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Chinese Christian Lay Leaders in America: Understanding the Role of Expository Preaching

By

WOON CHEUNG CHAN

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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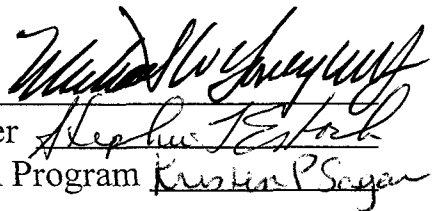
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The block contains three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature, for Michael W. Honeycutt, is written over the text 'Dr. Michael W. Honeycutt, Faculty Advisor'. The second signature, for Stephen T. Estock, is written over the text 'Dr. Stephen T. Estock, Second Faculty Reader'. The third signature, for Kristen P. Sagar, is written over the text 'Kristen P. Sagar, Associate Director of DMin Program'.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to understand the views of lay leaders of a Chinese church in North America on the role of expository preaching. Understanding these views can help Chinese pastors to preach God's word effectively and to educate their congregations about the significance of expository preaching in pulpit ministry.

This study employed a qualitative design, using semi-structured interviews. The review of literature and analysis of the eight interviews focused on three key areas of preaching that revealed the views of the lay leaders on what constituted biblical preaching. These areas of focus were: the views of lay leaders on preaching in light of their various church experiences in different countries, the views of lay leaders on preaching in relation to other contexts of teaching the Bible in the church, and the views of lay leaders on expository preaching. This study revealed that male and female of Chinese lay leaders share similar views of preaching. This study also concluded that Chinese lay leaders held opinions regarding preaching that were similar to those of preaching of Western Christians.

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Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A lay leader in a northern California Chinese church asked, “What is the difference between expository preaching in worship and teaching in Sunday school? Does the preaching in worship need to be a series based on a book from scripture? Is it possible to preach other types of sermons, such as topical studies or discourses on contemporary issues?” A college group leader in another Chinese church commented, “I would like to hear the idea or opinion of a pastor on some of the issues in his preaching.” One member of a Chinese church confided in her young pastor saying, “Pastor, I would like you to rebuke us just like the prophets in the Bible when you preach. We need to be rebuked or be awakened by your message. You have the authority to do that.” One non-believing lady said to a pastor, “I like to listen to your sermon because it is very touching.” Leaders of some Chinese churches make similar comments about their pastors saying, “The sermons preached by our pastors here are very different from the pastors we knew before coming to the United States. We need to take time to get used to the style of your preaching.” These reactions of lay people and lay leaders to sermons in Chinese churches in the United States show how people can listen to the same sermon differently, despite coming to church regularly and hearing sermons regularly over a period of time.

Most Chinese churches in America consist of immigrants and their children. These immigrants come from various denominational backgrounds. Many immigrants were in their churches overseas for a long period of time before coming to the United

States. Some became Christians while attending churches in the United States. Some of the Chinese immigrants attending church are still non-Christians. Regardless of their background, most Chinese Christian immigrants have listened to sermons in different worship service settings.

Chinese pastors born overseas vary widely in their ministerial training. Some older generation pastors do not have any formal seminary training. While many foreign-born pastors ministering in America do have seminary training, many of them had no more than one class on speech and the delivery of a message. To address this need, some Chinese parachurch organizations hold seminars on expository preaching for pastors and church leaders serving in pulpit ministries.¹ Nonetheless, some pastors are unfamiliar with or misunderstand the nature of expository preaching. Complicating the issue is that fact that many lay people in Chinese congregations believe that as long the preacher mentions a Bible verse, the sermon is biblical.²

All of these factors demonstrate reasons why different people listen and respond to sermons differently. Congregants' various church backgrounds, personality types, and relationships with their former pastors partially contribute to their reactions. Different approaches used by pastors in preaching also contribute. Discovering how the congregants in a local Chinese church listen to a sermon could greatly help pastors as they prepare sermons. If pastors know how their congregations understand expository preaching, how their congregants know God through preaching, and how their

¹ Christian Renewal Ministry and The Sacred Logos Resources Center are two such organizations.

² Lien Hwa Chow, *The New Homiletics*, 2nd ed. (Taipei, Taiwan: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1989), 124-125. Rev. Dr. Lien Hwa Chow wisely notes that it is not preaching at all if some preachers preach moral principles by just quoting some bible verses only or explain the biblical verse by verse (Chow, *The New Homiletics*, 124-125).

congregations expect the pastors to use scripture in preaching, pastors will be better equipped to feed their people from God's word.

Problem Statement and Apologetic for the Research

Classic Rhetoric Elements for Listening to a Sermon

People who attend church regularly over a period of time interpret sermons through the lenses of their own issues, expectations, and varying degrees of receptivity. John S. McClure, the Charles G. Finney Professor of Homiletics at the Divinity School of Vanderbilt University, states that the congregation does not hear the message in a vacuum.³ McClure points out that preaching differs from other forms of communication because "preaching takes place in a local community over long periods of time."⁴ McClure observes, "In the last twenty years, an approach called congregational studies has emerged to help pastors achieve a thick description of the congregation and its context."⁵ He concludes, "preachers seldom give members opportunity to identify qualities of preaching that motivate parishioners to engage sermons, and qualities of sermons that prompt disengagement."⁶ Therefore, McClure and other scholars researched what happens to listeners during the sermon⁷ and published their findings in a series of four books.⁸

Ronald Allen, the Nettie Sweeney and Hugh Th. Miller Professor of Preaching and New Testament at Christian Theological Seminary, wrote one of these four books, *Hearing the Sermon*. According to Allen, very few books published in the field of

³ John S. McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 6.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁸ Ibid., vii.

preaching during recent decades address how people listen to sermons and what qualities in a sermon engage the listeners' attention. Many books that address the subject tend to propose that "what makes a sermon 'work' depend[s] on biblical theology, systematic theology, philosophy of language, studies in orality and aurality, as well as literary criticism, speech communication theory, rhetoric, or the writer's experience as a preacher."⁹ In short, they focus on the preacher instead of the audience. Allen concedes that some books mention a shift of focus on the listener, but none question laypeople about which sermon traits command their attention and which do not.

Therefore, Allen and a group of scholars launched a project interviewing laypeople who regularly hear sermons in twenty-eight congregations.¹⁰ Allen adopted Aristotle's rhetoric on human communication between a speaker and an audience with the following key dynamics:

the audience's perception of the person and character of the preacher (ethos), the audience's perception that the speaker has developed the content of the sermon to show that the message of the speech is true (logos), and the audience's response to the feelings and identifications generated in connection with the sermon (pathos).¹¹

To Aristotle's ethos, logos, and pathos, the scholars added embodiment (or delivery) as a key dynamic of preaching.¹² Allen and his colleagues used these four key dynamics to investigate how the congregants perceived a sermon: ethos, logos, pathos, and embodiment.

⁹ Ronald J. Allen, *Hearing the Sermon: Relationship/Content/Felling* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹² *Ibid.*

Pathos, logos, ethos, and embodiment provide basic criteria for studying how congregations engage sermons. However, the personality or ethos of a preacher is the most important among those elements impacting how congregants receive sermons.

The Character of a Preacher in Conveying a Sermon

In his book *Christ-Centered Preaching*, Bryan Chapell, president and professor of practical theology at Covenant Theological Seminary, also acknowledges the importance of ethos, pathos, and logos in every message. He asserts, “listeners automatically evaluate each of these elements of persuasion in sermons in order to weigh the truths that the preacher presents.”¹³ Chapell agrees with Aristotle’s belief that “ethos is the most powerful component of persuasion,”¹⁴ a belief that is “confirmed in countless modern studies.”¹⁵

Chapell also points out that the Bible emphasizes how pastoral character is the foundation of ministry,¹⁶ and quotes numerous biblical passages¹⁷ confirming the importance of ethos for effective proclamation. Chapell states, “the character and compassion of a minister more than the characteristics of the message preached determine the quality of the message heard.”¹⁸ Because ethos carries great persuasive power, Chapell warns, “emphasis on the power of ethos without dependence on God’s mercy has the potential to drive preachers to arrogance or to despair.”¹⁹ He points out that “without understanding our daily dependence on grace, we have little hope of reflecting

¹³ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 34.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 35.

¹⁷ The biblical passages are 1 Thessalonians 2:3-8, 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12, 2 Timothy 2:15-16, 2 Timothy 2:22-24, Titus 2:7-8, 2 Corinthians 6:3-4, James 1:26-27, and James 3:13.

¹⁸ Chapell, 39.

¹⁹ Ibid.

the character that endorses the integrity of our messages.”²⁰ The grace of God has a major role in keeping the character of a person true to God. Chapell emphasizes,

Grace keeps our character true to God, our messages true to Scripture, and our efforts true to Christ’s will. Reliance on this grace results in sermons that are empowered by God (despite our knowledge of our sin and inadequacy), for he alone is responsible for the holiness and truth that fuel preaching’s spiritual force.²¹

Philips Brooks, the lecturer of the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale Divinity School in 1877, defines preaching in such a way that truth and personality are two of the essential elements.²² Brooks argues that the “truest” truth is the word of God.²³ He continues, “Truth through personality is our description of real preaching. The truth must come really through the person, not merely over his lips...It must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him.”²⁴ Although he does not name the term, Brooks also considers the element of ethos to be essential in preaching.

In his book *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson, the Harold John Ockenga Distinguished Professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, observes that ethos is a powerful component in a message. Robinson understands that listeners do not separate preachers from their messages, and that the personality of the preacher affects the message. The congregation still sees the preacher, despite their prayers to see Jesus instead of the preacher. Robinson observes that the congregants hear not only a sermon; they also hear the preacher. He explains,

²⁰ Ibid., 40.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Phillips Brooks, *The Joy of Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publication, 1989), 25.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 27.

As much as we might wish it otherwise, we cannot be separated from the message...We affect our message. We may be mouthing a scriptural idea yet we can remain as impersonal as a telephone recording, as superficial as a radio commercial, or as manipulative as a con man. The audience does not hear a sermon, they hear a person—they hear you.²⁵

Marshall Shelley, editor of *Leadership Journal*, also acknowledges the important role of the preacher's personality in preaching (ethos). Shelley defines preaching as "communicating truth in context."²⁶ His understanding of context includes "the personality of the preacher as well as the personality, prejudices, character, and capacities of the audience."²⁷ He concludes, "preaching involves the context of the preacher and the context of the listeners."²⁸

Mark Labberton, the Lloyd John Ogilvie Chair for Preaching and director of the Lloyd John Ogilvie Institute for Preaching at Fuller Theological Seminary, believes that ethos is more effective than logos and pathos in bringing Jesus Christ to congregants. After Labberton visited many churches, he perceived that renewal and healing in the congregation are not the result of the communication skills of the preachers, but rather the character and attitudes of the preachers who bore witness to Jesus Christ. Labberton says of these pastors who had a profound impact upon their congregations:

They exuded a life that primarily bore witness to Jesus Christ in character and in attitude even more than in word. They simultaneously conveyed both an honest discipleship and an honest humanity; they seemed to know suffering, their own or others. They were not glib about their role; they had discovered in weakness that Christ was the Center who could and did hold them together.²⁹

²⁵ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 38.

²⁶ Marshall Shelley, "Preaching is Truth in Context," *Leadership Journal* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 5.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Mark Labberton, "Elemental Preaching," *Leadership Journal* 31, no. 1 (Winter 2010): 24.

All of these men understand that “ethos” is the most effective component in conveying a message to the listeners. Congregants hear both the sermon and the preacher. However, these scholars do not ignore the fact that the other components of rhetoric can also engage listeners in a message.

The Purpose of Preaching

In reviewing the work of Allen and his associates, Mary Alice Mulligan, the director of the chapel at Christian Theological Seminary, observed that congregants understand the purpose of preaching through eleven statements. First, “the purpose of preaching is to teach or instruct the congregation and the individuals within it.”³⁰ Second, the purpose of preaching is to explain the Bible.³¹ Third, the sermon is regarded as “the word of God or as interpreting the word of God.”³² Fourth, its purpose is to apply “the teachings of the Bible or Christian faith to life.”³³ Fifth, a sermon can help listeners to “deepen their relationships with God or Christ.”³⁴ Sixth, a sermon could be “around the motifs of inspiration, lifting up, empowerment, and motivation.”³⁵ Seventh, the purpose of preaching is to unify the congregation.³⁶ Eighth, some, though not a majority, believe that “a sermon could cause them to think about the Bible or issues in life in ways that push them beyond the edges of their current perspectives.”³⁷ Ninth, a sermon is to help people “to sort out what they believe.”³⁸ Tenth, the role of a sermon is to convert people

³⁰ Mary Alice Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching: What listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005), 7.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*, 8.

³³ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 12.

to the Christian faith.³⁹ Finally, some also believe that a sermon “should bring a message that is distinctively Christian and that will help the congregation manifest distinctively Christian identity and vocation.”⁴⁰ Mulligan identified these eleven clusters through interviews with laypeople.

Mulligan observed the general functions of preaching a sermon from the perspective of laity. She discovered a view of laypeople on the purpose of preaching that is quite similar to that of Daniel Baumann, the pastor of College Avenue Baptist Church in San Diego, California. He states:

The purpose of preaching is to address the whole man— a man who first of all needs to be redeemed by the power of Jesus Christ, a man who makes a personal decision to let Jesus Christ come into his life as Savior and Lord. He needs also to be taught regarding the Christian faith. Then he needs the encouragement that the “Balm in Gilead” can soothe his aches and heal his hurts. Finally, he needs to know that God has a word for him regarding his society and his place in it as a Christian.⁴¹

Baumann’s observations and Mulligan’s clusters provide preachers with some ideas about how congregants perceive the purposes of preaching. Although some of the functions of expository preaching were mentioned in the statements above, the expository preaching style is just one of many observations. Lay people are likely to be exposed to different styles; therefore, it is unclear whether lay people understand the nature of expository preaching.

Expository Preaching

Homiletics professors and scholars propose descriptions of expository sermons that differ somewhat from the descriptions of lay people. For example, Robinson declares

³⁹ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book, 1972), 219.

that “preaching is a living interaction involving God, the preacher, and the congregation, and no definition can pretend to capture that dynamic.”⁴² Then, for the sake of clarity, he offers the following working definition, “Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through the preacher, applies to the hearers.”⁴³

According to Chapell, any “sermon that explores biblical concepts is in the broadest sense ‘expository.’”⁴⁴ However, he also offers a technical definition of an expository sermon as one that “expounds Scripture by deriving from a specific text main points and subpoints that disclose the thought of the author, cover the scope of the passage, and are applied to the lives of listeners.”⁴⁵

John Stott, the director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, makes similar broad comments on expository preaching. He says, “All true Christian preaching is expository preaching.”⁴⁶ He further explains that exposition “refers to the content of the sermon (biblical truth) rather than its style (a running commentary).”⁴⁷ Stott also asserts, “In expository preaching the biblical text is neither a conventional introduction to a sermon on a largely different theme, nor a convenient peg on which to

⁴² Robinson, 21.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Chapell, 132.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1982), 125.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

hang a ragbag of miscellaneous thoughts, but a master which dictates and controls what is said.”⁴⁸

Stott recognizes four principal benefits of expository preaching. The first is that “exposition sets us limits” and “restricts us to the scriptural text.”⁴⁹ The second principal benefit is that “exposition demands integrity.”⁵⁰ The third is that “exposition identifies the pitfalls we must at all costs avoid,”⁵¹ including forgetfulness and disloyalty.⁵² He explains, “The forgetful expositor loses sight of his text by going off at a tangent and following his own fancy. The disloyal expositor appears to remain with his text, but strains and stretches it into something quite different from its original and natural meaning.”⁵³ The fourth principal benefit is that “exposition gives us confidence to preach.”⁵⁴ Stott further reasons that “if we [preachers] are expounding God’s Word with integrity and honesty, we can be very bold.”⁵⁵

It follows therefore that expository preaching is limited to a scriptural passage. The preacher explicates that specific passage and draws the main points and sub-points from that text.

Authority is Warranted in Expository Preaching

Many experts agree that the personality, character, and attitude of preachers do not warrant the authority inherent in preaching God’s Word. Authority does not stem from human ethos but from divine authority. Scholars of homiletics and lay people

⁴⁸Ibid., 126.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 127.

⁵¹ Ibid., 129.

⁵² Ibid., 130.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 132.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

understand that the fundamental issue of preaching is authority. In a survey of congregants listening to sermons, Mulligan observes that “in particular, the vast majority of interviewees speak of the Bible as central to preaching. Referred to as ‘scripture,’ ‘the Bible,’ ‘the Book,’ ‘the word of God,’ or simply ‘the Word,’ many people attribute the authority of preaching to the preachers’ use of scripture.”⁵⁶ But what type of biblical preaching warrants divine authority? Fred Craddock, the professor of preaching and New Testament at the Candler School of Theology, declares that preachers are

...obligated, regardless of the kinds of sermons the parishioners may like, to ask and respond to the questions: What authorizes my sermons? If the authorization is by the Scriptures, in what way? How do I prepare so as to enter the pulpit with some confidence that my understanding of biblical preaching has been implemented with honesty and integrity?⁵⁷

Craddock concludes that, “It is not likely that any preacher will arrive at a satisfactory position that does not involve serious grappling with the text of Scripture.”⁵⁸ Thus Craddock implies that expository sermons that are faithful to the biblical passage can give authority to the preacher.

Robinson reasons that expository preaching is “the type of preaching that carries the force of divine authority.”⁵⁹ However, he laments that some so-called expository preachers do not fulfill this weighty job’s requirements. Therefore, he comments that “not all expository preaching necessarily qualifies as either expository or preaching.... Yet, in spite of damage done by admirers, genuine expository preaching has behind it the power of the living God.”⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Mulligan, 21.

⁵⁷ Fred B. Craddock, *Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 100.

⁵⁸ Ibid.,

⁵⁹ Robinson, 20.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 21.

Chapell observes that “as expository preachers, our ultimate goal is not to communicate the value of our opinions, others’ philosophies, or speculative meditations, but rather to show how God’s Word discloses his will for those united to him through his Son.”⁶¹ Furthermore, he argues, “Scripture obligates preachers to make sure others understand what God says. We have no biblical authority to say anything else.”⁶²

Authority comes from preaching the word of God. As Chapell explains,

Expository preaching endeavors to discover and convey the precise meaning of the Word. Scripture determines what expositors preach because they unfold what it says. The meaning of the passage is the message of the sermon. The text governs the preacher. Expository preachers do not expect others to honor their opinions. Such ministers adhere to Scripture’s truth and expect their listeners to heed the same.⁶³

From Chapell’s view, the expository sermon is warranted and authorized by the word of God.

Western homiletics scholars have written the majority of the available literature on preaching, and they have conducted their research mostly on Western Christians. Only a few resources have explored how non-Western Christians, especially Chinese Christians, understand a sermon, and specifically how their relationship with the pastor affects their reception of the sermon. Although these Western homiletic scholars have not yet applied their findings to a Chinese Christian setting, the above literature can provide Chinese pastors some guidelines to understand whether Chinese Christians from different backgrounds really understand the nature and role of preaching. In particular, Chinese pastors would benefit from knowing how their congregants perceive expository preaching

⁶¹ Chapell, 31.

⁶² Ibid, 32.

⁶³ Ibid.

and how they distinguish between the credibility of the preacher's personal ethos versus the preacher's divine authority to preach God's word.

While Western literature on homiletics provides many helpful guidelines, it fails to answer many of the questions raised in the introduction by Chinese Christians and lay leaders. How does the relationship between a Chinese preacher and Chinese congregants impact how the congregants hear that preacher's sermons? What issues do Chinese congregants have while listening to sermons? What do Chinese congregants believe to be the purpose of preaching? How do they identify the source of authority in the sermon? Do they distinguish preaching in worship from teaching in Sunday school? Further, do they know what expository preaching is?

After preaching on Sunday, Chinese ministers seldom receive direct feedback from their congregations, other than the simple and brief comments congregants make when bidding the minister goodbye after a service. Chinese pastors seldom request feedback on sermons from their congregations, and the congregations seldom offer thoughtful commentary on sermons. Moreover, Chinese pastors rarely open themselves up in the pulpit. Addressing these questions and problems could greatly benefit both Chinese pastors and their congregations who hear their sermons.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore how lay leaders of Chinese (Cantonese) churches understand the nature and role of expository preaching. Due to Chinese immigrants' various denominational backgrounds, as well as the length of time spent listening to sermons in their homelands, they have different ideas about biblical preaching, and they have their own bias when listening to sermons. They may have

stereotypes about good preaching. This study sought to discover how congregants perceive and define biblical preaching. This study explored the many different avenues that Chinese immigrants use to understand, define, and evaluate expository preaching.

