

**A STUDY OF TEXT-GUIDED PREACHING
IN THE KOREAN CHURCH CONTEXT**

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PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

By

Sung Jin Lim

Supervisor: Prof. C. J. A. Vos

Co-Supervisor: Prof. H. J. C. Pieterse

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented here and submitted to the University of Pretoria for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy represents my own research and has not been submitted by me to any other university for degree purpose.

Sung Jin Lim

Signature:

Date:

ABSTRACT

A Study of Text-Guided Preaching in the Korean Church Context.

I have been for years now teaching homiletical theories and methods to students at World Mission University in Los Angeles, California. I have been aware of certain problems in the theory and practice of preaching prevailing in the Korean church. One of the most critical issues is that Korean preaching largely consists of the topical-deductive method. Another is that a hierarchical structure enforces the gap between the preacher and the congregation.

The study explores, within the framework of the theologian Johannes van der Ven's empirical-theological research program, text-guided preaching, based on the American homiletician Thomas G. Long's theory that the sermon should regenerate the impact of the biblical text, in the context of the Korean church and its tradition of preaching.

The study looks at the history and characteristics of Korean preaching (Chapter 2) and also at the emergence, characteristics, and styles of new American preaching (Chapter 3). The empirical component of the study deals with a case study involving a preaching workshop for theological students as an illustration of the reception by Korean preachers of the proposed theory for preaching (Chapter 5).

My proposal is that text-guided preaching (described in Chapter 4) will benefit those Korean preachers and students willing a homiletical exploration. The basic premise of this model of preaching is that a text seeks to impact its

reader; or, to use Paul Ricoeur's words, confronts its readers with a particular world of understanding; or, from the standpoint of speech-act theory, performs multiple illocutionary acts.

Text-guided preaching as it is presented in this study incorporates the notion of application, a notion introduced to hermeneutics by Hans-Georg Gadamer that says that understanding a text always aims at some practical application.

Homiletically refined by H. J. C. Pieterse and C. J. A. Vos, it means that the preacher's understanding of a biblical text is partly determined by the particular, historically contingent situation of the congregation.

This study adopts an empirical-theological approach to practical theology. As a part of the theological induction phase of the empirical-theological cycle, a preaching workshop was conducted with eight student-participants. The case study produced some significant results.

The clearest finding has to do with the task of interpreting the life situation of the congregation. It leads to the conclusion that theological education at World Mission University has to be modified to include trainings that would produce competent interpreters of the cultural context of Christian life.



KEY WORDS

Homiletical theory

Korean preaching

New theories of preaching

Interpretative process

Interpretation of congregation

Interpretation of text

Sermon form

Empirical-theological research

Speech-act theory

Theory of text-guided preaching

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Sung Jin Lim, D. Min., Ph.D. Candidate

Curriculum Vita

Business Address:

World Mission University
500 Shatto Place, #600
Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 385-2322
E-mail: hanesmo@gmail.com

Current Position:

Chief Academic Officer and Professor
World Mission University, Los Angeles, California

Education:

Present	Ph.D. Candidate, Homiletics, University of Pretoria (R.S.A)
1995	D.Min., Practical Theology, San Francisco Theological Seminary, CA
1992	M.A.T., World Mission University, Los Angeles, CA
1991	M.Div., Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, CA
1985	B.A., English Literature, Sejong University, Seoul, Korea

Selected Graduate-Level Courses Taught:

Revelation, Acts, Hebrews, Systematic Theology I, Systematic Theology II,
Preaching Clinic, Homiletics

Church & Denominational Involvement:

Secretary, World Evangelical Missionary Alliance (2006-present)
Member, The Oriental Mission Church, Los Angeles, CA (Independent Church)
Senior Pastor, Oriental Mission Church of Oregon, Portland, OR (1994-1999)

Personal information:

Born: November 20, 1953
Family Status: married (1983); three children (born 1987, 1988, 1990)

A SUMMARY OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

A Study of Text-Guided Preaching in the Korean Church Context
By Sung Jin Lim

- Ch. 1 The thesis contends Korean preaching can be improved by incorporating text-guided preaching that asserts that sermons should regenerate the rhetorical impact of the biblical texts.
- Ch. 2 Chapter 2, which deals with the history and characteristics of Korean preaching, shows the predominance of the topical-deductive approach.
- Ch. 3 Chapter 3 deals with the development and characteristics of new models of preaching in American homiletics.
- Chapter 3 also discusses some features of philosophical hermeneutics pertinent to homiletics—most particularly, the role of application in the interpretative process—and H. J. C Pieterse’s homiletical appropriation.
- Ch. 4 Chapter 4, which describes text-guided preaching, emphasizes the importance of the performative dimension of the text—the idea that a text may perform multiple speech-acts.
- Chapter 4 describes Thomas Long’s theory that the preacher-interpreter must pay attention to the literary and rhetorical features of the biblical texts with the aim of regenerating the performative force of the texts in sermons.
- Chapter 4 considers text-guided preaching in connection with biblical poetry with the aid of C. J. A. Vos’ discussions of psalms.
- Ch. 5 Chapter 5 presents a case study developed from the perspective of empirical-theological research advanced by J. A. van der Ven.
- Chapter 5 describes the empirical findings, which support the position that text-guided preaching could contribute to the improvement of Korean preaching.
- Ch. 6 Chapter 6 concludes the study by providing a summary account of text-guided preaching as well as some general reflections on the key aspects of the study.