exists for the world. It cannot exist otherwise because the church exists as the body of Christ and this as a predicate of Christ. As Christ exists for the world, so the church cannot exist in any other way than for the world (Johnson 2015:103, 104).

3.5 A missional homiletics of witness

With reference to Barth's ecclesiology, Johnson opines that four assertions arise from Barth's ecclesiology:

- A Christian witness is fundamentally the task of the community, and the special calling of an individual or group can be understood only in the context of the task given to the whole community, then the witness of the preacher should be understood as a discrete element of the whole witness of the community.
- To put the same point in a different way: since witness is the fundamental task of the Christian community and the task is executed in a variety of forms, with preaching being one form, then it is imperative to discern the distinctive nature of preaching as differentiated from and in relation to the other forms of witness.
- Since the unifying element in the multiplicity of the community's witness is the content of its witness, then it is also imperative to identify the essential content of preaching.
- Since the community necessarily exists for the world, then preaching must in some way turn the community toward the world for whom it exists (Johnson 2015:105).

At a later stage, Johnson summarises the implications for missional preaching as follows:

- Missional preaching helps a congregation discern missional vocation, which is its unique giftedness for witness in its time and place.
- Missional preaching interprets scripture using a missional hermeneutic, leading the community in biblical discipleship and in discerning how God is shaping the community through the witness of scripture.
- Missional preaching is a clear declaration of the gospel that flows from and into the congregation's other acts of witness, centering the multiform witness of the community in the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Missional preaching uses the biblical language of God's kingdom to help the congregation understand itself as a provisional sign of God's reign and imagine how it can participate in the coming kingdom.

In my view, the first four implications form the essence of what missional preaching is about and the work the missional preachers do. Still, the implications of the following four patterns are instructive for missional preaching and point to the kind of community that missional preaching can cultivate:

- Missional preaching calls and equips the congregation to take risks as a contrast community, demonstrating life in the kingdom of God in counter-cultural and costly ways.
- Missional preaching cultivates communal practices that demonstrate God's gracious intention for all human life, as the life of the community becomes a parable of the reign of God.
- Missional preaching intentionally depends upon the holy spirit and calls on the congregation to do the same, especially through a corporate and intentional prayer life.
- Missional preaching practices communal authority by sharing the ministry of the word with others in the community who are gifted for it.

These implications, which resonate across the missional literature with respect to preaching, point towards a missional hermeneutic that is rooted in and conversant with North American ecclesial context. Moreover, as you can see clearly, there are strong connections among these implications, a homiletics of witness and Barth's missional ecclesiology. Taken together, these three conversation partners lead us into a theologically and contextually faithful missional homiletic (Johnson 2015:137, 138).

4. PREACHING, TRUTH, AND PROPHECY

The trilogy of 1 Corinthians 12-14 is, in essence, a plea for the edification of the body of Christ, with the unity of this body as a core concept. Whatever gift there might be and still might be given is to serve the "witness" of the body. Love is the qualifying operational principle for the functioning of whatever gift may have been given. But so is the edification of the body. Gifts, practised in love, should edify the body. This is the "truth-security-check" of all gifts. Picking up on Long, as referred to earlier, preaching should be held accountable in this regard: Is it coming from the community? Is it for the community's sake, preparing them for their witness in the world? Long even suggests that

the preacher goes to the scripture but not alone. The preacher goes on behalf of the faithful community, and, in a sense, on behalf of the world (Long 2005:490; see also Hoyt 2010:95).

It is obvious that the edification of the body of Christ is the reason why Paul opted for prophecy over (not against) speaking in tongues. It is obvious why: "Intelligibility" (see 1 Cor. 14 again. The NIV even uses the following heading for the first pericope (14:1-25) of the chapter: "Intelligibility in

Worship”). Later on in the chapter, Paul wrote that this should be the reason for their being “eager for gifts of the Spirit” – “to excel in those that build up the church” (1 Cor. 14:12).