One avenue that must be explored is how Chinese congregants understand the function of sermons. Specifically, when pastors develop sermons from the text of scripture, how do lay people receive the message? The findings would help preachers to better understand their congregants and to recognize the different perspectives through which those congregants filter their sermons. The study findings may also help pastors to engage in theological reflection regarding their listeners' expectations, and to develop sermons about the purpose of preaching in order to help their congregants understand the function of sermons that are developed mainly from the text of scripture.

A second avenue that was explored was how lay people perceive pastoral authority in the pulpit. Some lay leaders and lay people think that God has given pastors the authority to teach and preach just like the prophets and the apostles in the Old and New Testaments. They think that whatever pastors teach and preach in the worship service is from God. Therefore, another research aim was to find out whether congregations know what God is doing through sermons, and how the authority of preachers is warranted in order that the congregants need to listen and obey. The findings in this research can help pastors to preach sermons that help their congregations reflect on the divine work accomplished through sermons, and to help them distinguish whether a sermon is really based on God's word.

A third avenue that was explored was how Chinese congregants define biblical preaching. The term "biblical preaching" is vague among Chinese Christians, and most

Chinese Christians think that if a preacher references the Bible, then the preacher has preached a biblical sermon. Referencing the Bible is not the same as preaching the Bible. Some pastors with a low view of scripture appeal to the Bible merely to support their own opinions. Some congregants are not able to discern this problem. They do not know what real biblical preaching is. Knowing how their congregants define biblical preaching can help pastors to prepare sermons that guide congregants in reflection on biblical preaching.

A final avenue that was explored was the perspective of lay leaders concerning expository preaching. More specifically, the researcher sought to understand how they distinguish biblical preaching from expository preaching. Expository preaching is also quite loose among the Chinese Christians. Most of them believe that anything explained from the Bible is expository preaching, without understanding the nature and role of expository preaching. These findings can help pastors to develop some guidelines that will help lay leaders to understand what expository preaching is, and to appreciate that divine authority is warranted for expository preaching.

Research Questions

The classic rhetorical elements of ethos, logos, and pathos can still provide a useful frame of reference for analyzing events in which people communicate with one another.⁶⁴ Marshall Shelley has pointed out that preaching involves the context of the preacher and the listeners.⁶⁵ Many homiletics textbooks and preaching magazines discuss the ethos, logos, and pathos in preaching from the context of the preacher. This research studied the context of listeners in an effort to understand what happens within them as they listen to a sermon. The following research questions guided this study as it sought to

⁶⁴ McClure, 7.

⁶⁵ Marshall, 5.

understand the views of foreign-born Chinese and recent adult immigrant Chinese lay leaders of Chinese churches concerning how they define preaching, particularly expository preaching:

1. How do lay leaders view preaching in light of their various church experiences in different countries?
2. How do lay leaders view preaching in relation to other contexts of teaching the Bible in the church?
3. How do lay leaders view expository preaching?

Significance of the Study

The qualitative methodology adopted in this research allowed the researcher to better understand what listeners thought about a sermon. Pastors may use this information to assess how their relationships with their congregants (ethos) impacts the effectiveness of their sermons, and to explore how they can more effectively convey a message by accounting for the mindset of listeners. Thus, pastors can apply the three classical rhetorical elements in sermon preparation prayerfully and with dependence on the Spirit, who transforms and renews lives. Pastors may also use this information to help their congregations understand the role and nature of expository preaching.

The researcher hopes that this study will encourage Chinese pastors to request feedback from their congregants concerning their sermons, with particular emphasis on discovering how the congregants' relationships with their preachers affects how the congregants listen to their pastors' sermons. As a whole, the results of this study may deepen pastoral understanding of what congregations are thinking and perceiving while listening to sermons. Finally, it is hoped that the results of this study will help Chinese

pastors to educate their congregations' the views of the nature and role of sermons based solely on God's word.

Definition of Terms

The following key terms will be used throughout the study.

Preaching: the proclamation of God's word from a designated church leader to a group of people in the context of worship.

Biblical Preaching: the preaching of the scriptures, through which God encounters individuals to bring them to salvation and to the richness and ripeness of Christian character.⁶⁶

Expository Sermon: a message in which the structure and thought are derived from a biblical text, that covers the scope of the text, and that explains the features in order to disclose the enduring principles for faithful thinking, living, and worship intended by the Spirit, who inspired the text.⁶⁷

Rhetoric: the use of written or spoken language to persuade a person or group to adopt a particular point of view. It includes all the means and modes of persuasion.⁶⁸

Ethos: the listener's perception of the character, personality, and trustworthiness of the pastor preaching a sermon.⁶⁹

Logos: reason in the content of the sermon.⁷⁰

Pathos: the role of feeling in the event of preaching.⁷¹

Embodiment: the delivery aspect of the sermon.

⁶⁶ Robinson, 20.

⁶⁷ Chapell, 31.

⁶⁸ McClure, 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Congregant: Church members and non-church members who regularly attend church worship on Sunday, as well as other church activities.

Sunday School: Bible classes for adults and children in the church on Sunday.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to understand how lay leaders view preaching, in particular their understanding of expository preaching. Lay leaders' views on preaching may be very subjective and influenced subconsciously by mass media and contemporary orators. Therefore it is essential to understand the biblical perspective on preaching. In this chapter, important literature on preaching, specifically on expository preaching, will be reviewed.

The Purpose and the Nature of Preaching in the Bible

The Old Testament describes the essential ministry of the prophets in Old Testament times as the exhortation and proclamation of God's word to the Israelites. Prophets primarily preached orally, and then their messages were recorded in writing. In the New Testament, preaching was also the essential ministry of Jesus Christ and his apostles. Since the Old Testament merely records the prophetic messages, there is not much discussion on the purpose of preaching. However, the purpose and the nature of preaching is considered in the New Testament.

The New Testament often describes preaching as a vital ministry of the servants of God. Because of its important role in ministry, the New Testament addresses preaching throughout its books. In the gospels, Jesus is described as preaching at the beginning of his ministry. Matthew 4:17 states that "from that time Jesus began to preach,

saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”⁷² Mark 1:14 also describes Jesus coming to Galilee and proclaiming the gospel, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”⁷³ Both passages could be understood as a summary of Jesus’ preaching ministry. When Jesus proclaims “Repent and believe in the gospel,” he gives his audience new information, and he makes known to them the arrival of a new way of life in the kingdom of God.⁷⁴

Two incidents in Jesus’ life give helpful insight into the nature of preaching in Jesus’ ministry and his new message about God’s kingdom. First, Matthew 11:1-5 describes Jesus’ preaching ministry in a scenario saying, “When Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in their cities...The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them”⁷⁵ Matthew explicitly connects Jesus’ preaching ministry with healing and release from bondage. Second, Jesus sees himself fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah when he is given Isaiah’s scroll to read in the synagogue. Jesus finds Isaiah 61:1-3, where it is written, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”⁷⁶

⁷² Matthew 4:17.

⁷³ Mark 1:14.

⁷⁴ Michael J. Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 27.

⁷⁵ Matthew 11:1-5.

⁷⁶ Luke 4:18-19.

After reading this passage, Jesus gives the scroll back to the attendant and sits down. He then teaches, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”⁷⁷ In this passage, Jesus’ preaching ministry is related to proclaiming good news to the poor, freeing the captives, and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor. Jesus’ preaching ministry proclaims the good news to people in need—those who need wholeness and healing and those who need to be freed from all kinds of bondage. It proclaims the good news that the Lord is going to show favor to them.

Jesus’ ministries of healing and performing miracles occur alongside his preaching of the good news of the kingdom of God.⁷⁸ But when Jesus preaches in the synagogue of Judea, he also emphasizes the importance of practicing what is preached.⁷⁹ When Jesus teaches and preaches, his words have authority in the lives of the hearers. His preaching demands an obedient response. Jesus says to the crowd and to his disciples that “the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses’ seat, so practice and observe whatever they tell you--but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice.”⁸⁰

Jesus’ teaching and preaching ministry sets the foundation for his disciples’ preaching ministries. Acts 5:42 describes the vital role preaching played in the apostles’ ministries, “And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”⁸¹ In the book of Acts, the apostles and disciples are described as preaching wherever they go. They preach to the Samaritans in Acts 8:4-5 and to the Gentiles in Acts 10:45. They preach Jesus as the Christ, and they

⁷⁷ Luke 1:21.

⁷⁸ Luke 4:43.

⁷⁹ Luke 4:43.

⁸⁰ Matthew 23:1-3.

⁸¹ Acts 5:42.

preach through the power of Christ's Holy Spirit. In preaching Jesus Christ and the cross of Christ, Paul explicitly connects the power of God the Spirit in his preaching as he says,

And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God⁸²

The Apostle Paul describes preaching as an essential ministry to people. He says, "And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.'"⁸³ People's eternal salvation depends upon the faithful preaching of the gospel. Moreover, Christians' spiritual growth here on earth depends upon faithful preaching of God's word. When charging his spiritual son, Timothy, to preach the word, Paul explains that there is urgency in preaching the word of God, telling him, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."⁸⁴ Paul's charge to Timothy highlights the preaching of God's word as the tool for reproof, rebuking, and exhorting Christians in the church.

Paul refers to preaching the word as preaching the scripture. Paul says, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for

⁸² 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

⁸³ Romans 10:14-15.

⁸⁴ 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

every good work.”⁸⁵ Dennis Johnson, academic dean and professor of practical theology at Westminster Seminary in California considers 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to be the key to understanding the purpose of preaching. Johnson further comments that “this purpose of preaching has implications for what we say and do in preaching: Preaching not only informs the mind but also employs truth to appeal to emotions and to challenge the will to respond in ways appropriate to the truth revealed in the gospel.”⁸⁶ Just as Jesus’ teaching and preaching demanded a faithful response from its hearers, the faithful preaching of his word today demands a faithful response.

The scriptures describe preaching as an essential ministry of God’s servants. Preaching is a verbal communication based on the word of God and on Jesus as Christ. Preaching always comes with the expectation of the hearer’s repentance and life change according to God’s word, and it offers a new way of living an abundant life.⁸⁷ It is also considered to be an act of proclaiming the good news to people who are in need of healing and salvation. It is a means by which the Holy Spirit can transform people’s lives to that which is pleasing in the sight of God.

In the New Testament, Jesus reinforces and expounds upon principles already taught in the Old Testament.⁸⁸ Jesus explains the intended meaning of the scriptural text to the people. For example, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus explains the Mosaic law and the prophets concerning himself.⁸⁹ When he does this, Jesus lets the text determine his message; he draws out themes that God’s people missed concerning the messiah. The

⁸⁵ 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

⁸⁶ Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ From All The Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 85.

⁸⁷ Quicke, 27.

⁸⁸ Matthew 5:21-48.

⁸⁹ Luke 24:27.

Apostle Paul also instructs Timothy to teach and preach the scriptures, rather than his own ideas or opinions. Throughout scripture, it is clear that the goal of preaching is to explain God's word. The scriptures determine what preachers should preach.

Preaching Throughout Church History

The New Testament clearly defines preaching that honors God and his word. Throughout church history, godly preachers have reflected upon and applied biblical principles about preaching in many helpful ways. Surveying preaching from the early church fathers to the present will allow this study to analyze various views of the nature, purpose, and effectiveness of preaching throughout church history.

In the apostolic (30-100) and post-apostolic ages (100-300), the apostles and church fathers sought to preach the word of God so that the faith of believers might stand in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men. Preachers during this time period did not use rhetoric skill in preaching.⁹⁰ During the second century, apologetic preaching played a major role because the church fathers preached against heresies, such as Gnosticism.⁹¹ Justin Martyr (100-165) was a strong apologist of the Christian faith. Origen (185-254) was a scholar who tried to make the scripture the real basis of preaching, but he advocated an allegorical method of interpretation.⁹² During this time period, people began to apply the principles of rhetoric and oratory to preaching. After Emperor Constantine's conversion to the Christian faith in the year 312, preachers and teachers adopted rhetorical principles in preaching.⁹³

⁹⁰ Ralph G. Turnbull, ed., *Baker's Handbook of Practical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1967), 6.

⁹¹ Quicke, 65.

⁹² Turnbull, 6.

⁹³ Quicke, 65.

During the third and fourth centuries, the practice of biblical preaching was almost abandoned for a period of about a century and a half.⁹⁴ Jim Shaddix, assistant professor of preaching at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, as well as a former pastor of Riverside Baptist Church in Denver, Colorado, explains, “the importation of Greek philosophy, logic, and rhetoric into Christian thinking by the church fathers caused most preachers to abandon the actual text of Scripture in preaching and strive to master the ‘art of the sermon’ that was more involved with rhetoric than with truth.”⁹⁵ He expounds, “thus, the Greek concept of the ‘sermon’ was born out of the syncretistic fusion of the Biblical necessity of teaching with the notion of Greek rhetoric. The tradition of the Christian sermon quickly took on a life of its own, with little emphasis on the Biblical text.”⁹⁶

Through this period, a sermon was known as a “homily,” which was viewed as primarily a talk based on scripture.⁹⁷ Scripture was used in quotation or application rather than as a “text.”⁹⁸ Lucy Lind Hogan, associate professor of preaching at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C., and Robert Reid, senior lecturer in communication at St. Martin’s College in Lacey, Washington, further explain the meaning of the term “text” as the modern notion of using scripture as a text for preaching. Hogan then points out that the structure of a homily was idiosyncratic and usually short.⁹⁹

⁹⁴ Jim Shaddix, “A History of Text-Driven Preaching” in *Text-Driven Preaching: God’s Word at The Heart of Sermon* ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen and Ned L. Mathews (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 40.

⁹⁵ Shaddix, 41.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 41.

⁹⁷ Lucy Lind Hogan and Robert Reid, *Connecting With the Congregation: Rhetoric And the Art of Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 33.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 33.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 33.

Despite this period of preaching with little emphasis on the biblical text, John Chrysostom (347-407), one of the few faithful men, preached on the biblical text. The name John Chrysostom means “golden mouthed.” He helped lead the Antiochene School in the Eastern Roman Empire and was a significant expositor of the early Christian church.¹⁰⁰ He rejected allegorical interpretation of the scripture, instead emphasizing grammatical and historical expositions of biblical texts.¹⁰¹ According to Ralph Turnbull, noted author and pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Seattle, Washington, Chrysostom “preached from the Bible directly to the needs of his listeners. His messages centered on themes but still adhered to the running commentary pattern. He preached through many of the books of the Bible.”¹⁰² Scott Wenig, assistant professor of applied theology at Denver Seminary and associate pastor of Centennial Community Church in Denver, Colorado, observes that Chrysostom “spoke from the Scripture directly to the situation.”¹⁰³ A great love and care for God’s word fueled Chrysostom’s preaching, and according to historian Philip Schaff, Chrysostom wrote commentaries on the entire Bible.¹⁰⁴ Chrysostom’s expository sermons and serious Bible studies greatly influenced other preachers, such as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, and Augustine.¹⁰⁵

Following in Chrysostom’s footsteps, Augustine (354-430) also faithfully preached God’s word during this time period. An influential leader among the churches

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰² Turnbull, 6.

¹⁰³ Scott A Wenig, “Biblical Preaching That Adapts and Contextualizes” in *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People*, ed. Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibbson (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Books, 1998), 28.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 41.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 41.

in the Western Roman Empire, he produced more than six hundred sermons, including expositions of the Psalms, the Gospel of John, and other gospels.¹⁰⁶ Despite being a master at biblical exposition, Augustine infused some rhetorical principles into his preaching. He was a teacher of rhetoric and a master of communication skills before he became a Christian.¹⁰⁷ He was known to communicate God's truth in familiar and ordinary ways.¹⁰⁸

Augustine believed that the purpose of preaching is to instruct, to please, and to move the will to action.¹⁰⁹ He wrote a theological treatise on homiletic theory, known as *On Christian Doctrine*, to develop "principles for ascertaining the proper meaning of Scripture (the first three books) and the proper mode of making known that which is ascertained (the fourth book)."¹¹⁰ In this treatise, he conceded that, "There are also certain rules for a more copious kind of argument, which is called eloquence, and these rules are not the less true that they can be used to enforce the truth as well, it is not the faculty itself that is to be blamed, but the perversity of those who put it to a bad use."¹¹¹ He maintained that preachers could still benefit from whatever has been rightly said by the heathen about rhetoric, if used appropriately. He reasoned, "Human institutions such as are adapted to that intercourse with men which is indispensable in this life--[these] we must take and turn to a Christian use."¹¹² Other than simply using rhetoric to make an argument for truth, Augustine also suggested using three styles of speech in Ciceronian eloquence, "He, then, shall be eloquence, who can say little things in a subdued style, in

¹⁰⁶ Shaddix, 41

¹⁰⁷ Hogan, 34.

¹⁰⁸ Wenig, 29.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 29, 30.

¹¹⁰ Hogan, 35.

¹¹¹ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. J.F. Shaw (Mineola, NY: Dover Publication, 2009), 2.36.54.

¹¹² Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 2.40.60.

order to give instruction, moderate things in a temperate style, in order to give pleasure, and great things in a majestic style, in order to sway the mind.”¹¹³

Despite his emphasis on communicating God’s truth, Augustine applied rhetoric to his preaching in a carefully guarded way. He did not prescribe a form for the homily.¹¹⁴ He justified his introduction of the art of rhetoric into the vocation of the Christian teacher and preacher:

Now, the art of rhetoric being available for the enforcing either of truth or falsehood, who will dare to say that truth in the person of its defenders is to take its stand unarmed against falsehood?...Since, then, the faculty of eloquence is available for both sides, and is of very great service in the enforcing either of wrong or right, why do not good men study to engage it on the side of truth, when bad men use it to obtain the triumph of wicked and worthless causes, and to further injustice and error?¹¹⁵

To the tradition of the homily, Augustine added significant elements of the art of persuasion and sought to confront the false teachings of heretics and schismatics.¹¹⁶

Throughout the middle ages (476-1500), preachers often failed to practice proper biblical exposition and thus minimized the role of scripture in their sermons.¹¹⁷

According to Turnbull, allegorical and superstitious interpretations took the place of true preaching of the gospel, and preachers spoke more about the saints, holy days, and apocryphal miracles than about Christ and the Bible.¹¹⁸ Preaching leaned heavily toward moral lessons. Hogan observes that “the task of preaching and the art of rhetoric circled

¹¹³ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 4.17.34.

¹¹⁴ Hogan, 35

¹¹⁵ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 4.2.3.

¹¹⁶ Hogan 35.

¹¹⁷ Shaddix, 42.

¹¹⁸ Turnbull, 6.

each other, with the former drawing more and more from the latter, but always with cautious caveats about the dangers of a full embrace.”¹¹⁹

Hogan explains the form of sermons in this way, “During the eleventh century the sermon was still practiced as a kind of inorganic homily with no formal introduction or divisions.”¹²⁰ However, the notion of preaching themes began to emerge in eleventh century Europe.¹²¹ Guibert, a Benedictine monk at Geremar Abbey, later to become Abbot of St. Mary of Nogent, proposed four ways for preachers to interpret a scriptural text in a prologue to his commentary on Genesis:

The first is history, which speaks of the actual events as they occurred; the second is allegory, in which one thing stands for something else; the third is tropology, or moral instruction, which treats of the ordering and arranging of one’s life; and the last is ascetics, or spiritual enlightenment, through which we who are about to treat of lofty and heavenly topics are led to a higher way of life.¹²²

Guibert emphasizes the tropology or moral approach. He reasons, “Granted that all four of these methods of interpretation are valid and can be used, either together or singly, yet the most appropriate and prudent for use in the matters referring to the lives of men seems to be the moral approach.”¹²³ In the rest of this book, Guibert presents moral lessons drawn from the book of Genesis. Murphy, professor emeritus of rhetoric, communication, and English at the University of California at Davis points out that “Guibert’s treatise marks an early medieval explanation of how the ‘four senses’ of Scriptural interpretation should be used for the invention of preaching material. Scripture continues to be the starting point. And moral instruction is to be preferred to mere

¹¹⁹ Hogan, 36.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 36.

¹²¹ Ibid., 36.

¹²² Guibert de Nogent, “A Book About the Way a Sermon Ought to Be Given” in *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric*, ed. Joseph M. Miller, Michael H. Prosser, and Thomas W. Benson (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 170-171.

¹²³ Ibid., 171.

exposition of doctrine.”¹²⁴ Murphy points out that Guibert’s “concept of multiple interpretation has roots at least as far back as Judaic exegesis long before Christ. Gregory, Jerome, and Augustine had all commented on the practice; Origen and other preachers had made it popular in the early church.”¹²⁵

Guibert’s homiletic approach accounted not only for scriptural interpretation but also for the audience who would hear the sermon. When a preacher addresses an audience of mixed educational backgrounds, Guibert says, “he should take care that the unlearned hear simple, clear matter while the learned find in the same sermon some things they can understand at a more profound level.”¹²⁶ Joseph M. Miller, the translator of Guibert’s book, comments, “Guibert demonstrated a knowledge of solid principles for building ethos and for proper use of pathos; he made incisive observations on invention, organization, style and delivery; he showed himself, whether by instinct or by training, a master of Aristotelian and Ciceronian rhetoric.”¹²⁷

In the late medieval period, scripture was increasingly examined for texts from which the preacher might thematically amplify.¹²⁸ Hogan observes that the thirteenth century saw an explosion of formal rhetoric in preaching, and there were more than three hundred individual treatises written on the subject.¹²⁹ Hogan then further points out that preachers during this period adopted a hierarchical structure of preaching, known as taxonomy. Hogan explains,

¹²⁴ James J. Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages: A History of Rhetorical Theory from St. Augustine to the Renaissance* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), 303.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 303.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹²⁷ Miller, 162.

¹²⁸ Hogan, 36.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 36.

Discussions of homiletics were increasingly organized by the model of the taxonomic approach of the ancient rhetorical handbook tradition, filled with definitions and lists of options. Many preachers no longer saw their job as conveying truth that needed no assistance from the humanistic art of persuasion. Instead, the practice of preaching had become the means by which a preacher “preaches the multitude, within moderate length of time, to worthy conduct.”¹³⁰

In 1322, Robert of Basevon, a fourteenth century preacher and author, details numerous themes that are appropriate for this kind of preaching in *Form of Preaching*. He then lays out an extensive structure for a “three-point” sermon which develops a theme, “because a threefold cord is not easily broken.”¹³¹ Quicke also observed that sermons constructed “on a single Bible verse with three points and subpoints, [was] often called the scholastic method.”¹³²

Rhetoric overshadowed the power of God’s word and the work of the Holy Spirit during this time period. Shaddix quotes, James Philip who contributes an article in the *Evangelical Review of Theology* in which he comments on the preaching in this period of time:

The influence of the scholastic theology of the universities, which from the beginning were clerical institutions, took over, and the combination of theology and philosophy, and the application of Aristotelian logic to the interpretation of Scripture, with its speculation, analysis and ratiocination imposed an intolerable incubus upon preaching which virtually destroyed it as an effective means for communicating the gospel. It is not surprising, therefore, that hardly any counterparts to the comprehensive patristic expositions of complete books of the Bible are to be found in medieval ecclesiastical literature.¹³³

¹³⁰ Ibid., 36.

¹³¹ Ibid., 37.

¹³² Michael Quicke, “History of Preaching: Assessing Today’s Preaching in Light of History” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communications* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Laron (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005) 66.

¹³³ James Philip, “Preaching in History,” *ERT* 8 (1984): 300, quoted in Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Matthews, eds., *Text Driven Preaching: God’s Word At the Heart of Every Sermon* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010), 42.

Turnbull summarizes the preaching of the late medieval period as follows, “Preaching was at low ebb...Scripture was used less and less as a basis for preaching. Following the scholastic method of minute analysis, the form of the sermon was characterized by numerous divisions and subdivisions. The minutely organized sermon was often cold and lifeless.”¹³⁴

Hogan observes that the form of the three-point sermon with a theme was suited to the doctrinal program of the Reformation, explaining,,

The late medieval preachers used this form of sermon to organize tropological expositions of scripture for a moral purpose, but the shift from an inorganic, unstructured narrative to a tightly reasoned argument developed and amplified the form. This development from homily to sermon provided the rationalists of the Renaissance with a form highly suited to the doctrinal program of the Reformation. The moralistic sermon was certainly not abandoned, but even for Aquinas the literal sense of the passage was as the primary sense..¹³⁵

In the Renaissance period, humanists revived the lost discipline of studying the Greek and Latin classics, including the biblical text. This renewed interest in the original text also led to a study of homiletic theory.¹³⁶ Erasmus (1466-1536) edited and published the first Greek New Testament in 1516. He also wrote *Gospel Preacher*, published in 1535, which summarized current homiletic practices.¹³⁷

Quicke argues that the renewal of the study of Greek and Latin classics and the publication of the first Greek New Testament, “aided the tumultuous rediscovery of Scripture in the Reformation through Martin Luther.”¹³⁸ Shaddix also observes that some humanists like Erasmus and John Colet (1466-1519) helped lay the groundwork for later

¹³⁴ Turnbull, 52.

¹³⁵ Hogan, 37.

¹³⁶ Turnbull, 52.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹³⁸ Quicke, 66.

expositional preaching through the study of Greek New Testament.¹³⁹ John Colet, an Englishman, studied on the continent and learned from the work of Erasmus and other humanists. After returning to his native land, he began consecutive exposition of the scriptures.¹⁴⁰ According to Turnbull, “this was one of the real recoveries of Renaissance. Scripture again became the basis for Christian preaching.”¹⁴¹ Moral preaching still dominated preaching styles, however. As Hogan points out, by the time of William Tyndale (1494-1536), the tropological approach to preaching was widely used to challenge audiences with the “plain meaning” of scripture.¹⁴² Hogan says, “In part, this sounds like the old denouncement of rhetorical eloquence in sermons by Basil of Caesarea. But unlike the Basil, this English pre-reformer had no quarrel with arguing persuasive points in a sermon.”¹⁴³ Hogan then continues, “Tyndale may have been deeply frustrated with the simple moralistic, thematic preaching in his day, but he expressed no frustration with the emerging form of sermon organization originally devised to present tropological interpretations of Scripture.”¹⁴⁴

Church historians describe the Reformation (1500-1648) as a great period for preaching. However, Shaddix clarifies that

The most significant quality was the revival of Biblical preaching in which expository sermons driven by the text of Scripture replaced the telling of stories of saints, martyrs, and miracles. These sermons were characterized by the employment of better methods of interpretation and application, a combination that fostered a much-needed revival of reverence for the Biblical text in preaching.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁹ Shaddix, 43.

¹⁴⁰ Turnbull, 52.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 52.

¹⁴² Hogan, 37.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 37.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁴⁵ Shaddix, 43.

Reformers taught the doctrine of “sola scriptura,” meaning “scripture alone” and upheld scripture as supreme over tradition and the sacraments.¹⁴⁶ Martin Luther (1483-1546), one of the best known reformers, called the church back to the use of scripture alone as the authority for faith as well as the subject of preaching.¹⁴⁷

The principle of sola scriptura worked itself out in many practical ways in Luther’s preaching. Because he believed that everyone should have access to God’s word, Luther preached in the language understood by his audience. He emphasized that theology should be communicated in a way that young parishioners could hear and understand.¹⁴⁸ Luther taught his preaching students to “preach plainly and simply and have regard for the unlearned people and do not address only one or the other.”¹⁴⁹ Further, Luther noted, “A sincere preacher must consider the young people, the servants and the maids in the church, those who lack education. He must accommodate himself to them as a nursing mother does to her infant...So preachers should also act; they should be simple in their sermons.”¹⁵⁰ In regard to illustrations in sermons, Luther told his students, “The common people are captivated more readily by comparisons and examples than by difficult and subtle disputations. They would rather see a well-drawn picture than a well-written book.”¹⁵¹ Luther used illustrations from the experiences of his parishioners.¹⁵² He believed that preaching had to be relevant and biblical in order to be transformational.¹⁵³ Turnbull describes Luther’s preaching style in this way, “His preaching was mostly the

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴⁸ Wenig, 32.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 32.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 34.

¹⁵² Ibid., 34.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 34.

running commentary style, but was vigorous, direct, relevant to life, and loyal to the whole of Scripture.”¹⁵⁴ Luther preached over four thousand sermons from the beginning of his ministry to his death.¹⁵⁵

John Calvin (1509-1564), another leading reformer, also committed himself to expounding the text of scripture in his sermons. He spent his life studying and exegeting scripture. Shaddix describes Calvin’s incredible treatment of one biblical text after another in sequential expositions of biblical books as unparalleled in church history.¹⁵⁶ According to Shaddix, Calvin preached more than two thousand sermons from the Old Testament alone. He spent a year expounding the book of Job and three years in the book of Isaiah.¹⁵⁷ Lester De Koster, professor of speech at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, points out that Calvin “had been well trained in eloquence...and quoted more extensively from Cicero¹⁵⁸ than from any other of the ancients.”¹⁵⁹

Calvin understood that the arts are gifts from God, and that these gifts are instruments for helping men carry out worthwhile activities. Therefore, eloquence is not devalued unless it is abused.¹⁶⁰ When commenting on 1 Corinthians 2:4, Calvin clarifies what it means to abuse eloquence, “If the apostle’s preaching had been supported by the power of eloquence alone, he could have been overthrown by superior oratory. Further, the truth which relies on brilliance of oratory no one will call genuine. Indeed it can be

¹⁵⁴ Turnbull, 8.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 31.

¹⁵⁶ Shaddix, 44.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 45.

¹⁵⁸ Cicero was a Roman rhetorician. He was both theorist and practitioner. He and Quintilian were two prominent Roman rhetoricians.

¹⁵⁹ De Koster, “The Preacher as Rhetorician” in *Preaching: The Preacher and Preaching in the Twentieth Century* ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1986) 319.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 320.

helped by it, but it ought not to depend on it.”¹⁶¹ He never lost his appreciation of the arts of rhetoric and eloquence, but his sermons and writings were in plain style, characterized by concise and simple language.¹⁶²

De Koster summarizes Calvin’s teachings to other preachers. He says that first, the goal of Christianity is human renovation. Salvation is the Lord’s business, and he will manage it without hitch. A life lived for the glory of that Lord is the believer’s business, and it is the work of the church and the aim of the pulpit to facilitate a believer. Second, words are key to influencing the soul. Third, the good that bears fruit in obedience is not conveyed via the liberal arts, useful as they are to those whose duty it is to proclaim the word of God. God has ordained that a saving faith, with the life of obedience to which it leads, comes to man through preaching. Fourth, the preacher performs under twin disciplines: the discipline of his congregation’s needs governs his work in the study, and the discipline of strictest obedience to the text governs his proclamation from the pulpit. Fifth, soteriology has to do with the believer’s liberation from the burden of inherited and daily acquired guilt. In Christ, the Christian is, like Israel, freed from the bondage of Egypt and called to the life of obedience, as taught in the church. Sixth, the presence of good in the soul is not demonstrable through eloquence, but only by the life of love, as defined by the scriptures and summarized in the divine law. Seventh, the soul or self is sculpted into the lineaments of a lost *humanitas* through acts of willed obedience to the proclamation of God’s word. Eighth, Calvin’s aim was pedagogy. He was fond of speaking of the church as God’s school, of the Bible as God’s textbook, and of the

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 321.

¹⁶² Ibid., 321.

ministry as God's pedagogues.¹⁶³ Reformers taught the importance of the scriptural text in preaching. The words of Calvin summarized this importance: "Let us not take it into our heads either to seek out God anywhere else than in his Sacred Word, or to think anything about him that is not prompted by his Word, or to speak anything that is not taken from that Word."¹⁶⁴

Hogan also describes this conviction:

In many ways, preaching had become synonymous with argument and with which confessional tradition offered the most reasonable interpretation of scripture, most reasonable practice in the church, and most reasonable understanding of the Christian life. The Reformation sermon form entered the modern era undergoing modifications over time for purposes of clarity of reasoning and audience patience... but it became in this era argument in the most classical sense.¹⁶⁵

William Perkin(1560-1602) was a Puritan preacher at Cambridge. His treatise, *The Art of Prophesying*, influenced English preachers, especially the Puritans and Separatists going to America. In his treatise, Perkin emphasized interpretation and exposition,¹⁶⁶ and Puritan preaching embodied the preaching style of the reformers who preached through a series of expository sermons taken from one book of the Bible to another. The Puritans upheld the purity of scriptural standards in preaching and church life.¹⁶⁷ According to Shaddix, major Puritan preachers were great Bible expositors, such as Joseph Hall (1574-1656), Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680), Richard Baxter (1615-1691), John Owen (1616-1683), Thomas Manton (1620-1677), John Bunyan (1628-1688), Stephan Charnock (1628-1680), and William Greenhill (1681-1677). Despite their

¹⁶³ De Koster, 322-323

¹⁶⁴ Shaddix, 45.

¹⁶⁵ Hogan, 37.

¹⁶⁶ Turnbull, 53.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 8.

diversity of preaching styles, they all committed to a faithful explanation of scripture.¹⁶⁸

Hogan pointed out that a typical Puritan sermon was organized quite formally with the following divisions:

(1) “opening” by reading a Biblical text; (2) explaining the historical circumstances of the text; (3) defining key words and or unclear reference; (4) thematically developing the doctrines arising in the text or doctrines logically deducible from it; (5) supporting the arguments in the doctrine section with “reasons,” especially by way of scripture citation; and, finally, (6) applying the sermon in a section variously called “uses” or “improvements” in which the preacher brought the doctrine to bear on practical living.¹⁶⁹

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, topical and evangelistic sermons were largely preached. Shaddix describes George Whitefield, an outstanding evangelical preacher, as more topical and theological than expository.¹⁷⁰ However, the influence of the Puritan style of preaching still had impact on some great preachers, such as John Gill (1697-1771) and Matthew Henry (1662-1714).¹⁷¹ Some influential biblical expositors were produced in the latter part of nineteenth century, such as James H. Thornwell (1812-62), John A. Boradus (1827-1895), John C. Ryle (1816-1900), Charles J. Vaughan (1816-1897), Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910), and Joseph Parker (1830-1902).¹⁷² Although his overall preaching style does not purely fit into the category of expository, Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1826-1910) also demonstrated a strong conviction about the important role of the Bible in preaching.¹⁷³

In his Yale lectures on preaching in 1877, Phillips Brooks noted that the preaching of texts had characterized Christianity for the better part of six hundred years.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶⁹ Hogan, 38.

¹⁷⁰ Shaddix, 47.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁷² Ibid., 46.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 47.

Even “a page of the Bible torn out at random and blown into some savage island seemed to have in it the power of salvation.”¹⁷⁴ Brooks argued that each verse was clothed with an independent sacredness of meaning; therefore, texts supported themes for preaching and doctrines for theology. This kind of preaching owes its heritage to a complex interplay between Enlightenment rationalism and the Protestant Reformation.¹⁷⁵

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, G. Campbell Morgan (1863-1945), who preached at the Westminster Chapel in London, was praised as one of the great Bible expositors, and his sermons were filled with biblical text.¹⁷⁶ Shaddix describes Morgan’s works as “rich not in explanation but also in textual illustration and exegetical interpretation based on the whole Bible.”¹⁷⁷ His successor, D. Martin Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) continued his mentor’s practice. Lloyd-Jones’ preaching was described “with careful exegesis and featured a careful setting forth of the meaning and application of each Bible passage.”¹⁷⁸ Despite Lloyd-Jones’ knowledge of different styles of preaching, he emphasized that all preaching must be expository.¹⁷⁹ Along with Morgan and Lloyd-Jones, several notable Bible expositors in the first part of the twentieth century had similar convictions about the role of the Bible in preaching. H. A. Ironside (1876-1951), Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960), James M. Gray (1881-1935), James Denney (1856-1917), William Graham Scroggie (1877-1958), W. A. Criswell (1909-2002), and James Montgomery Boice (1938-2000) all followed the preaching traditions of the Reformers and Puritans. They preached a series of sermons from one biblical book to

¹⁷⁴ Philip Brooks, *Lectures on Preaching* (London: Allenson, 1895), 161.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁷⁶ Shaddix, 47.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 48.

another. Contemporary expository preachers include John Stott, John MacArthur Jr., John Piper, Charles R. Swindoll, Haddon W. Robinson, and Bryan Chapell. Many of their works influence and are quoted in this project.

This brief survey has revealed that many preachers throughout church history preached biblically in a manner that was relevant to the needs of their people. Even during the middle ages, preachers often preached moral sermons, despite the influence of rhetoric.

Contemporary Preachers on the Nature and Purpose of Preaching

Martin Lloyd-Jones observes that “preaching is the primary task of the church, and of the minister in the Church.”¹⁸⁰ He bases this claim on his study of the scriptures. Lloyd-Jones was convinced that preaching is the peculiar task of the church, and that the preacher must help people to understand that they need salvation due to their ignorance and rebellion against God.¹⁸¹

Acknowledging that the scriptures have much to say about the purpose of preaching, Johnson gives a comprehensive definition of preaching based on his study of Colossians 1:24-2:7. According to him, preaching includes elements of communication, content, office, and purpose. He calls this “apostolic preaching,” and defines it as follows:

the proclamation, explanation and application (communication tasks) of the Word of God written, in relation to its integrating center—Christ, the only Mediator between God and man—(content) by a man called by God, gifted by the Holy Spirit, and growing in Christlikeness, (office) to people made in God’s image but alienated and marred by sin and its toxic by-products (listeners) in the presence of God (office) to serve as the Spirit’s means of grace by which he replaces unbelieving hearts of stone with believing hearts of flesh, and then brings

¹⁸⁰ D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971), 45.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 29.

immature children of God into conformity to Christ, (purpose) to the glory of God in his church (purpose).¹⁸²

This definition of preaching focuses the preacher's task on Christ and also addresses the needs of listeners in their cultural setting. In a similar vein, Edmund Clowney, the late president and professor of practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania stresses that biblical theology should help preachers to preach Jesus Christ in his book *Preaching and Biblical Theology*.¹⁸³ If Christ is neglected, then preaching will be moralized. He urges that all ministers must preach Christ.

John Piper, pastor for preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota, emphasizes that the cross of Jesus Christ is to be the basis and validity of preaching. He argues, "Without the cross, preaching that aims to glorify a righteous God in the gladness of sinful man has no validity...The cross is also the ground of the humility of preaching because the cross is the power of God to crucify the pride of both preacher and congregation."¹⁸⁴ In his study of 1 Corinthians 2:1-2, Piper concludes that "the cross of Christ not only provides a foundation for the validity of preaching—enabling us to herald the good news that a righteous God can and will be glorified in the glad submission of sinners—but also provides a foundation for the humility of preaching."¹⁸⁵

John Bettler, director of the Christian Counseling and Education Foundation and an adjunct professor of practical theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, considers application to be the essence of preaching. Since preaching is driving home the word of God to the lives of his people, preaching is concerned with life. A preacher does

¹⁸² Johnson, 95, 96.

¹⁸³ Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979), 74.

¹⁸⁴ John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004), 36.

¹⁸⁵ Piper, 38.

not need to make God's truth relevant. God's truth is always relevant, and to declare it is to apply it.¹⁸⁶ Bettler points out that Broadus simply states that preaching is application. Preaching is not speaking about truth before the congregation, but rather speaking truth to the congregation.¹⁸⁷ Biblical preaching emphasizes applying God's word to change one's life.

The Westminster Confession summaries the purpose and the nature of preaching comprehensively in Larger Catechism question 155:

The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.¹⁸⁸

The transformation of a person after hearing a Christ-centered sermon preached has to do with the divine power and authority of God.

Authority and Power Based on God's Word, From God's Word

Matthew describes the followers of Jesus, after listening to his Sermon on the Mount, as amazed at Jesus' teaching "for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes."¹⁸⁹ Samuel Logan, academic dean and associate professor of church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, points out that the word "authority" used in this verse and throughout New Testament is "exousia," which "suggests both

¹⁸⁶ John F. Bettler, "Application" in *Preaching: The Preacher and Preaching in the Twentieth Century* ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Welwyn, Herfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1986), 332.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 333.

¹⁸⁸ Westminster Larger Catechism, 155, quoted in Dennis E. Johnson, ed., *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2007), 69.