Except for building up the church in understanding its missional being and purpose, what else would prophesy entail? In my opinion, a word in 1 Corinthians plays a decisive role in understanding the essence of prophecy in the text concerned. It has become the core confession in being a Christian and being a member of the body: “and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord’, except by the Holy Spirit”. Prophecy at its simplest is to challenge members of the body to confess him to be the head of the body, the Lord. Confessing him to be Lord, head of church and world changes everything. It changes our understanding of “self”, of “us”, of our giftedness, of our gifts in the function of the Lord’s body – of being the body of the Christ who died for the reconciliation of the world.¹¹ In the second letter, Paul comes back to this in the well-known pericope of 2 Corinthians 5:11-21. Whoever understands what happened to the Lord understands “that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Cor. 5:15 ([NIV])). And it is to these kinds of people that God entrusted the ministry of reconciliation. This is the essence of being a new creation: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:17-18 ([NIV])).

5. PREACHING AS PROPHETIC CHALLENGE FOR TRANSFORMATION

I have no intention to take too short a cut, but my interpretation of the challenge that faces pastors is to help churches come to a new understanding of the Lordship of Christ for both church and the world. Preaching is driven by the quest for this truth. In specific, the truth is the “testimony of Jesus”. Within the context of the book of Revelation, it is stated: “For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy”.¹²

11 It is worth referring to the classical commentary on 1 Corinthians (Grosheide 1957:317). In his words, this confession puts the Christian congregation apart from anybody and anything else.

12 “9 And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.” 10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (RSV)

Cultural captivity harms the church in many ways, but probably the most serious impoverishment lies in the level of control over who we are and how we operate, control over who is in and who is out, over who is acceptable and who is not, and who qualifies and who not. And this leads to serious cultural insensitivities and sometimes a total lack of missional transformation – to become the body of the Lord as an example, an expression, of what in the Letter to the Ephesians is called

15 His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility (Ephes. 2:11-22 ([NIV]).

In my opinion, for the courage to speak this truth as prophecy, we need what Livermore phrases as cultural intelligence. He did so initially for the business community. It is, however, as necessary for the church and its leaders as one can imagine. To develop our cultural intelligence is in more than one way to develop our prophetic ability – challenging (in the spirit of a pastor) the community of faith with the truth that we as God’s sent people “turn the community toward the world for whom it exists” (see Johnson 2015:105). Livermore (2009a:26) portrays cultural intelligence drive (CQ) to be “the motivational dimension of CQ [which] is the leader’s level of interest, drive, and energy to adapt cross-culturally” (see also Kim 2017:6).

As part of the theological reflection on the concepts derived from the South African empirical research referred to earlier (Nel 2021:166-167), I have explained it this way:

Developing our CQ plays a critical role in a growing sense of being sent ourselves as we lead worship and preach among God’s sent people. This has everything to do with our understanding and willingness to become part of God’s dealing with all the cultures represented in his and ‘our world’ we live in. Cultural sensitivity is part and parcel of a deep awareness of the world God loves so much ... We are required to develop our appreciation for the diversity of the world we learn to love. And we do so as we grow in our sense of being sent as part of God’s love for his diverse world. When this is not happening, we probably get stuck in prejudice, alienation and even racism. Kim links up with the understanding of cultural quotient theory (CQ) as developed by Earley & Ang in the business world. They (Earley & Ang 2003:12) defined cultural intelligence as ‘the capability to deal effectively with other people with whom the person does not share a common cultural background and understanding’. If one

agrees with Kim's definition of culture, it makes a whole lot of sense to continue developing our CQ – it will hardly come naturally. Kim defines culture as: *'culture is a group's way of living, way of thinking, and way of behaving in the world, for which we need understanding and empathy to guide listeners toward Christian maturity'* (Kim 2017:5, italics his).

6. CONCLUSION

May it be true that speaking truth as prophecy in the above regard requires

- preachers who as witnesses, testifiers, and confessionists are passionately driven by a desire to speak (prophecy) also this truth in love;
- preachers who have one of the central dimensions of this development of cultural intelligence: "love: desire -----> ability" (Figure 1 in Livermore 2009b:13);
- preachers who, as a "three in one" (concerning the three perspectives covered by Johnson) are "compelled" (see 2 Cor. 5:14 [NIV]) by a desire to represent God in this culturally diverse world and to do so with cultural intelligence;
- preachers who consistently develop "cultural intelligence (CQ) that resembles emotional intelligence (EQ), (and) which measures one's capacity for relational and interpersonal skills" (Kim (2017:5); he does so with reference to Alcántara (2015:198).
- Preachers, who as pastors rediscover the truth as the testimony of Jesus – "For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy".¹³

13 9 And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God." 10 Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God." For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (RSV)

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