¹⁸⁹ Matthew 7: 28-29.

sheer power and intrinsic right.”¹⁹⁰ Logan further argues that in the essence of his authority, Jesus demonstrates his deity by healing body and soul as recorded in Matthew 9:2-7:

And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” And behold some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home.¹⁹¹

Logan concludes that because Jesus asked the scribes a rhetorical question, he demonstrates that it is his intrinsic right and power to heal this paralytic physically and spiritually. Clearly, Jesus taught with power and authority, but Logan asks how Jesus’ authority translates into our pulpits today. Logan suggests that Matthew 28:18-20 may have the answer:

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”¹⁹²

Logan argues that Jesus’ authority is conferred upon his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20, and explains,

The authority that belonged to Jesus, which was His by intrinsic right, that every authority He conferred upon His disciples. It was the authority both to speak and to do, to do by speaking. Their language was to function analogously to Jesus’ own, bringing the kingdom to bear upon their hearers and thereby making disciples for all nations. Jesus’ concluding promise, that He would be with His disciples even to the end of the age, was meant to reinforce the authority they had

¹⁹⁰ Samuel T. Logan, Jr. “The Phenomenology of Preaching” in *Preaching: The Preacher and Preaching in the Twentieth Century* ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1986), 145.

¹⁹¹ Matthew 9:2-7.

¹⁹² Matthew 28:18-20.

in His name. Because He was with them, they could speak and act with His authority.¹⁹³

While Jesus gives his authority to preach his gospel specifically to the apostles in Matthew 28, Logan shows that authoritative preaching ministry continues after the time of apostles by referring to 1 Timothy 3-4 and 2 Timothy 4.¹⁹⁴ Titus 1:5 and 9 are examples of this continuity of authoritative preaching ministry. As the Apostle Paul writes to Titus, “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you--He (overseer) must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”¹⁹⁵

Logan then reminds the preacher that authoritative preaching is not infallible. Preachers do not have a blank check to say whatever they want from the pulpit. Instead, preaching should be based on orthodox doctrine. Biblical preachers must seek to build upon the objectively true facts about the kingdom of God and thus bring Jesus’ authority directly and immediately upon their congregations where they live.¹⁹⁶ Logan concludes:

As he (preacher) sees his task and his opportunity in relationship to the accomplishment of the rule of Jesus over His kingdom, the preacher can do no else than bring divine authority immediately to bear upon those who hear him. And that, by the sovereign, gracious power of the Holy Spirit, is the phenomenology of preaching.¹⁹⁷

Chapell points out that preaching accomplishes its spiritual purpose due to the power of the scripture proclaimed, as indicated by what the Apostle Paul says,¹⁹⁸ “And

¹⁹³ Ibid., 149.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 151.

¹⁹⁵ Titus 1:5 and 9.

¹⁹⁶ Logan, 152,

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 160.

¹⁹⁸ Chapell, 26.

my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God”¹⁹⁹ When discussing the efficacy of the truths in 2 Corinthians 3:5, Chapell concludes that “God is not relying on the sufficiency of our craft or character to accomplish his purpose...but his Spirit use the Word itself to fulfill his saving and sanctifying purposes.” Therefore, God “infuses his Word with his own spiritual power.”²⁰⁰ Ultimately, the power in a sermon comes not from the preacher but from God.

Having studied the Bible’s teaching on preaching God’s word, Chapell concludes that the Bible clearly conveys that scripture is powerful without any peer or dependence.²⁰¹ He further points out that the power of God’s word preached can transform the hearers. He says,

Preaching that is true to Scripture converts, convicts, and eternally changes the souls of men and women because God’s Word is the instrument of divine compulsion, not because preachers have any power in themselves to stimulate such godly transformations.²⁰²

J. I. Packer, professor of systematic and historical theology at Regent College in Vancouver, Canada comments on the model of Paul’s preaching based on 1 Corinthians 2:4, which states “My [Paul’s] message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.”²⁰³ Packer indicates that authority is an integral part of preaching God’s word. He elaborates that “preaching that does not display divine authority, both in its content and in its manner, is not the substance, but only the

¹⁹⁹ 1 Corinthian 2:4-5.

²⁰⁰ Chapell, 26.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 27.

²⁰² Ibid., 27.

²⁰³ 1 Corinthians 2:4

shadow of the real thing. The authority of preaching flows from the transparency of the preacher's relation to the Bible and the only personal God whose Word is the Bible."²⁰⁴

Geoffrey Thomas, an assistant editor of the *Banner of Truth*, is very serious about preaching with power. He declares, "Every sermon is to be accompanied by divine power if it is to be a true proclamation of the Word of God...All true preaching, whether evangelistically humbling and awakening or pastorally encouraging and strengthening, is to be suffused with the power of God."²⁰⁵ Thomas points out that the word of God is alive and powerful by quoting Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."²⁰⁶ He then concludes that the Bible is powerful because it is the word of God.²⁰⁷ A fully-orbed definition of preaching must include power and authority from God, who accomplishes the spiritual purpose of preaching by his spiritual power when his word is proclaimed.

The Pastor's Ethos

The fact that God accomplishes the purpose of preaching by the Holy Spirit does not mean that a preacher is without responsibility. Chapell remarks that "good preaching in one sense involves getting out of the way so that the Word can do its work."²⁰⁸ He points out that even Apostle Paul makes a personal resolution "to put no stumbling block

²⁰⁴ J. I. Packer "Introduction: Why Preach" in *Preaching: The Preacher and Preaching in the Twentieth Century* ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1986), 12.

²⁰⁵ Geoffrey Thomas "Powerful Preaching" in *Preaching: The Preacher and Preaching in the Twentieth Century* ed. Samuel T. Logan, Jr. (Welwyn, Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1986), 370.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 371.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 371.

²⁰⁸ Chapell, 34.

to the gospel in anyone's path (2 Corinthians 6:3)."²⁰⁹ Chapell highlights Aristotle's three classical rhetorical elements, which can help preachers understand the basic components of every message preached, so that preachers do not cause others to stumble over the delivery of the message.²¹⁰ These elements, which were explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, are logos, pathos, and ethos. Chapell notes that Aristotle believed ethos (personal character or personality) was the most powerful component of persuasion.²¹¹ Further, Chapell describes how the Apostle Paul cites his conduct and his compassion as integral sources of the power of his message. Chapell then reminds preachers that pastoral character is still the foundation of ministry.²¹²

De Koster, professor of speech at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, mentions that Calvin, one of the great reformers, applies the classical rhetoric elements in his preaching. De Koster says,

With Calvin, the sermon is finally made its own genre in fact. It is enriched in every way out of the classical resources, which Calvin knew intimately, but the homily is freed from the pagan limitations of the rhetorical tradition. Calvin maintains, however, the tradition of oratorical courage dating far back to that time when Demosthenes threw down the gauntlet before the face of Alexander's emissaries.²¹³

Packer understands that those rhetorical elements could not be eliminated from the delivery of a message, especially a preacher's personality. He says,

Philip Brooks was profoundly right when he defined preaching as "truth through personality." The preacher's personality cannot be eliminated from the preaching situation, and what he appears to be is a part of what he communicates--necessarily, inescapably, willy-nilly, and for better or for worse. So the preacher

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 34.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 34.

²¹¹ Ibid., 34.

²¹² Ibid., 35.

²¹³ De Koster, 323.

must speak as one who himself stands under the authority of his message and knows the reality and power of which he speaks.²¹⁴

Quicke argues that “preaching is a character issue.”²¹⁵ He further explains that no one can preach effectively unless he or she evidently belongs to Christ. Quicke points out the uniqueness of Christian preaching, as distinguished from other discourses, by saying, “Only in Christian preaching are words and Spirit so integrated that the whole person is wholly important. Message is inseparable from messenger.”²¹⁶ He points out that most preaching textbooks do not explore the character of the preacher because those books already assume that preachers are bound to be persons of integrity.²¹⁷ Preachers should live out their relationships with God, their personal integrity, and their relationships with others. Quicke uses the old adage, “What you are shouts more loudly than what you say” to illustrate his point.²¹⁸ Preachers demonstrate their character in their relationships with others. Through the trusting relationships, people know how much preachers care for them and love them. Quicke then quotes John Broadus. When he was asked about the first thing required for effective preaching, Broadus responded, “I should say sympathy; and what is the second, sympathy; and what is the third, sympathy.”²¹⁹

Stott understands that ethos is very important to a preacher. He says, “From all this it is again evident that preaching can never be degraded into the learning of a few rhetorical techniques. A whole theology lies beneath it, and a whole lifestyle behind it.

²¹⁴ Packer, 16.

²¹⁵ Quicke, 93.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 93- 94.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 94.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 94.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 95.

The practice of preaching cannot be divorced from the person of the preacher.”²²⁰ He therefore emphasizes the preacher’s sincerity. Stott urges all preachers to guard their personal walks with God and their loyalty to him.²²¹

Philip Teng, former senior pastor North Point Alliance Church in Hong Kong, and emeritus principal of China Graduate School of Theology, also in Hong Kong, used his exposition of 1 Corinthians 4:1-7 to point out that preachers are inseparable from their preaching. He then describes seven characteristics that a preacher should cultivate in order to be effective. Teng highlights that preachers should have integrity of character, pure motives to save people, and orthodox beliefs. Preachers should live out the truth as a testimony. They should appeal to the minds, hearts, and wills of their listeners, centering their messages on Christ and not on their own opinions, and relying on the Holy Spirit.²²² Even though Teng does not mention the classical rhetorical elements, ethos, pathos and logos stand out in several of his characteristics.

Although logos and pathos are often discussed as elements that make a sermon effective in a homiletics class, ethos stands out among these classical rhetorical elements in persuasion. Pastoral ethos makes the sermon effective in demonstrating how the word of God should be lived. Therefore, ethos is defined as the character of a preacher in relationship to the hearers. The audience can see the sincerity and authenticity of the preacher living out the truth delivered, and what hearers see impacts how they listen to sermons and their views of preaching.

²²⁰ Stott, 265.

²²¹ Ibid, 265.

²²² Philip Teng, “Preacher the person,” *Pastoral Sharing*, no.112 (September 1998): 6-7. The author summarized these seven characteristics in English.

In regard to the role of ethos in application, Chapell observes that “one reason we need to be doing application in preaching is for our own personal ethos.”²²³ According to Chapell, people rate preachers in terms of their ethos, which is based on their perception of the preacher’s credibility and compassion. These two elements, credibility and compassion, make up ethos. People perceive the credibility of pastors based on their knowledge of the pastors’ lives. Chapell says, “Much of what happens in application is saying, ‘I am not just knowledgeable about exegesis. I know the world you live in. I am able to be realistic.’”²²⁴

Ethos is also based on compassion. People perceive the character of their pastors from observing their genuine care for people. People trust and listen to their pastors when they perceive that their pastors care about them.²²⁵ Ethos is tied to the ability of the preacher to apply all that is realistic and courageous. Chapell comments that Christians desire to walk with God, but they also desire to be challenged. Pastors need to be bold in giving specific applications to listeners who desire to be challenged. Challenging listeners with specific applications is risky because pastors may say things that are foolish and highly disagreeable, or people may not be ready to hear the application.²²⁶

The Layman’s View on Preaching

In reality, listeners evaluate each element of persuasion in a message and weigh the truths that the preachers present. Ronald Allen interviewed people listening to sermons to find out how they evaluate ethos, pathos, and logos. When he published his

²²³ Bryan Chapell, “Application Without Moralism” in *the Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervans, 2005), 289.

²²⁴ Ibid., 289.

²²⁵ Ibid., 289.

²²⁶ Ibid., 290.

findings, Allen devoted a chapter to each of the classical elements of persuasion in a message.

In ethos settings, Allen found that integrity between what the preacher says and how the preacher lives is a core value to listeners.²²⁷ Listeners want to know that preachers are one with them and real. Listeners used preachers' personal experience examples to judge the preachers' ethos.²²⁸ Allen also found out that in the ethos setting, the hearer's positive relationship with the preacher enhances their understanding of the sermon.²²⁹

In the logos settings, people listening to sermons want the preacher to give them information and ideas to help them interpret the significance of the gospel for their lives.²³⁰ Listeners want "the sermon to help them to discover the meaning of life so that they can respond appropriately."²³¹ This indicates that many people listening to sermons through logos settings are changed by ideas which are presented to them in an orderly way.²³² They will shift their perspectives as a consequence of encountering significant ideas.²³³

Pathos relates to how emotions play a role in the way a congregation responds to a sermon. Allen also points out that pathos not only functions as a setting through which listeners hear a sermon, but it is also a mode of knowledge activated by a sermon.²³⁴ He explains that "feeling is itself a mode of knowledge. It is awareness that is almost

²²⁷ Allen, 24.

²²⁸ Ibid., 25.

²²⁹ Ibid., 27.

²³⁰ Ibid., 45.

²³¹ Ibid., 44.

²³² Ibid., 52.

²³³ Ibid., 50.

²³⁴ Ibid., 72.

intuitive in nature and that cannot always be expressed in conventional language. Sometimes knowledge from the life of feeling can be expressed through artistic media. However, sometimes this knowledge can hardly be expressed.”²³⁵ Allen points out that despite the difficulty of expression, some people listening to sermons through pathos settings are engaged when the preacher offers a theological interpretation of emotion that helps them name what is happening within them.²³⁶ In this pathos setting, listeners can remember sermons that touch them.

Allen reminds preachers that there is a particular combination of listening tendencies in each listener and congregation. He then proposes:

A pastor can incorporate into every (or nearly every) sermon material that parishioners are likely to receive and process on each of the three settings. To put it crudely, the preacher could communicate the message in three languages in each sermon—ethos language, logos language, and pathos language. In one sermon, the preacher could say the same thing in these three different modes.²³⁷

Lora-Ellen McKinney, a psychologist, chronicles preaching from her experiences attending church for a long period of time and from her experience as a daughter of a pastor in her book *View from the Pew*. She says, “Preaching is the performed word of God. It is an opportunity for the preacher to demonstrate the fruits of time spent in digging into the mine of the Scripture in search of ideas, specific Biblical history, and textual relevance to the lives of those sitting in the pews.”²³⁸ She also points out that preaching is the primary format of Christian education and is the main way parishioners

²³⁵ Ibid., 72.

²³⁶ Allen, 92.

²³⁷ Ibid., 111-112.

²³⁸ Lora-Ellen McKinney, *View from the Pew: What Preachers Can Learn From Church Members* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2004), 17.

learn about the Bible.²³⁹ She argues, “Preaching is also the scriptural education that fills the empty space in our lives, answers questions important to our daily living, and lights spiritual fires within us. When preachers preach the Word, parishioners learn and are edified.”²⁴⁰

McKinney encourages preachers to use stories from their own lives to illustrate the important points in their sermons. Parishioners need to learn that pastors are human and can use their experiences to inform how they solve their problems. By sharing personal moments, preachers can enhance their relationships with parishioners.²⁴¹ She also encourages preachers to show their pastoral hearts, or what she calls “exposing pastors in preachers.” If preachers share their vulnerabilities as humans called by God to pastor his people, the parishioners will trust them and gladly call them pastors.²⁴² By exposing their pastoral hearts in preaching, preachers will preach better, and their sermons will be filled “with pathos, joy, and the vast array of emotions that make us human.”²⁴³ She indicates that this is what the congregation needs most from the preacher: “We need preachers who pastor through preaching, and who, recognizing the needs and directions of individual and corporate spiritual growth, use the rich and unique qualities of God’s wonderful Word to speak through our minds to the needs of our hearts.”²⁴⁴ McKinney believes that preachers should address the emotional needs of their congregants by using God’s word to speak to their hearts.

²³⁹ Ibid., 17.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 17.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 69.

²⁴² Ibid., 67.

²⁴³ Ibid., 75.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 81, 82.

Confirming the wisdom of McKinney's encouragement to preach to the hearts of parishioners, a study of the relationship between congregations and pastors also discovered that "members tend to respect, and [are] willing to listen, to a pastor whom they know cares for them, who proficiently and faithfully performs pastoral responsibilities, who acts with integrity, whose sermons give signs of thoughtful preparation."²⁴⁵ McKinney highlights that the hearer will respond to God's word personally. She says, "When we are preached to as if the preacher recognizes us, we respond in a much different, stronger, and more personal way to the Word of God."²⁴⁶

Quicke points out that today's hearers connect with preachers who live authentic lives. He says, "today, postmodern hearers particularly seem to value authenticity and vulnerability. Preachers need to be genuine about their spirituality to be courageous and mature....Authentic personal stories connect with both Scripture and hearers."²⁴⁷ Thomas In-Sing Leung, an evangelist, Chinese philosopher, and the director of the Center of Cultural Renewal Study, explains that effective preaching comes from the authentic life of a preacher who loves and cares for the people.²⁴⁸

Communicating effectively with listeners is a difficult task. As Jeter and Allen discovered, some people tend to hear what they want to hear and only listen to preachers they like. Some listeners even interpret the sermon to confirm what they already believe,

²⁴⁵ Joseph R. Jeter, Jr. and Ronald J. Allen, *One Gospel, Many Ear: Preaching for Different Listeners in the Congregation* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2002), 171.

²⁴⁶ McKinney, 28.

²⁴⁷ Quicke, 94.

²⁴⁸ Thomas In-Sing Leung, "Life is a Beautiful Sermon," *Pastoral Sharing*, no.120 (January 2000): 5. The author summarized his idea into English.

regardless of what the preacher actually says. They “may even unconsciously reconstruct the content of the message so that it will go along with their beliefs.”²⁴⁹

In summary, the above reviews indicate that listeners’ positive relationships with pastors can affect the way that they listen to sermons. Parishioners are generally willing to listen to their preachers respectfully, but some unconsciously reconstruct the message of the preacher to fit their beliefs. Despite this phenomenon, the three classical rhetoric elements, logos, pathos and ethos, are still valuable for today’s preachers.

Expository Preaching

When interpreting Paul’s exhortation to Timothy to “preach the word” in 2 Timothy 4:2, Geoffrey Thomas, an assistant editor of the Banner of Truth and the present chairman of the Grace Baptist Assembly Organizing Committee, exhorts that “all of Scripture is to be understood by the whole church, and all of Scriptures is to be preached to the whole church.”²⁵⁰ He then suggests that the expository method is the best and most interesting method to fulfill the exhortation to preach the word. Thomas understands that expository preaching is the best method to “preach systematically through books of the Bible, especially those portions which present the system redemption.”²⁵¹ Congregants can hear the whole counsel of God by listening to preaching that methodically teaches through the books of the Bible.

Johann Lai, author, pastor, and director of Sacred Logos Resource Center in Sunnyvale, California, agrees with Thomas that expository preaching approaches the Bible systematically. However, Lai argues that expository preaching has to deal with

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 173.

²⁵⁰ Thomas, 374.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 374.

preachers' attitudes rather than with a paradigm of preaching. Preachers need to ask whether their points are developed from the scriptural text, or whether they are imposing their ideas into the text.²⁵² Lai also argues that a preacher should declare the word of life to listeners in a way that is relevant to their lives.²⁵³

Lloyd-Jones argues that sermons should always be expository. He clarifies that an expository sermon has a particular form, and it "is not a running commentary on, or a mere exposition of, the meaning of a verse or a passage or a paragraph."²⁵⁴ An expository sermon's particular form is that all ideas are only from the passage so that people will know if the preacher preaches something out of accord with the passage in the Bible.²⁵⁵ In this respect, expository preachers share much with the Old Testament prophets. The burden of the Lord is on the prophet, and the message comes to the prophet as a burden. God gives the prophet the message, and the prophet delivers the message.²⁵⁶ Lloyd-Jones argues that a preacher should speak and preach only from the burden that arises from the exposition of God's message, the Bible. Lloyd-Jones also highlights that after having the message or a doctrine from the text, the preacher should then consider the relevance of this particular message or doctrine to the people who are listening to the sermon.²⁵⁷ The sermon should end with a note of application from this particular message or doctrine.²⁵⁸

²⁵² Johann Y. H. Lai, "Expository Preaching: Faithful to the Scripture and Relevant to Contemporary Needs," *Great Commission Bi-Monthly*, no. 84 (February 2010): 9. The author summarized Lai's idea into English.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁵⁴ Lloyd-Jones, 72.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 78.

Chapell defines expository preaching similarly to Lloyd-Jones. However, he relates expository preaching to the power of God's word applied to preaching. He explains,

Biblical exposition binds the preacher and the people to the only source of true spiritual change. Because hearts are transformed when people are confronted with the Word of God, expository preachers are committed to saying what God says... The words are not meant to convey one's own authority but rather humbly confess that the preacher has no better word than God's Word. Thus, the preachers' mission and calling is to explain to God's people what the Bible means.²⁵⁹

According to Chapell, expository preachers do not communicate their opinions, but rather show the will of God to their people as revealed in God's word. In this case, listeners can see that preachers derive the concepts for their sermons from scripture and apply scripture to their lives. Such preaching puts people in immediate contact with the power of God's word.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, scripture determines what expositors preach because expository preachers unfold what scripture says. Therefore, the meaning of the passage in the scripture is the message of the sermon.²⁶¹

John Broadus, the late professor of homiletics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky defines an expository sermon as a sermon that is occupied mainly with the exposition of scripture. In practice, the main points and the subdivisions of the sermon come from the text; the entire thought content comes from scripture.²⁶² He further clarifies that an expository sermon has both unity and an orderly structure. Unity is essential in a discourse, whether it is in the form of instruction,

²⁵⁹ Chapell, 30.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 31.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 32.

²⁶² John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, revised by Vernon L. Stanfield (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row Publishers, 1979), 58.

conviction, or persuasion.²⁶³ The orderly structure in an expository sermon gives listeners the sense that each passage of scripture has a topic that is well chosen and well handled.²⁶⁴

Having reviewed what the scholars and great preachers say about expository preaching, it is clear that this form of preaching is very distinct from teaching or lecturing on the Bible.

Preaching Versus Teaching

In answering the question “Is there a difference between preaching and teaching?” Stott understands that the two words are not interchangeable, and that “kerygma” (preaching) and “didache” (teaching) in the New Testament are not interchangeable. However, he observes that these two words overlap considerably in content, as observed in certain passages. He explains,

For in the public ministry of Jesus “teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23; 9:35) are not sharply distinguished, while the apostle Paul described himself as both a “preacher” and a “teacher” of the gospel (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11), and when Luke takes leave of him at the end of the Acts, he is “preaching the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 28:310) No doubt his preaching was more evangelistic in purpose and his teaching more systematic in character, but it is not clear that the one is entirely distinct from the other in content; probably they overlapped considerably.²⁶⁵

When discussing the form of the sermon, Lloyd-Jones states that preaching must be theological, and yet preaching is not simply a lecture on theology.²⁶⁶ He warns, “it is wrong for a man to impose his system violently on any particular text; but at the same

²⁶³ Ibid., 60.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 60

²⁶⁵ Stott, 122.

²⁶⁶ Lloyd-Jones, 66.

time it is vital that his interpretation of any particular text should be checked and controlled by this system, this body of doctrine and of truth which is found in the Bible.”²⁶⁷ According to Lloyd-Jones, a lecture about a particular subject imparts knowledge and information concerning this particular subject. It speaks primarily and almost exclusively to the mind; the object of the lecture is to give instruction and state facts, a goal which is free from concern about the listener.²⁶⁸ He further points out that a lecture lacks the need to impact the listener,²⁶⁹ which is a vital element in preaching.²⁷⁰ In Lloyd-Jones’ opinion, a sermon should always be expository and does not start with a subject. The theme or doctrine in a sermon is derived from the text and its context and is illustrated by that text and context.²⁷¹ He then points out that another element in an expository sermon is relevance to the listener.²⁷² Therefore, preaching a sermon is different from lecturing.

According to Packer, preaching is essentially teaching plus application (invitation, direction, summons); where the plus is lacking, something less than preaching occurs.²⁷³ As a mode of Christian instruction, preaching has many advantages. Preaching is never less than teaching. Preaching aims at both mind and heart, and it seeks to change the way people think and live.²⁷⁴ Despite criticism that the monologue form of preaching is a

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 66.

²⁶⁸ Lloyd-Jones, 71.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 71.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 71.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 71.

²⁷² Ibid., 76.

²⁷³ Packer, 3.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 21.

hindrance both to teaching and learning, Packer affirms that preaching has a great advantage in regard to both.²⁷⁵ He says,

Since preaching is monologue, artifice (clever device) is needed to ensure that hearers stay awake and are kept interested, involved, and thinking along with the speakers as he proceeds...In short, a preacher will see it as his responsibility to make his message as clear, vivid, searching, “home-coming,” and thus memorable, as he can, and to use all the rhetorical resources and possibilities of monologue form to that end.²⁷⁶

Packer suggests that a preacher should consider rhetorical resources and use them wisely so that hearers will gain more from the sermon than they would from an informal conversation or discussion on the same subject.²⁷⁷

Packer points out that another advantage of this monologue form of preaching is the possibility of giving counsel from the pulpit and equipping the hearers to be counselors. Packer writes,

Another thing that monologue makes possible is the exhibiting of individuals’ problems as problems of the community, by bringing them into the pulpit for Biblical analysis. By this means a wise preacher may in effect do much of his counseling from the pulpit, and in so doing equip his hearers to become counselors themselves. This is a further great advantage of the monologue form to those who have the wit to use it.²⁷⁸

Jay Adams, the director of the doctoral program at Westminster Theological Seminary in California, affirms that the difference between a preaching stance and a lecture stance. He explains, “Preaching that stops short of asking for change that is appropriate to the Holy Spirit’s letters to His Church is not preaching at all; at best it is

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 23.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 21-22.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 22.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 23.

lecturing. The lecturer speaks about the Bible; the pastoral preacher speaks from the Bible about the congregation. He tells them what God wants from them.”²⁷⁹

These observations lead to the conclusion that teaching or lecturing is merely giving information and knowledge about the Bible, and that preaching involves more than this. Preaching with the use of all the resources discussed earlier conveys the message of the Bible with the intention of changing the mind and behavior of hearers. Preaching focuses on God’s word, especially on Christ, as the center of the message, with the intention of changing the minds and behavior of the hearers. Many scholars commend the use of rhetorical elements in preaching because they can help hearers focus on what preachers say. Expository preaching is a distinct form of preaching because the preacher speaks what the word of God speaks. It is not from the preacher’s opinion; the authority and power of the preacher in delivering the message is based on the word of God. God’s power in his word can transform the preacher and his people when they hear God’s word. Preaching, especially an expository sermon, is distinct from teaching and lecturing in its methodology and goals.

²⁷⁹ Jay E. Adams, *Preaching With Purpose* (Phillipsburg, NJ.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1982), 43.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to examine how lay leaders in a Chinese congregation listen to sermons, and how they understand preaching. To accomplish this goal, it was necessary to first determine what impact the relationships between lay leaders and their preachers have upon the lay leaders as they listen to sermons. Secondly, it was important to study lay leaders' perspectives concerning expository preaching. Lastly, it was important to find out how lay leaders distinguish biblical preaching from expository preaching. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do lay leaders view preaching in light of their various church experiences in different countries?
2. How do the lay leaders view preaching in relation to other contexts of teaching the Bible in the church?
3. How do lay leaders view expository preaching?

To answer these research questions, this researcher engaged the lay leaders of a Chinese church. Therefore, this study was qualitative in nature. A qualitative study is one that helps a researcher to “understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences.”²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2009), 5.

Design of the Study

In her book *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, Sharan Merriam gives four characteristics that define the nature of qualitative research. First, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people construct out of their experiences in the world. Second, qualitative researchers are the primary instruments for data collection and analysis. Third, qualitative researchers usually employ an inductive research methodology. Fourth, qualitative researchers use words and pictures to describe the results of their study.²⁸¹

Qualitative research aims to understand how people make sense of their experiences. Data is collected through interviews and observations, and documents are analyzed inductively to address the research questions.²⁸² In this way, qualitative research is different from quantitative research. Qualitative research works from questions to answers, whereas quantitative research begins with a hypothesis and tests its validity.

A qualitative case study will allow the researcher to engage lay leaders in a Chinese church. Case studies illuminate the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon being studied, extending the researcher's experience or confirming what is known. According to Merriam, a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system.²⁸³ A bounded system can be a single entity, a unit with boundaries. In this sense, the unit of analysis, not the topic of investigation, characterizes a case study.²⁸⁴ In this study, a group of lay leaders in a Chinese church was selected as the unit of analysis.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 14-16.

²⁸² Ibid., 37.

²⁸³ Ibid., 40.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 41.

Merriam points out that there are three special features characterizing qualitative case study. First, it is particularistic, meaning that the study focuses on a particular situation, event, program, or phenomenon. Second, it is descriptive, meaning that the end product of the study is a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study. According to Merriam, a “thick description” is a term from anthropology, and it refers to the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated. Finally, it is heuristic, meaning that the study illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study.²⁸⁵

In this study, individual interviews were conducted. According to Merriam, the purpose of an interview is to allow the researcher to find a person’s perspective on a subject.²⁸⁶ The interviews in this study were semi-structured in format. In this type of interview, questions were flexibly worded. This format allowed the researcher “to respond to the situation, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic.”²⁸⁷ The interviews were recorded and transcribed for further review utilizing the “constant comparative” method. The goal of this study was to understand how lay leaders listen to sermons and their understanding of what expository preaching is.

Sampling Criteria

This study was limited to lay leaders in one evangelical Chinese church in the San Francisco Bay area. The analysis mainly focused upon how Chinese Christian immigrants view a sermon. These Chinese Christian immigrants attended churches of various denominational backgrounds before coming to the United States, but they do not

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 43-44.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 88.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 90.

generally represent the Chinese Christian immigrants attending other Chinese churches in the United States. Instead, this study focused on Cantonese speaking Chinese Christian immigrants from Hong Kong. Since most of the Chinese churches in Hong Kong are conservative and evangelical, it was expected that study participants would most likely have high views of scripture. Moreover, their relationship with their home churches and pastors in Hong Kong were expected to impact their ways of listening to preaching, as well as their views of church leadership and preaching.

This study also focused on the viewpoints of five lay leaders in the San Francisco church, most of whom are involved in teaching ministries. Since this church allows women to work in teaching ministries, both in children's and adult Sunday school, two female lay leaders from these five were chosen as interview participants. The reason for interviewing them was to understand how female participants listen to sermons and to discover if female participants have any preferences when listening to sermons. All participants either taught adult Sunday school, led Bible studies, disciplined younger Christians, or led/supervised praise and worship. Moreover, all had some leadership and teaching training from workshops held by Christian organizations and Chinese seminaries. As a result, these participants have developed their own patterns of listening to sermons, thus providing rich data for this research.

Study subjects also included three lay leaders who became Christians in this church. They were trained by the lay leaders mentioned above or had some leadership and teaching training from workshops held by local Christian organizations or seminaries. They lead Bible studies and teach in Sunday school classes. Their inclusion provided the

researcher an opportunity to compare their views, which were heavily influenced by the lay leaders who trained them.

Data Collection

According to Merriam's method of qualitative research, the researcher conducted an interview with each participant that lasted approximately one hour. Appendix A provides the interview questions, which are divided into four sections. First, the researcher asked about the background of the participants. These questions probed into areas such as whether the participants were Christians before migrating to the United States, their previous church ministries, the number of years they served in their previous churches, and their present ministries in this Chinese Church in San Francisco. Second, the researcher asked how the participants listen to sermons. These questions aimed to discover the participants' relationships with their pastors in the past and present, their understanding of authority and power in preaching, and their view on the role of God in the delivery of sermons. Third, the researcher inquired into the views of participants on preaching and how it differentiates from teaching in Sunday school. Fourth, the researcher explored the views of the participants on biblical preaching and expository preaching.

The questions listed in Appendix A were suggested questions. The researcher did not strictly follow the order of the questions, leaving himself the option of not asking every participant all the questions because the interviews followed the semi-structured model. According to Merriam, a semi-structured interview allows "the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new

ideas on the topic.”²⁸⁸ Therefore, during the interviews, the researcher clarified terms and questions the participants had difficulty understanding. The researcher also applied active listening techniques to ensure he correctly understood the participants’ answers.

Cantonese is the native language of the interviewer and all the participants; therefore, Cantonese and English were used in the interviews. Most of the participants responded in English, with some Chinese terms. The researcher then immediately translated these terms into English to ensure a clear, accurate translation. The participants confirmed the accuracy of the translation and accepted the English terms as accurately describing their thoughts.

One-on-one interviews were conducted so that the interviewer could explore the interviewees’ responses in breadth and depth. The interviews were recorded to preserve the data for cross-checking and further reflection. The interview material was transcribed into English. If the interview was conducted in Cantonese, then the material on each tape was transcribed into Chinese and the transcription was checked for accuracy before being translated into English. The researcher analyzed the interview transcripts and interpreted the data. The researcher presented the transcriptions to interviewees to check for correct interpretation and if necessary, for clarification. The transcription in English was checked by a church member who is fluent in both Chinese and English to ensure the analysis data and interpretation was reliable. The names of participants will be kept confidential.

Data Analysis

The researcher has utilized an inductive, comparative method to analyze the data. Known as the “constant comparative method” of data analysis, this method is widely

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 90.

used throughout qualitative research because it allows the researcher to identify patterns without building a grounded theory.²⁸⁹ The constant comparative method involves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences.²⁹⁰ Data collected from each participant was compared in each section in order to find out recurring regularities in the data. The overall objective of this analysis was to identify patterns in the data.

According to Merriam, data analysis is the process of making sense out of the data.²⁹¹ In order to make sense out of the data, Merriam suggests that researchers use data analysis to answer the research questions.²⁹² Merriam specifically points out that the answers to the research questions are called categories, themes, or findings.²⁹³ The researcher looked for the recurring regularities in the data in order to put them under the categories or sub-categories. The researcher made a coding system corresponding to those categories.

The data collected from each participant was compared under the four categories or sections as indicated in Appendix A, corresponding to the research questions. Under section one, the researcher sought to obtain the church backgrounds and ministries of participants overseas in the past and in the United States of America in the present. It was hoped that the information obtained would confirm that they had been involved in leadership ministries, such as teaching in Sunday school, leading Bible studies in small groups, serving on various departmental committees, or serving on a governing board.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 175.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 30.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 175.

²⁹² Ibid., 176.

²⁹³ Ibid., 176.

This information would also confirm that the participants had been listening to preaching for a significant period of time. In this section, some patterns could be identified that provide insights for making recommendations in chapter five of this research.

In section two, the researcher focused on the first research question and the participants' views of preaching from various church experiences. Several categories were created in this section, namely the perspectives of participants on good preaching, their relationships with their pastors and how those relationships impact their listening to a sermon (ethos setting), the role of the Bible in preaching, the authority of preaching, the aspects of God in listening to a sermon, and the role of God in the sermon. In regard to the perspectives of participants on good preaching, the researcher tried to identify the roles of the three classical elements (logos, pathos, and ethos) in good sermons. The researcher put the data into the subcategories, namely, the clear structure and logical presentation of a sermon for logos pattern, good touching stories for pathos in illustration, and applications for ethos.

In section three, the researcher focused on the second research question and the participants' views of preaching in relation to other contexts of teaching, particularly Sunday school. The researcher put the data given by the participants into the categories of similarities and differences, and the experience of participants in learning.

In section four, the researcher focused on the third research question and the participants' views of expository preaching. The researcher put the data given by the participants under the categories of biblical preaching and expository preaching. It was hoped that patterns might be identified in their views of expository preaching in order to help the researcher make recommendations in chapter five.

Limitations of the Study

The conclusions of this study were limited to the views of the lay leaders interviewed, along with the input gained from selected literature. Therefore, the conclusions were limited to the perspectives of a select group of individuals. This study was primarily conducted in the context of the Cantonese-speaking congregation of a local, Chinese church in the San Francisco area. The lay leaders' educational backgrounds, learning styles, relationships with the pastors in their current and previous churches, and communication skills were considered before the data was generalized. The lay leaders of this church were in the position of giving suggestions and evaluations of the ministries of this church in the leadership meetings with the pastoral staff. In the leadership meetings, the lay leaders freely express and give feedback to the pastors without offending their pastors, the researcher, and other leaders about the teaching ministries, pulpit ministries, worship, and the caring and visitation ministries for improvement in this church. It is due to years of serving together, and a relationship based on trust between pastors, the researcher and leaders. The lay leaders are honest and not people pleasers, therefore their views were helpful to the researcher in conducting this project.

Researcher Position

The researcher is an ordained minister in the Christian and Missionary Alliance in North America and an associate pastor of the San Francisco Chinese Alliance church. He has been a part of this church for almost ten years. He also serves in pulpit ministries along with his senior pastor, who assigns him to preach two to four times monthly. The worldview of the researcher would best be described as evangelical and conservative Christian. He believes in the inspiration and the authority of scripture, and that it is the

ultimate guide for Christians to live with integrity. He believes that expository preaching is the best way to convey the message of God to the congregation clearly, logically, and systematically. Despite the availability of various means of communicating the message of God to congregants effectively, the researcher believes it is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and transform the lives of congregants.

While his worldview and professional status could bias the researcher's perspective concerning preaching, he believes the use of systematic data collection procedures, multiple data sources and the literature and peer review process substantially mitigate this problem. At the same time, the researcher believes his background and experience enhances his understanding of what congregants have in their minds and hearts while listening to preaching. This awareness helps the researcher to better communicate the message of God to the congregation. Finally, his worldview influences him to attempt to report and interpret the data with an ethic of integrity. This ethic compels him to protect the privacy of the participants and to adhere to the policies and guidelines to which participants consent.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This study was designed to examine how lay leaders in a Chinese congregation listen to sermons and how they understand preaching. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do lay leaders view preaching in light of their various church experiences in different countries?
2. How do the lay leaders view preaching in relation to other contexts of teaching the Bible in the church?
3. How do lay leaders view expository preaching?

In this chapter, the researcher will introduce the participants of the study and present their insights concerning the research questions. Eight lay leaders from a church in San Francisco, California were interviewed.²⁹⁴ To protect the church's identity, the researcher will refer to this particular church as City Church. The researcher divided these eight lay leaders into two groups. The first group consisted of five people who became Christians and joined churches in Hong Kong before immigrating to the United States. All the members of this group have attended City Church regularly for at least of 7 years. The second group consisted of three lay leaders who became Christians and were baptized in this church. They also have attended City Church regularly for at least

²⁹⁴ This City Church is a Christian and Missionary Alliance church. Christian and Missionary Alliance is an evangelical denomination that allows women to preach in the worship service and conduct worship service. However this denomination does not ordain any women to ministry, but instead consecrates women to ministry.

five years. The members of both groups answered a set of questions that were designed in accordance with the three researched questions. They all primarily responded to the interview questions in English but also occasionally used Chinese terms and names that the interviewers immediately translated into English. The interviewees read and confirmed that the transcriptions of their interviews were accurate.

The Description of Participants

Two women and three men made up the first group of interviewees. All names have been replaced to protect the identities of the participants.

R is a female lay leader at City Church. She became a Christian when she was very young and grew up in a Christian family where both her parents and grandparents were Christians. She was baptized at twelve years old. In Hong Kong, R attended an Alliance church for a long period of time. The church in Hong Kong commissioned her husband, who is a pastor, and R to plant an Alliance church in another district. R and her husband planted the church and stayed for seven years before coming to San Francisco. While at the church plant, R led the children's ministries and started the children's worship on Sunday. She also taught children's Sunday school, served as the church organist, and sang in the choir.

After moving to San Francisco, R and her family have attended City Church regularly, and she has served in children's, music, and teaching ministries. She coordinated of the children's program for about twelve years, which then became a children's fellowship. She also played the piano and the organ for the worship services and served as a worship leader. R even occasionally conducted worship workshops for various fellowship groups within City Church. R has taught Bible classes in adult Sunday

school at City Church. She advised a career fellowship group. R, her husband, and their two adult boys have attended this church for more than fifteen years.

J is a male lay leader who has served on the City Church government board, known as the board of deacons. He attended a Baptist church in Hong Kong before moving to San Francisco. After immigrating, he attended a very strict, conservative Chinese church, known as the Church of God, where he was baptized in 1993. This church emphasized individual spiritual growth and discouraged all college students from dating. The church also strongly emphasized devotion to be the disciples of Jesus Christ. Instead of employing a full time pastor, a group of lay leaders mainly ran this Church of God. These lay leaders trained J to lead Bible studies and to share messages in the Sunday worship. The lay leaders also trained J in leadership and preaching. After attending the Church of God for a few years, J came to City Church where he has attended regularly for more than seven years. He leads Bible studies in small groups for the career fellowship and teaches adult Sunday school classes. J has been elected to the board of deacons, and with his wife has served as an advisor to the college group for more than two years.

K is a female lay leader at City Church. K grew up in a Presbyterian, Chinese church in Hong Kong where she was baptized when she was sixteen. She served in the church's committee of the youth fellowship, worship music ministry, and children's ministry. K taught Bible stories to children in her Hong Kong church until she came to study in the United States. During her college years, she attended a Chinese church and her university's student fellowship for four years. After graduation, K moved to California. There, she attended a Chinese Alliance Church for one or two years in San

Jose. She then moved to San Francisco and started attending City Church in 2000. She has attended City Church for more than ten years. Throughout her time at City Church, she has served in many different capacities. K has played the piano for fellowship and prayer meetings. She was the chairwoman of the career fellowship for two years and was involved in the career fellowship committee for almost six years as secretary. K has led small group Bible studies and has taught a new believers class for the adult Sunday school. She is single and lives in San Francisco by herself.

E is a male lay leader at City Church, where he has served on the deacon board for four years. He began attending a Lutheran church in Hong Kong when he was in high school and attended faithfully until he moved to San Francisco. In Hong Kong, the church leaders trained E to be a disciple of Christ through his participation in the high school and college fellowships. E also helped disciple others in his Hong Kong church. Since coming to City Church in San Francisco, E and his wife have been involved in a couples' fellowship for families with children. Within the couples' fellowship, E has led Bible studies for small groups and has served on its committee. E has also served as a worship leader, usher, and Sunday school teacher. E, his wife and their teenagers have attended City Church regularly for more than fifteen years.

P is a male lay leader at City Church. He attended a Chinese church in Hong Kong where he was baptized in 1963. He moved to Honolulu, Hawaii with his parents in 1966. In Hawaii, he attended an Assembly of God church's Cantonese congregation where he participated in the youth fellowship but did not become involved in any ministry. P attended graduate school in Palo Alto, California, but did not go to church. After his graduate studies, P's parents introduced him to City Church in the 1970's, but

he did not attend City Church regularly until the late 1980's when he joined the church and became active in church ministries. To further his training, P took extension courses from a local Chinese theological seminary. P's former employer, URS, also required him to attend speech training courses for over a year. These courses strengthened P's theological fundamentals and formed a good basis for his Sunday school teaching. He served as superintendent of the church's Sunday school for a few years, taking care of Sunday school administration and teaching adult classes. P and his wife have attended City Church regularly for more than twenty years.

Two women and one man make up the second group of interviewees. As with the first group, all names have been changed to protect the identities of the participants.

A is a male leader in the career fellowship at City Church. He was baptized there in 2007, and he joined the church choir and became involved in the career fellowship committee for more than three years. After training to be a group leader, he then led a career fellowship small group and Bible study. A has attended the worship services regularly since his baptism. In Hong Kong, he attended a Catholic church with his mother, where he heard about Jesus and learned some names of Bible characters. A also learned about Jesus when he studied in a Christian secondary school in Hong Kong. Nonetheless, he was not converted until he attended City Church. A is single.

F is a female leader in the career fellowship at City Church. F moved to Wisconsin as a college student, and she worked there for many years after finishing her schooling. While in Wisconsin, she did not attend any church. F then moved to San Francisco, taking a job as a social worker for the elderly. F's co-worker in this job introduced her to City Church in 2005. F started attending City Church, and she was

baptized in May, 2005. She served as secretary for the committee of the career fellowship and joined the church choir. After training as a group leader, F led a small group and small group Bible study for the career fellowship. She was then invited to co-teach a new believers' class with an experienced adult Sunday school teacher.

S is a female leader in the career fellowship at City Church. She moved to San Francisco with her family and attended City Church's high school and college fellowships. She was baptized in 1995. After graduation, she worked as a kindergarten teacher and then became a manager of a kindergarten center. When she was in elementary school, she heard about Jesus Christ, but her mother did not allow her to go to church with her schoolmate. S's relatives introduced her to City Church, and she began attending regularly with her younger sister. She was involved in the church floral arrangement ministry and joined the church choir. S trained to be a small group leader in the career fellowship. She co-taught a new believers' class for adult Sunday school. She has attended City Church for almost twenty years.

In brief, all participants have experience in teaching the Bible and leading Bible studies. They are active in church ministries and are leaders in various ministries. The results of the interviews will now be considered and analyzed.

Views of Preaching

Styles of Preaching

Different styles of preaching capture the listeners' attention in different ways. R has listened to a lot of different preachers since she has been a Christian for so long. She categorizes sermons into four types, which she describes in the following ways: dynamic,

talking softly with precise points, humorous, and empty talk. She described the style of dynamic preaching by saying,

The preachers were very dynamic, very powerful, and they preached very loudly. They also talked very fast, and every word is just like pounding on you. I think with this kind of preacher you won't fall asleep. ..They are great preachers. It seems like every time they preach, they just want to deliver a very important or urgent message to you. So I think that the way they deliver the message, it really captures my attention.

She then described the second type, talking softly with precise points, as the opposite of dynamic preaching. R elaborates, "Those preachers are very calm. They talk softly, but the message is very precise, clear, even though sometimes the message is very short." She went on to note that many preachers who preach in this style deliver organized sermons that have distinct points. R cited the example of her pastor, Dr. PT saying,

He always gives seven points in a sermon. So in this way, it is easy to keep my attention...We will just focus and try to remember the seven points. This is a good way to present a sermon. Even though you think that seven points are too long, when Dr. PT presents the sermon, it's very precise. He won't just talk. Very, very, short and clear message. So this is also another good way to capture my attention.

R admitted that the third type of preaching style, humorous, is likely the most popular type. She elaborated, "They may also have a lot of illustrations or stories. It helps the congregation or audience to remember the message." E agreed with R, "Also some people are very humorous--that will at least keep your attention."

R then mentioned one more type:

...the fourth type, I encounter some of those preachers who just like to talk, talk. I think the content is very empty. You can't get anything out of the sermon because it's not delivering the word of God. It's just speaking about their own experience,

or just talking about very secular values. These are the preachers I don't like, because I think when you are preaching in the pulpit, it must just be like you are delivering God's word.

E also noticed this tendency in preachers. He said that it was "like the President of the United States. There may be no content, but the way he gives his speech may help him."

J also observed different preaching styles in the City Church. He said,

Some pastors are going for academic style...They go to a Bible book and list out all the points and explain the details, focusing on the Bible verses. In that style, what strikes me is the way they explain the Bible, elaborate. The other style itself, let's say Pastor M. He comes back to more of the realistic world. He uses Bible verses to reflect our basic life. Are we acting on what the Bible said? So this causes you to reflect on yourself and think if you are doing what a Christian should. There are other types, like pastors giving out shared experiences, giving themselves or other people's experiences. So based on those experiences, you can learn from those experiences. ...You learn that they are out there and learn what and when they rely on God and when they don't.

Real Life Applications

Four participants pointed out specifically that real life application captured their attention. K likes a vivid preaching style with real life application. When the application in the sermon applies to her real life situation, this captures her attention the most. She said, "I like the more vivid preaching style, more application in terms of real life, or real life examples, like humor. I think it depends whether that sermon applies to my situation at that point. I think that captures me the most." In addition, she clarified that vivid preaching uses illustrations, as well as visual and sound elements.

E also likes applications relating to him. He explained, "I think for myself on content; how the Bible is interpreted as related to your daily life. That is application to me. It doesn't have to be a very difficult thing. But you know, it just has to be

applicable.” E also said, “If they use daily life examples, that will capture me. I notice if the preacher is presenting something and people are getting distracted, ‘Let me tell you a story,’ and everyone wakes up because they like to hear a story.”

F from the second group said,

But what captures my mind, kind of sticks with me, would be if a person says something related to me—more like application that I have similar experience with. Then it would stick with me a little bit better, or they mentioned a passage that I’ve read and that I know. A lot of times, if it’s on the Old Testament, in the beginning, you don’t understand. You always start reading the New Testament because it is easy to read.

S agreed, “Just today, it tells us how to care for each other. Pastor G asked if you care for your friends and parents. I did not pay attention to my parents. They are nonbelievers. I prayed for my parents, that one day they will accept Christ. But honestly I am not doing well at home. I could not convince them to come to church to know Jesus more.”

New Insights and Contemporary Issues

One participant believed that new insights in content capture the listeners’ attention. E said, “When someone interprets the Bible, if they have something new to me, some new insight, with some verses, everybody sees it the same way. But maybe some Bible scholar or teacher in the seminary has something new and gives you new insight. That will capture me. That is the spiritual part.”

One participant specifically preferred listening to sermons on contemporary issues. A explained,

The sermon itself is really educational, but on the other hand, it’s not. A part can be used for your daily life, but sometimes it’s too educational—just like a lecture that may not be used for daily life. Sometimes, I wish our sermons could have

more bearing with the daily basis. For example, like some kind of news that happened in the world, politics linked to God's message to us would be more helpful. The knowledge from the book, we all understand, but it's sometimes hard to use when you face this realistic world.

He was asked to clarify what he meant by educational sermons. A answered,

"Educational, for example, most of the time the sermon is related to the Bible. That kind of information, but sometimes related to our real world, would be better. For example, like one man, one woman and proposition eight...what kind of point of view does the Christian have."

First Experiences with Sermons

Two people from the second group shared their experiences in listening to sermon when they first came to church. A was attracted by the songs, and the expression of the choir. A said, "The first thing that really hit me was not the speech from the pastor, but the songs from the choir and also their facial expressions. I saw it, so warm and so touching." F said, "In the beginning, I was worried that something was wrong with me. Sometimes when I came out of the service, I was kind of like, 'What did he say?' I couldn't register anything."

Defining a Good Sermon

P considered a good sermon to have a good theme, story, conclusion and applications. P noted,

I am a very good sermon listener, I think. From the training in Sunday school ministry, I learned how to be a good speaker and organize Sunday school lessons. So a good sermon has the same main ingredient as Sunday school teaching. You need an icebreaker, you need to tell a good story, have a good theme, and have organized thoughts, and point out supporting points with a good conclusion at the end. And also, don't forget to challenge your Sunday school students or audience with application to apply the lessons that you learned to your own lives... You got

to have a conclusion and emphasis the points you want to make so students can bring those points home and apply the biblical principles to their own daily lives.

On Relationships with Pastors

When asked about their relationships with their pastors in the past and the present, two participants considered their previous pastors in Hong Kong as spiritual fathers and shepherds nurturing the sheep. R believes that the good relationship with his former pastor allowed him to listen attentively to sermons and grow spiritually. R described this relationship,

The relationship is just like that of a spiritual father. You will be willing to listen to what he preaches...I can always look up to him. I always think that for a pastor, the most important role is just like a shepherd and the sheep. ... How you are going to nurture your sheep? I think this is just like what Jesus told Peter after his resurrection. You have to take care of my sheep. You have to nurture the sheep. I think this is the most important role of a pastor. That means the sheep are following you, they really want to have grass. You have to really feed the sheep. If a pastor can feed the sheep well, I think he is a good pastor. So I think the relationship with the pastor should be just like the shepherd and the sheep. This is the number one.

K agreed that a healthy relationship with her pastors has helped her listen to sermons. K describes her experience with two different pastors saying, “Back in Hong Kong...When I was fifteen, the senior pastor retired. He knew me and my mom very well. It’s more like a teacher, a fatherly figure in Hong Kong. Also here, I think because I am now older and I am quite friendly with the pastors here, we have friendship.”

P also believes a friendship with the pastor is important when listening to a sermon. He described his relationship with the pastors at City Church saying,

We have good relationships, but if the relationship is not so good then of course it will affect the way you listen to the sermon. But my relationship with the pastor has always been good, so there is positive impact on that. If I have a good

relationship with the pastor, of course, I will listen to them more and their sermon really affects me. Most pastors treat me really nice and have good respect on a personal level. Sometimes people go to sports with me, like swimming together, play with me and joke with me--like a personal friend...You know him more. And whatever he speaks, he sometimes demonstrates his life the way the Bible teaches him to do. So if that's the way he speaks and then he does *that*, helping the poor and needy, he demonstrates doing that. And that has a positive impact on me because I see that happening.

J described how knowing his pastor helps him discern the style of preaching and apply it more easily. J said,

Definitely. I think everyone has their own way of absorbing the ideas of the style...Let's say Pastor M uses live experiences to try to strike you and hit you in the face and tell you...For me, I am the kind of person who will take that. So, when he preaches, I know how he is going to come for me. So I prepare for that and get stepped on the face.

In this example, J's friendship with the pastor and knowledge of the pastor helped him listen to the sermon. K agreed,

The more you know your pastor I think it's easier to understand certain points because you know the pastor's background and you know what they were going through during that time period. And sometimes the examples they use apply to their own personal life. And I also mention about testimony, knowing the pastors makes their testimonies more powerful...I think more friends, friendship with pastor rather than authority. I enjoy that more.

The listeners' relationships with the preacher may help them to discern the pastor's main point. E said that sometimes it is difficult to know what a preacher is saying, but "at that point my relationship with the preacher may kick in. I know the preacher and his background may help a little bit." F agrees that knowing her pastors helps her discern what they are saying,

I do not know whether all pastors know every single member in the church, but...because of my involvement in fellowship in different ministries, I think most

pastors know me. In general, we are in good terms. I think it does affect how much I pay attention. I do not have much preference. The style, you guys are all different, very different. You guys do not overlap at all in my opinion. So it's more like when you look at that day, that morning, when you get to the service, you then have different expectations: Oh, this pastor is going to be long; this pastor is kind of funny; that one is more heavy on the application. You guys have different styles. It is more like how it affects my thinking. Affect how I receive on that day.

One participant pointed out, however, that the quality of the sermon, not the relationship with the pastor, affected his listening to the sermon. E's relationship with his pastor in Hong Kong was not close, even though that pastor baptized him. There was about a forty year age difference between E and his pastor. Moreover, E remembered:

A lot of different people preached in my church in Hong Kong. There were a lot of speakers, not just different ones. I can't remember how often my home pastor preached. Maybe once a month? We had two to three preachers. They took turns preaching, so the senior pastor did not preach every week, and we had quite a few outside speakers. So I did not know the speakers at all. I just knew some people maybe from seminary or another church—we invited them to preach. I did not have a relationship with that person at all...It doesn't mean I had a better relationship with the pastor. I liked his sermon more. I think quality of the sermon is the main thing--not just relationship.

E's experience at City Church has been different than his experience in Hong Kong. Even though E and his pastor are now in the same stage of life, their relationship still requires a lot of work.

In the United States, I think we know more and work closer with the pastor. As I grow older, my life experience and age is also closer to the pastor....In the States, I am middle age and the pastor is middle age or not that much older. So I think in terms of life experience and Christian background you can get a little bit closer here. But any kind of deeper relationship, maybe not. You need to have some kind of fellowship or sharing to establish getting-know-each better relationship. Just work together.

S considered her relationship with the pastors in the church by saying, “I would just respect them, as part of brothers and sisters, just like big brothers and sisters...advisors.” Like E, S did not consider that her relationship with the pastors could help her listen to their sermons. Instead, she believes the Holy Spirit helps her receive a sermon. She said, “No. I believe it is the Spirit...You never know the Spirit would be around you. Through people and anything the Spirit brings you the message.”

The Role of the Bible in Sermons

The Bible plays an important role in preaching. Many of the interviewees expressed their belief that preaching should be based on the Bible, which is God’s word. R said, “I believe that the content of the preaching should be only based and focused on the Bible. It is because you are preaching God’s word. Only God’s word can affect our lives. Is that right? The biblical teaching of the pastor, in fact it is the biblical teaching of God through the mouth of the pastor, can apply to our daily lives.” K agreed, “It should be the base of the sermon. All the sermons should be based on Bible teaching. And also if you make a point, the Bible should strengthen that point. It should also make you understand the point more.” E concurred, “In the sense of biblical preaching, I think the role of the Bible should have the primary importance in preaching.” P also noted, “The role of the Bible is very important because everything is based on the Bible. You always base your teaching and preaching on the principles in the Bible. If not then there is no substance in the sermon.” F summarized, “I think it should be the foundation. You have to base on the passage, base on the Bible, base on God’s word.” She then affirmed that the Bible is God’s word.

Discerning Whether Preaching Is from God's Word

When R listed the fourth type of preaching as empty talk, she demonstrated an ability to distinguish whether preaching really delivers God's word. R explained,

...the fourth type, I encounter some of those preachers who just like to talk, talk. I think the content is very empty; you can't get anything out of the sermon because it's not delivering the word of God. It's just speaking about their own experiences, or just talking about very secular values. These are the preachers I don't like, because I think when you are preaching in the pulpit, it must just be like you are delivering God's word.

E also commented upon this, "Like the president of the United States. There may be no content, but the way he gives his speech may help him." E then said,

In the sense of biblical preaching, I think the role of the Bible should have the primary importance in preaching. I hear some that I don't agree. May be I am wrong or the preacher is wrong, but I just do not agree. But not often...but so far, I know some Bible and I ask myself--Is it really true? Or is it something from research or something else. I think biblical preaching is of primary importance, not just the preacher conveys his own thinking or own sharing.

Linking Bible Verses to Daily Issues

Two participants communicated that the Bible should link listeners to daily issues and teach them to be good Christians. A said, "I think the Bible is really important for the sermon as well. If the pastor can link the verses of the Bible or the story to some kind of issues we are facing, it feels more useful for our daily life." S had never thought of the Bible's role in preaching. She said, "I never thought of that." She later added,

At least it teaches how to be good followers of Jesus, and also how to be good Christians...It reminds us every day, we are not perfect. We are sinners even though we accepted Christ. Sometimes we make mistakes. The Bible reminds us to renew. The Spirit renews us by reading the Bible, even a chapter in the Bible. It gives us different perspective/point of views to see and to learn from that message.

On a Sermon's Authority and Power

Several participants shared how they believe a sermon's authority and power are based on God's Word, not on the personality or preaching style of the pastor. R said,

I think this one is about, as I mentioned in the very beginning, the different types of pastors and sermons. It does not necessarily mean that the sermon is powerful if it is very loud. It can be like Dr. PT, soft. Another one is the senior pastor, SW, the successor of Dr. PT. He just talks softly, but they still have power. The way they present the sermon is so powerful, because I think the content of the sermon is really from God...If the pastor is preaching based on God's word, of course, God's word, the word from the Bible, always has authority.

E agreed and shared his experience saying, "In my mind, I know every sermon should have authority, but you know you just don't sense it every time. Objectively, I think it has to come from the Bible...And also the Holy Spirit helps. Of course, sometimes you really feel the power of the word. And you know it is truth. I can't really explain how."

The consistent life of the preacher living out God's word adds authority to the sermon. P said, "All the preaching is based on biblical principles, and if the preacher sets a good example of it himself, that adds more authority when he is preaching...Demonstrating in his daily life he is doing what the Bible said adds more authority to his preaching."

One participant saw that the Bible could help him to distinguish what God's message is in a sermon. A said,

Even though we feel bored or sleepy when the sermon is happening, I really think that we still need to listen because it is God's message which is from the pastor. So basically, that is the way we get the message so that we cannot argue or we cannot justify if this message is from God or not, because by the Bible we are able to do that so we have to believe it, this is from God.

God speaks to the listeners through the preachers; therefore, listeners need to obey.

And yet, preachers are human and make mistakes. J responded by saying,

I think when each pastor comes before God, God speaks through the pastor. So regardless of who is preaching on the stage, it is God speaking to the entire congregation--so we should obey regardless. But definitely, there are times when you can feel like something's not right...but you know at that moment it's not quite God talking or a personal experience. Or the pastor is just too used to his way of preaching that he doesn't realize he is doing his own way.

K said, "I think the Bible is a tool used by God to teach me 'cause sometimes you need to be realistic. Sometimes you need to hear it from someone saying loud to you instead of like just praying and waiting for a sign or waiting for God to talk to you. It's more realistic that way." She then clarified that God talks to her through the pastor a lot of times. F explained how God spoke to a person through the speaker by saying,

That's how he gives you the message. Apparently, you do not talk to God directly, but in a sense he is kind with us, through the environments, through people. I think a lot of times you have to try to see/listen if there is any voice. The most difficult part to me is to distinguish between is that coming from God or is that coming from a person...If I have a question I pray over and over about if there is any discrepancy, then I have to be careful. I go back and forth. I can't decide or I don't know if that is really what God wants me to do.

Listening for God's Character in a Sermon

Three participants wanted to know more about God without any preference of wanting to know specific character traits of God. R said, "I want to know everything. I want to know all...Not only the good side. Sometimes you need something like punishment...This is what we have to learn to learn more about God." E said, "I don't have a preference. I'm just open. I just try to know God more in whatever...I mean you cannot just pick what you like." F said, "Honestly I don't. I don't have a real preference."

One participant preferred to hear about the love of God and how to fear him. J said, “Most of the time, I see the characteristics of God as loving regardless of whatever passage. He is the one power I should fear.”

One participant preferred to know God’s righteousness. K said,

I think for me, more righteousness... I think different groups of other cultures or religions can say they bring love, but only God has righteousness. He is the only person that can show righteousness...I think a lot of things in this society are unfair in this world. It’s unequal and a lot of times, people think money is the most powerful thing in the world. Because of that, people do a lot of things in an ungodly way. And I think knowing God is righteous helps me a lot. So I admire God for that. And also knowing, like, I can’t really see the future at this point. Who knows, right? But I know at the end, God is righteous and I think that is very important....We know there is a future, we are not just thinking of the present. If we see unrighteous things that happen around us, yes, God holds us accountable. So I think that helps me to be a better person because at the end I know God will be righteous and at the end all the unfairness, dishonesty will come out.

One participant considered listening to the love of God and the righteousness of God, and expressed her desire for these characteristics to touch her life. P said,

You need to have a good balance of God’s love and God’s righteousness. The Old Testament more or less emphasizes on God’s righteousness, not so much on God’s love. Good thing we have the New Testament. Jesus demonstrates God’s love by dying on the cross for us. So, whenever you listen to a sermon, there are two sides to God’s deity--on one side God’s love and God’s righteousness on the other. Those are the aspects.

Two participants preferred listening to sermons on God’s faithfulness and care. P said, “God is faithful and listens to our prayers. Scripture touches people’s lives. So those are the aspects of God I want to hear from a sermon. How does God really touch our lives?” F said, “there are times when sermons about certain things might catch my attention more...If you hear about God’s love, the things he does for you no matter how

bad you are...Sometimes you really don't understand how that can be. I ask that question still, how can that be?" She then talked about God's care by saying,

Everything has two sides. If something happens to you, it is bad in your own mind and in humans' mind. But maybe in God's eye it is not. Instead, it is the best thing for me. And that's the hardest thing to accept, that how could that be. How could it be good for me? You really have to think twice to try to understand why those kinds of things are supposed to be good for me.

She then gave a specific example, "A lot of things happened with me that came out of the choices I made in the past. Why do I live alone? I do not have family here. The church is like a family, it gives me a lot of comfort. Brothers and sisters here are like a family, but my blood related family is not here."

One participant preferred to know about the end time. A said, "The most I want to know of course, is how we are going to face the future, the end of the world. How we are going to prepare when the world is ending? It's hard to understand that, even though it's the last chapter of the Bible."

One participant wanted to know God's will. S said, "I have been thinking if I follow him, what can I do for him? I have been asking God. I am here. Please use me. I don't know what's in the future. I am waiting for God's answer. I am ready." E agreed and clarified, "Preaching is God saying something to you. God's will."

On What God Is Doing in the Sermon

Many participants acknowledged that God works in the sermon by his own ways, specifically speaking to the listeners. J explained, "I believe when there is a sermon God is actually there talking, and God has a plan and has his own thing going on. I may not see it or understand. So there is definitely something going on." He further clarified,

Sometimes when I get together with the brothers and sisters, they say God definitely speaks to me. When I hear the sermon, I may not get that same message, but someone else does. I am sure God is working on everyone. He is the almighty God and has his plans. And I will never understand, but I believe definitely in every sermon, He is showing his mercy and his almighty power.

K agreed with J's assessment and linked God's work through a sermon to a pastor's God-given calling to preach. She said,

God speaks to the whole audience whether you are believers or nonbelievers. God is amazing in that way, through one sermon he can touch a lot of people. The speaker (and I think all the speakers) is chosen by God, because I don't think anyone can give a sermon without God choosing people to give a sermon. God has also shown his mercy to nonbelievers, he shows this through the delivery, reminding me and nonbelievers that he is righteous. He also uses the preachers to share the Gospel. One more thing, it's also a testimony. The sermon giver is a real person, he/she actually has a testimony to show, he's not just talking about God who is far away in some point. He is using that person to show that he is real.

F and S agreed that God speaks through sermons, and they pointed out that he uses other means too. F said, "It is kind of what you are talking about, but it could be that God is telling me something or God wants me to do something." S said, "God will use different ways or methods to speak to us. Through pastors or fellowship advisers, close friends and also Bible study. God will use many ways to speak to me" S later elaborated, "The Spirit of God uses different ways/methods to speak to us and to teach us lessons."

R acknowledged that God speaks to his people, but they must be willing to receive the message. He said, "And sometimes talk to individuals who are willing to listen. That's why every time, every Sunday when we go to worship, we are not expecting. I want to have a good preacher talk. It is not necessary, every time you just think that okay, in the worship, God is talking to you." R believes that when listeners come with an expectation that God will speak to them, the Spirit of God works in

people's hearts during the sermon. R explained, "I believe that when the preacher is delivering purely, purely God's word. Of course, the Holy Spirit is working in people's heart. The Holy Spirit helps people to understand the truth...So, you must have to have something from God in that worship. If you have that kind of attitude." P agreed that the Holy Spirit directs the preacher; "Actually, I can see the Holy Spirit is the actual teacher of the sermon. He teaches our hearts directly. The preacher is God's servant to deliver the message. But you can see that behind it is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is behind all that...The Holy Spirit is there to teach us in both Sunday school and preaching."

E admitted that the distinction between God's voice and the preacher's voice is a hard distinction to make. He explained, "So in a spiritual sense, God speaks to you. But in reality, it is a person giving out a speech...." E warned that it is important but difficult to differentiate between the pastor's personal thoughts and the words of God:

Well, I think God should be using the preacher. I mean not just to the listener. If we say the sermon is God speaking to us, God really works, right? God works through the speaker to deliver, so I think God is working through the preacher, the speaker. I think every word out of his sermon should be God's will. I think so, but sometimes I don't think so. But I don't not know how to---I mean it is really hard. I really don't know about the spiritual part. I mean there are sometimes some really lousy preachers. They don't prepare and just say something, and it just doesn't feel right.

A pointed out how God uses the speaker to remind him that God is present and real. A said,

I believe he [God] wants us to know about the knowledge that comes from him. To educate us, God has a lot of patience. He loves us. He has a lot of patience, so I think he wants us to learn something. But I think, also regarding the way we think too, sometimes good speech is good stuff for us to share, but if I am not interested in that way there is no use.

He then continued, “God uses the pastor’s mouth to remind us every week that he is here, because I feel that we are no different from the ancient people in the Bible, we always do the wrong things, sin, just like a cycle. The preaching is good to remind everyone.”

F agreed and clarified that sermons do not always help her make specific life decisions, but they remind her that God is always present, even when she does not know what to do. God’s presence provides great comfort for F and helps her live her best for God. She explained,

It was just like the Israel trip in January, I thought about going but I don’t have funds. I don’t have vacation time. I just started working again after graduating from school. So it’s just not possible. That is not the sermon, but comes from my mind. When you hear a sermon you don’t get something. You would hope that you get the message that God wants you to know. It always reminds you that God is here with you. It is so easy to feel abandoned when things don’t go right. It’s important to come to church consistently. If you don’t go, it’s so much easier. You just sleep in or do other things. There are so many restrictions when you are a Christian, and it is so easy to think that way. But you need to make a choice; you got to come. That’s what keeps you straight. This world is evil.

She then further added, “It just reminds me to keep myself straight. This is where I belong. This is where your priorities are, that is the way you ought to be. I could be anywhere. It is the choice you make that is the most important to you. Where you go is where your heart is.”

Preaching in Worship in Relationship to Other Contexts of Teaching the Bible

The participants compared preaching in Sunday worship with teaching in Sunday school. They found the several similarities between preaching and teaching. Preaching and teaching in Sunday school both require the speaker to explain God’s word. R elaborated, “They are both teaching God’s word...application. The way they present is

different, but they still have the same thing. You have to explain God's word in the three parts: observation, interpretation, and application. Only the way you deliver the message is different."

K agreed because the foundation of both preaching and teaching is the Bible. K explained, "Both have a point of teaching. And I think also in terms of authority, it's very similar because it's all from God, no matter if it's Sunday school or sermon. Everything is based from the Bible. And it's also all about God, but in different ways." F concurred that God's word is the focus, "God's word; still focus on God's word. It is learning. There is a teacher...." She also affirmed that the pastor and Sunday school teachers are both teachers.

The participants also agreed that both preaching and teaching include applications for real life. R said,

Those discussions may apply to daily life. This is a kind of application. But in the worship, you cannot have this kind of interaction. But the pastor still has to deliver that part: "How are you going to apply my sermon to your daily life?" That is the application. If you only deliver God's word, but you cannot link to the daily life, you cannot expect the audience or congregation to work it out....They are both teaching God's word.

S agreed but nuanced her answer saying, "Sunday school has more daily application. Actually both preaching and teaching have the applications." F said that both preaching and teaching should incorporate "learning God's word, how to follow him, how to be a Christian, how to live God's way."

The interviewees believed that a theme should focus both preaching and teaching. P said, "I see our pastors use different methods, sometimes topical, sometimes expository.

That's fine as long as you start it with a good theme, and the same thing I said a while ago, you affect lives." He then explained what a good theme is:

If you have a theme to start with, they always remember that theme. In your storytelling, emphasize that theme, illustrate how that theme works, then they will really remember your teaching with the stories and illustrative examples. Sometimes I even use my own experiences to explain that theme. That will help also. When I teach—let's say the book of Job—there's also a theme. Each lesson each Sunday has a theme itself. Of course the story could be pretty long, several chapters each Sunday, but then people get lost if you don't emphasize on one theme.

Another similarity the participants acknowledged is that learning together creates a fellowship. K said, "And I would say whether it's in a sermon or Sunday school it's also a fellowship. Even if it's different in the sermon, it's also fellowship to me." Then she elaborated on what she meant by fellowship,

Sunday school of course, because there's more interaction and open sharing a lot of times. That to me is fellowship, but even for sermon, I don't know how to explain, but it's just, to me, fellowship is when we learn together. So even the person giving the sermon learns more while he or she is giving the sermon. I believe God continues to speak to that person during the sermon and he or she may have more thoughts during the sermon then when he or she was preparing the sermon. To me, it's the sharing part that is kind of like a fellowship.

Finally, the participants saw the same structure in the contents of both preaching and teaching. P said,

But the similarities, as what I described awhile ago. You need to start with a theme and then you build your ice breaker and story around that theme and emphasize different points using the scripture as reference to enrich your point and theme. At the end of the Sunday school class or sermon you have the conclusion and challenge your students or audience to live the life using some form of application. The Holy Spirit is there to teach us in both Sunday school and preaching.

While the participants found many similarities between preaching and teaching, they also saw many differences. The interviewees acknowledged the following differences between preaching in a worship service and teaching in a Sunday school class. The interviewees observed that preachers use a monologue format in preaching, while Sunday school teachers often use a diversified presentation. With regard to sermons, E said, “it is a speech by somebody. It is a one-way speech, a monologue.” E compared and contrasted preaching with teaching explaining, “But in Sunday school, you can have more discussion and two-way feedback. It is more teaching in the sense—a more biblical and academic learning. It is school. Preaching is one-way and maybe you just sit there and listen and follow.” R gave a further example of this contrast,

Sunday school is interactive...In Sunday school, you can monologue first, for maybe the first part. You can even use a dvd or whatever as a teaching aid to help the class. After that, maybe at the last part, you can split into small groups and then have discussion lead by some leaders. Or you can have the whole class and lead by yourself with some discussions. Those discussions may apply to daily life. This is a kind of application. But in the worship, you cannot have this kind of interaction.

J has had similar experiences as R. He elaborated,

...for example, spiritual fruit. The pastor preaches about spiritual fruit in the sermon and tells the congregation that from the Bible and from his quiet time, God talking to him. In Sunday school we also have that, but for instance, instead of reading the Bible, we watch a dvd and the pastor breaks down each fruit and then quotes other places and then gives out questions to get us to think. Are you practicing it or asking for it?

P pointed out that the atmosphere differs between a sermon and a Sunday school lesson, “There are some differences and similarities. Sunday school class is more casual, allowing students to ask questions and the preacher will explain through scripture and

answer those questions. In preaching, it is one direction. You can't say 'Hey explain this to me.'" P elaborated, "Instead of Sunday school teaching, you have two way communication between you and the students." A agreed, "Preaching is one way, it's from God to us. Teaching is both ways, you ask and someone answers, immediately. Preaching, I'm not saying God just teaches us something. He also answers some of the questions through the pastor's mouth, but I think the big difference is that it's just one-way... It is a message from God. It's message more than studying."

The interviewees noted how preaching tends to address topics, but Sunday school follows a curriculum. R believes that topical sermons complement Sunday school curriculums well and engage listeners more easily;

In fact, for my own opinion, I think that in the worship, it should be more topical...Sunday school is more systematic. You're maybe studying the books of the Bible. So, if we have Sunday school doing that kind of teaching already, so why do we have to have the same kind of teaching in the worship? Sometimes in the worship, if it's just topical, then the content could be more appropriate...maybe for some people, it's not as boring.

J agreed, "In Sunday school, you follow a curriculum. You follow a series of material already prepared...So you know the end result...Like we want people to understand the book of Psalms. We know the focus is on understanding the book of Psalms. All the material is prepared."

The participants also observed a difference in time restraints. K noted,

Sunday school teachers are allowed more time so there can be more detail in everything he or she teaches. I think Sunday school can be very straightforward, like a Bible study kind of lesson, and can go into every detail. The teacher can ask the students to flip the Bible anywhere, or go back and forth with different verses. It's more important, too. While for a sermon, most of the time it is one way. And also, I think more application.

P added, “The Sunday school duration is also usually longer. Preaching in worship is usually pretty short, twenty to twenty-five minutes.”

While a diverse audience attends worship, there is generally a more homogeneous audience for Sunday school. K observed, “But for a sermon, you have to reach a different audience; so it somehow has to cover a more broad aspect. For each sermon just can’t be limited to covering just kids, just parents, or just elderly, or just male or just female.

While for Sunday school, you categorize people for specific lessons--people who are new in the church, or people who have been to church for a very long time.” F said of sermons,

You pay attention...to five hundred people coming to worship every week. You could say, how many of them could listen to the whole sermon? Two-thirds or fifty percent. People can sneak out easily...But Sunday school is a much smaller setting. In Sunday school, they are supposedly all believers. They are there because they want to learn more. They want to improve. They want to take more, to hopefully get ready to serve other people.

The participants also believe that sermons carry more authority than teaching in Sunday school. E explained preaching’s authority saying,

Sometimes I think preaching is just not teaching. Preaching is...sometimes you don’t have to understand. You just follow and you get no answer. Maybe sometimes after they preach, you have more questions. Not because it was lousy preaching, but because of the content, and you know you can’t understand God one hundred percent. Sometimes, the preacher says something that really confuses you, but if you believe that the preaching is from God, you just follow. More authority in preaching during sermon...Preaching is not like in a school. Preaching is God saying something to you, God’s will. Maybe that will is from the Bible. Not maybe, it should be from the Bible. Preaching is one-way and maybe you just sit there and listen and follow.

In a similar respect, the participants believe that a sermon brings a message, but teaching in Sunday school is more informative. A clarified, “Sunday school is mainly

Bible study and Bible teaching...And then preaching is for you to be able to listen to God's message. Message is more from a sermon. Bible teaching is part of the message, but there is more knowledge you can get." Several participants stated that the sermon's message should come directly from the Bible, but some Sunday school teaching could address topics outside of the Bible. J said,

For preaching, the pastor has quiet time before God and let God speak to him about what he should talk about. So when God is speaking to him, then he starts looking for references and material. But ultimately everything should be coming from the Bible. Ultimately that makes the difference. Because in Sunday school, it is not Bible directly related stuff. Sure the goal is direct back to the Bible. But there are many ways to achieve by knowing the Bible.

Several interviewees acknowledged that Sunday school teaching could be more informative and detailed in biblical knowledge through discussion, questions, and answers, while preaching in worship could not have this kind of interaction. F said,

You can get more in-depth with certain topics or certain books. You are able to discuss. That's the biggest difference. In worship, the pastor asks questions. People just raise their hands, but you don't get the whole group discussion in worship. In Sunday school, you are able to know each other better. It could even be a little cell group, a little bit fellowship too. In worship, people can come to church for twenty-five years and still not know someone else. People just come and go.

S agreed that Sunday school teachers can explore the Bible in more depth:

Sunday school is to know the Bible in more detail, background, and history. Preaching is more on one topic. You hear the pastor preach and then they talk about the meaning, what God wants us to do, and why. To encourage us to follow him and do it from God's will. The Spirit works in Preaching. In Sunday school you study on one book, and go into more detail about that book.

She then added, “Preaching is one-way. God speaks to us. We can’t discuss with others. During Sunday school we can ask questions, and have an ongoing conversation in a group. We study the Bible.”

A noted that the context for a sermon allows people to draw from the whole worship service, whereas a Sunday school class stands alone. A said,

But I can get other things from church besides the message. God may not use the pastor’s mouth to answer my questions, but He uses other pastor or brother and sister to give me the answer. It’s kind of hard to explain, because God may use different ways, not only just the pastor. So as long as you come to church on Sunday for worship, I can guarantee you can get something, but it may not be the speech from the pastor. It could be from the songs, even from the Sunday service.

In contrast, K believes she could take home something from Sunday school. K said,

I think a lot of times, after we sit through the sermon we may not be taking a lot home. But that doesn’t mean the sermon is not applicable that it is not good. I don’t know if there is any way to make sure we take something home...After Sunday school, you always take something home...It’s not physical. It’s something you remember. To be honest, sometimes after the sermon, I don’t remember what the Bible verses for that day were...I guess if it’s not applicable to me, sometimes I just don’t quite get it.

K admitted that Sunday school teaching tends to be more applicable to her life than sermons because the subjects in the Sunday school are more specific. K said, “For Sunday school, it can be more specific because of the subject matter. It can be one book.”

Views of Expository Preaching

In responding to the third research question, “How do lay leaders view expository preaching?” the participants were asked to define biblical preaching and distinguish expository preaching from biblical preaching.

Five participants understood biblical preaching to be based on the Bible, God's word, and not from man's thoughts and ideas. R expounded upon the definition: "Biblical preaching is just like you are preaching God's word. It's based on the Bible. It's more focused on God's word, less on man's word. Don't talk about your own experience, and all those garbage. I think this is very important. The pulpit is a place to teach God's word, it's not the place to teach secular values or some other business." J voiced a similar opinion,

I think biblical preaching cannot be subjective. It has to follow the Bible. You must believe what the Bible said and everything must come out from God. You cannot have your own meaning and put that back in the word. Everything must be from the Bible. The pastor is only passing out the message, he's not making some modifications and have the passage go out; it must strictly be from the Bible.

Several participants expressed the belief that all pastors should ground their sermons in the Bible. K said, "I thought all sermons are based on the Bible." She then added, "Biblical preaching...it's kind of like drilling into the verses. It's going into the deeper meaning. You try to explain every single word. I think that's more like biblical preaching." E also expressed how "all preaching should be biblical... We say the Bible is of primary importance in preaching. Every sermon, all preaching should be biblical." E then continued to say, "In the sense of biblical preaching, I think the role of the Bible should have the primary importance in preaching. I think biblical preaching is of primary importance, not just the preacher conveying his own thinking or own sharing. I mean, sharing is okay...can't say right or wrong. But sometimes people just interpret themselves." P added, "Biblical preaching should start with and be based on the scriptures." A elaborated that biblical preaching is "based on the Bible story and then

from the Bible story the preacher will explain it, how we could see the message from that particular story or particular verses.”

K pointed out that biblical preaching targets mature Christians. She said, “I think the audience needs to be more mature to understand biblical preaching...I don’t think you can use time or a number of years to categorize, it’s more whether you are mature, you read the Bible enough, and have a better knowledge of the biblical background.” In a similar observation, F observed that biblical preaching is just explaining God’s word, and that listeners must follow God, whether they agree or not. F said, “You explain God’s word, what God wants you to do. The meaning in the Bible is sometimes just like a command. Sometimes the Bible is hard to understand. It is just like a command, just like an order.”

S observed that biblical preaching requires seminary training. It has structure in form and follows a series from a Bible book. S said of pastors who preach biblical sermons, “First it is a gift from God. I do not have the gift. You also need some knowledge, study in seminary or Bible school.” She then came back to what biblical preaching is by saying, “Preaching from the Bible, chapter by chapter. Based on the Bible. The message and structure are from the Bible...For example, Paul always says this and that we have to follow this and that; we have to do it.”

In regard to expository sermons, P added,

Expository preaching is when you go into the Bible and you start to explore, what is the meaning of that scripture? And then you explain more, and of course you have observation. You have explanation, and you have application from that scripture. Maybe you have some supporting scripture of that scripture too, but mainly you deal with that scripture. Most of the time a preacher will use a book, such as Mark or John to have consistent preaching from that. Of course the

advantage is you go through this whole series of preaching of one book so you can have deep understanding of its teaching, but sometimes when you get into some topics you cannot digress to different topics because one book has so many topics.

R distinguished expository preaching from Biblical preaching by noting that there is a theme or topic in the expository sermon that mainly explains the Bible. The theme or topic should have biblical support in an expository sermon; “Expository preaching is more explanatory on the scripture...It’s more explaining verse by verse.” She then continued,

Expository preaching still needs a topic. When you prepare a sermon, you still have to start by picking a topic. Based on that topic, you start to find the verses to explain, to support that topic. It is not like teaching Sunday school. In teaching Sunday school, you teach book by book, or verse by verse. But expository preaching is not only explaining the verses. You still have a topic; those verses are going to support, to explain your topic.

She then clarified that a topic could be a theme. She continued, “I always believe when you are preaching in the pulpit, it should be always based on God’s word. Even though you use other verses to support, to explain this verse, this is the way.”

P saw the differences between an expository sermon and other sermons, but believes that the goal of all the various types of sermons should be to apply the Bible to the listeners’ lives. He said, “I see our pastors use different methods, sometimes topical, sometimes expository. That’s fine as long as you start it with a good theme and same thing I said a while ago, you affect lives.” He then explained what a good theme is by saying,

Well, the situation is like this. You always think that your students have a very short span of so-called reasoning. If you have a theme to start with, they always remember that theme. In your storytelling, emphasize that theme, illustrate how

that theme works, then they will really remember your teaching with the stories and illustrative examples. Sometimes I even use my own experiences to explain that theme. That will help also. When I teach, let's say the book of Job, there's also a theme. Each lesson each Sunday has a theme itself. Of course the story could be pretty long, several chapters each Sunday, but then people get lost if you don't emphasize on one theme.

A explained that expository sermons are mainly from the Bible with points and sub-points from the Bible. What a preacher says is mainly from the Bible, but sometimes preachers do not connect the Bible's teaching to the listeners' lives. A said, "Not all the pastors, but most of the time, preaching is in that category." He then continued, "By their power-point, the pastor chooses a verse and then they will divide it by parts and explain. While they explain they relate to the Bible and the meaning from those verses. ...Sometimes it seldom relates to our daily life. That's what I feel." He then further said, "On the positive side it is good because it is really according to the Bible and doesn't add much or any source not from the Bible...Best way is to let the Bible prove itself."

F noted that the form of expository preaching is structured and orderly. F said, "It sounds different, seems more structured. It would relate you to other passages in the Bible, but more like one, two, three, four, five. Kind of like there is an order..."

S believes an expository sermon gives deeper meaning. S said,

More meaning—what's the meaning behind, what's the purpose from the message? For example, Jesus always gives some answers, but doesn't directly tell you these. We need to think about it. Jesus uses different stories to tell you the message. Expository preaching is more like digging in more and more, deeper and deeper. Every time you will see from a different angle to see/view the message. More details about the background.

Four participants expressed that they were unfamiliar with the term expository preaching. E admitted, “Well it’s a new term to me.” J guessed that expository and biblical preaching are similar, “I honestly do not know, but if I have to compare, they look similar. It has to be from the Bible, because people try to define [later clarified to “explain”] God’s Word.” K also offered a guess that expository preaching is more biblical preaching in regard to explaining the Bible; “I think it’s more biblical preaching, but now that I recall a few times when Pastor G was doing a series in Revelation, is that closer to expository preaching? I don’t understand the term very well.”

Summary of the Findings

Three participants talked about the styles of preaching and how style could affect how they listen to sermons. Three participants felt that their relationship with the pastor could help them to listen to sermons and even to understand what the pastor wanted to communicate. The other three participants believed that their relationship with their pastor could not impact how they listened to sermon.

Most participants thought that real life, specific applications captured their attention in sermons. One participant mentioned that new insights in a sermon capture his attention. Storytelling and real life illustrations also help some participants to listen to sermons.

Most participants understood that all sermons should be based on the Bible. Two participants indicated that they distinguish whether preachers really deliver God’s word or their own ideas because the Bible is God’s word and the authority and power of sermons are based on scripture. Nonetheless, if pastors’ lives were observed to be consistent with the Bible’s teaching, they added more power and authority to the sermon.

The participants also expressed that God speaks to listeners in a sermon in different ways. The Holy Spirit helped some participants to understand the sermon and spoke to them. Three participants wanted to know more about God in listening to a sermon, specifically God's love, righteousness, and faithfulness. Two participants felt comfort that God affirmed his presence with them.

Most participants perceived that preaching in worship is a monologue, while teaching in Sunday school is diversified, with various means of presentation. However, both preaching in worship and teaching in Sunday school should be based on God's word. Many participants noted how preaching delivers a specific message, while teaching was mainly focused on more detailed biblical knowledge. One participant understood that there was more authority in preaching in worship than teaching in Sunday school. Several participants also observed that preaching is delivered to a very diverse audience in worship while teaching reaches out to a homogeneous group in a smaller setting. Teaching in Sunday school followed a curriculum, while preaching was more topical. Also, time is constrained during preaching in worship, but the length of time can be longer for Sunday school teaching. One participant often takes home something from Sunday school but not from the sermon in worship. Another participant pointed out that something else could be taken home in worship other than just the sermon, the fellowship of the church body. One participant pointed out that preaching in worship and teaching in Sunday school are a kind of fellowship in learning.

Participants understood that biblical preaching should be based on the Bible, more focused on God's Word, and with more explanation on the Bible. One participant thought that preachers must be trained to deliver biblical preaching, and that biblical preaching

was to more mature Christians. Four participants acknowledged that they did not know what expository preaching was. One participant believed that the difference between biblical preaching and expository preaching was very small. Two participants understood that there was a theme with points supported by scriptural references in expository preaching. Two participants observed that expository preaching was more structured and orderly, with more explanation of the Bible.

In regard to good sermons and good teaching, one participant with speech training mentioned that all sermons and Sunday school teaching should have a theme, with good ice breakers, good illustrations, good applications, and points supported by scriptural references. This participant could explain expository preaching in terms of structure.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the views that lay leaders hold on preaching, with particular emphasis on their understanding of expository preaching. In chapter two, the review of literature gave insight on the biblical perspective on preaching, particularly on expository preaching. The literature in chapter two summarized expository preaching as preaching that focuses upon God's word, with Christ being the center of the message, and with the intention of changing the minds and behavior of the hearers. Expository preaching distinguishes itself as a form of preaching because it demands that preachers speak what the word of God says instead of the preachers' personal opinions. Preachers base their authority and power in delivering the message upon the word of God because God's power in his word transforms the preacher and his people. Although preaching, especially expository sermons, is distinct from teaching and lecturing, many of the cited authors commend the use of rhetorical elements in preaching because they could help hearers focus on the message.

Chapter three described the methodology of this qualitative case study. The qualitative research was carried out by interviewing eight participants who were lay leaders in a Chinese church to find out how they listened to sermons and to explore their understanding of expository preaching. The following research questions guided the interviews.

- (1) How do lay leaders view preaching in light of their various church experiences *in different countries*?
- (2) How do the lay leaders view preaching in relation to other contexts of teaching the Bible in the church?
- (3) How do lay leaders view expository preaching?

Chapter four reviewed significant findings from the interviews. Chapter five will discuss the study and findings in light of the literature review and make recommendations for further research related to the purpose of the study.

Summary and Findings

This study has shown that various styles and techniques of preaching could impact how participants listen to sermons. God speaks to listeners through sermons in different ways. Some participants discussed how their relationships with their pastors helped them to listen to sermons and understand what their pastors wanted to communicate. For example, if a pastor's life was observed to be consistent with the Bible teaching, this added more power and authority to the sermon. In contrast, other participants noted that their relationships with their pastors did not affect how they listen to sermons. Real life sermon applications that specifically related to the lives of the participants captured their attention, and one participant mentioned that new insights in sermons captured his attention. Also, stories and real life illustrations helped some participants listen to sermons.

Most participants understood that all sermons should be based on the Bible. The participants all expressed their belief that the Bible is God's word and provides the authority and power for sermons. Two participants could distinguish whether preachers

really delivered God's word or delivered their own thoughts and ideas. Moreover, the Holy Spirit works with God's word to help some participants understand sermons. Some participants wanted to know more about God when they listened to sermons. Each participant sought to know more about God's love, righteousness and faithfulness. Two participants felt comfort that God affirmed his presence with them.

Most participants understood preaching in worship as a monologue and teaching in Sunday school as more diverse with various means of presentation. However, God's word must provide the foundation for both preaching in worship and teaching in Sunday school. The participants understand preaching as a focused message with illustrations and applications, while teaching can dive into more detailed biblical knowledge. Moreover, preaching was to a very diverse audience in worship, while teaching was to a homogeneous group and in a smaller setting. The participants further distinguished between preaching and teaching by noting that teaching in Sunday school often followed a curriculum, while preaching was more topical. Moreover, time was constrained in preaching, but the length of time could be longer in Sunday school teaching. One participant said that he could take home something in Sunday school but not in a sermon in worship. However, another participant pointed out that something else could be taken home in worship other than just the sermon. One participant saw similarities between the two, noting that preaching in worship and teaching in Sunday school was a kind of fellowship in learning. Another participant understood that there was more authority in preaching in worship than teaching in Sunday school

Participants understood that biblical preaching should be based on the Bible, be more focused on God's word, and be more explanatory of the Bible. One participant

expressed that preachers need training to preach biblically. Four participants acknowledged that they did not know what expository preaching was. One participant believed that the difference between biblical preaching and expository preaching was very small. Two participants understood that in expository preaching, there was a theme with points supported by scriptural references. Two participants observed that expository preaching was structured and orderly.

One participant with speech training talked about how to identify good preaching and good teaching. He then mentioned that all sermons and Sunday school teaching should have a theme, with good ice breakers, good illustrations, good applications, and points supported by scriptural references. This participant could distinguish expository preaching in terms of structure.

Four Cantonese-speaking pastors serve in this Chinese church, and City Church holds two monthly Cantonese services. The senior pastor preaches most often and then assigns the associate pastors to preach one or two times in the two monthly Cantonese services. The senior pastor has served at City Church for more than twenty years. Two of the associate pastors came from City Church, and the other one joined from an independent church. There are diverse preaching styles among those pastors.

Discussion of The Findings: Church Leaders' Views of Preaching On The Nature and Purpose of Preaching

In regard to the purpose and nature of preaching, most participants understood that the Bible holds the most important role in preaching. All sermons should be based on the Bible, which is God's word. E said, "I believe that the content of the preaching should be only based and focused on the Bible, because you are preaching God's word. So then,

only God's word can affect our lives." As cited in the literature review, Mulligan argues that sermons should be based on God's word, so that the congregation considers the sermon to be the word of God.²⁹⁵ The Holy Spirit uses pastors' sermons to convict listeners. In this respect, sermons become the word of God. Because the word of God can affect the life of the listener, it is important that preacher base his sermon and words on God's word. Just like prophets, preachers have to proclaim God's word, nothing more or less, to the people of God.

God's word has the authority and power to affect our lives. In the findings, one participant said, "If the pastor is preaching based on God's word, of course, God's word, the word from the Bible, always has the authority." In the literature review, Packer points out that "the authority of preaching flows from the transparency of the preacher's relation to the Bible and the only personal God whose word is the Bible."²⁹⁶ Another participant said,

All the preaching is based on the Bible principle, and if the preacher sets a good example of it in himself, that adds more authority when he preaches ...If you just listen to somebody saying, "Do this, do that," you do not see the preacher himself setting a good example of what he does. If the preacher demonstrates in his daily life by doing what the Bible said, this adds more authority to his preaching.

Pastoral authority to preach comes from the word of God. When listeners see the ethos of their pastors, their actions demonstrate the authority of God in their lives cause them to live obediently.

In regard to the power of God's word preached, Chapell said, "Preaching that is true to Scripture converts, convicts, and eternally changes the souls of men and women

²⁹⁵ Mulligan, 8.

²⁹⁶ Packer, 12.

because God's Word is the instrument of divine compulsion, not because the preachers have any power in themselves to stimulate such godly transformation."²⁹⁷ Therefore, Christians listen to sermons because the sermons based on God's word have power and authority to impact our lives. Sermons based on God's word demand people's attention and obedience. These sermons are different from other motivational and inspirational speeches. People coming to church and listening to sermons should understand that they are listening to God's word. This is the foundation of a sermon, and the authority of the word of God demands the obedience of congregants and preachers.

Most participants in this study perceived that God works through sermons in his own way, especially when teaching the listeners. God speaks to the whole audience, whether they are believers or non-believers, in different ways. Preachers must be aware that they are only the instruments of God for delivering the message to the congregation.

Because sermons should be based on the Bible, preachers must find their main message of each sermon in God's word, rather than deriving it from their own thoughts and ideas. One participant said, "I think biblical preaching is of primary importance. It's not just the preacher conveying his own thinking or own sharing." If the preachers preach from the Bible, this participant feels the power of the word. This participant explained,

In my mind, I know every sermon should have authority, but you know you just don't sense it every time. Objectively, I think it has to come from the Bible. I would rather have the preacher explaining the Bible... And also the Holy Spirit helps. Of course, sometimes you really feel the power of the Word. And you know it is truth. I can't really explain how.

The Holy Spirit convicts listeners that God's word is true, and expository sermons help preachers to focus their message on God's word. All the ideas in an expository

²⁹⁷ Chapell, 27.

sermon should come from God's word, not from the thoughts of the pastor. Pastors should bind themselves to God's word while preparing their messages. In the introduction of *Text-Driven Preaching*, David Allen clearly states that "text-driven preaching (expository preaching) stays true to the substance of the text, the structure of the text, and the spirit of text."²⁹⁸ Therefore, expository preaching has a significant role in the pulpit ministry. This format provides a safe guard to the preacher to preach God's word without imposing their thoughts and ideas in the message. Expository preaching should appeal to all preachers in all generations.

Based on the findings, the views of Chinese lay leaders from both groups on the nature and purpose of preaching are no different from the literature on the nature and the purpose of preaching. Indeed, it is fundamental that the Chinese lay leaders perceive that preaching is based on God's word, and the message is not about the ideas of the pastors. Just like Western Christian leaders, Chinese lay leaders understand that God's word has the authority and power to affect the lives of Christians. In this Chinese church, the senior pastor allows his associates to preach at least one or two times monthly. Therefore, most lay leaders in this church do not have any preference in listening to a particular preaching style.

On Styles of Preaching

During the interviews, eight participants shared their experiences in listening to sermons. They observed that pastors deliver a variety of sermons to their congregations. In regard to the style of preaching, if listeners are tuned to a particular style of preaching, they are ready to receive the message from their pastors. For example, one participant

²⁹⁸ David Allen, 8.

listened to the pastors in her Hong Kong church for a long period of time. She preferred listening to a style of preaching that was concise, with precise sermon points. She said, “Because I was in the church that he pastored for the longest time. He is really, really good....I think he is the most remarkable one.” The preachers from this participant’s church in Hong Kong are known to be good and effective preachers. A precise and concise sermon with clear points can be helpful because people have short attention spans in listening to sermon.

Some participants prefer listening to life experience preaching with applications that help them to live obedient lives. Life experience preaching with applications may help preachers connect to their congregations. However, this kind of preaching is heavier on the application side with less biblical support. Pastors who preach sermons with heavy emphasis on life-application must take care to avoid moralistic sermons. Chapell reminds pastors to apply duty with *grace*.²⁹⁹

Some of the study participants did not express any preference in style of preaching. Because the pastors at City Church have diverse preaching styles, listeners do not acclimate to one particular style. One participant shared,

In general, we are in good terms. I think it does affect how much I pay attention. I do not have much preference. The style, you guys are all different, very different. You guys do not overlap at all in my opinion. So it’s more like when you look at that day, that morning, when you get to the service, you then have different expectations: Oh, this pastor is going to be long; this pastor is kind of funny; that one is more heavy on the application. You guys have different styles. It is more like how it affects my thinking—how I receive that day.

²⁹⁹ Bryan Chapell, “Appication Without Moralism,” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resources for Today’s Communicators* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 293.

Styles of preaching can impact how listeners receive the message. In fact, it is a challenge to the pulpit ministries of a multi-staff church to convey expository sermons in different styles so that sermons are still true to the text. While pastors must preach in their own styles, they need to learn humbly from others and also listen to their congregations about how they receive the messages in order to improve their preaching. There is not much difference in preference among preaching styles between these two groups, with the exception of one or two interviewees from the first group. Some lay leaders from the first group listen to different guest speakers from their previous churches in Hong Kong. Guest speakers are quite often invited to speak in churches in Hong Kong, and the senior pastor may only preach one or two times every month. It may be different from the Western churches because the senior pastors of most Western churches preach every Sunday.

On Three Classical Rhetorical Elements

The research participants often interwove into the discussion their observations about ethos, pathos, and logos, the three classical rhetorical elements. Three participants listen for logos during sermons. For example, one listens to a sermon for new insights and good content, and another participant prefers to have a theme with orderly structure and clear points with good illustrations. Logos clearly plays a vital role in a good sermon. These participants listen to preaching with a discerning mind. Two of these participants considered their previous pastors in Hong Kong to be spiritual fathers, and they listen to them obediently.

Despite these participants' admiration for logos, ethos and pathos still play important roles in the sermon. The ethos comes in because they trust their pastors as their

spiritual fathers. In fact, one logos listener indicated that having a good relationship with the pastor affects how he listens to the preaching because he can observe that the pastor practices what he preaches. This participant said,

...but my relationship with the pastor has always been good, so there is a positive impact on that. If I have a good relationship with the pastors, of course, I will listen to them more and their sermons really affect me. Most pastors treat me really nice and have good respect and on a personal level...like a personal friend. You know him more. And whatever he speaks, he sometimes demonstrates his life the way the Bible teaches him to do. So that's the way he speaks and then he does that--helping the poor and needy. He demonstrates doing that. That has a positive impact on me because I see that happen.

In this case, the pastor's consistent life, or ethos, had impacted the listener. Real life application can capture listeners' attention, and touching stories can also capture a logos listener. Pathos also helps listeners due to their caring and loving relationships with their pastors, which helps them to understand how God's word should be applied in their daily lives. The three classical elements clearly continue to sway listeners today, and their influence does not come in isolation. Ethos, pathos, and logos work together to help pastors communicate. Allen argues that there is a particular combination of listening tendencies in each listener and congregation. He then proposes,

A pastor can incorporate into every (or nearly every) sermon material that parishioners likely to receive and process on each of the three settings. To put it crudely, the preacher could communicate the message in three languages in each sermon—ethos language, logos language, and pathos language. In one sermon, the preacher could say the same thing in these three different modes.³⁰⁰

Indeed, ethos, pathos, and logos guide pastors in preparing sermons. Ethos challenges pastors to live what they preach, to live their sermons among the congregation.

³⁰⁰ Allen, 111-112.

Pathos challenges pastors to love, shepherd, and care for their sheep so that their sheep can follow and obey what they preach from God's word. Logos challenges pastors to study God's word diligently and to rely on the Holy Spirit. Without all three elements, sermons become less effective. Together, the three classical elements challenge pastors to manage their time wisely in a balanced way so that they feed the sheep emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually.

According to Paige Patterson, the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, these three elements are valuable to preachers who want to make an optimal presentation of God's word to the congregation. He elaborates,

Classical rhetoric, no matter how persuasive, can never approach the transforming impact of Spirit-endowed preaching. But Aristotle's three criteria for rhetoric are still invaluable for today's minister. Ethos, logos, and pathos in Christian, text-driven, Spirit-inspired preaching are, in fact, lifted to a level that Aristotle himself might have envied.³⁰¹

The Bible still guides the use of ethos, pathos and logos. Preachers' actions should demonstrate how they live out God's word genuinely. Also, when delivering a sermon, preachers should be cautious with the congregation's emotions. They should not manipulate the congregation if the pathos application is not drawn out from the text they preach.

Based on the findings, most participants indicate that good relationships with their pastors help them to listen to sermons. The one male participant who did not indicate this said that he prefers listening to sermon with new insight and good content. In this area, the Chinese lay leaders in this church are no different from the Western Christians who

³⁰¹ Paige Patterson, "Ancient Rhetoric: A Model For Text-Driven Preachers" in *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon* ed. Daniel L. Akin, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Matthews (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2010), 35.

showed up in the literature review when it comes to listening to sermons. They all indicate that good relationships with their pastors can help them to listen to sermons.

On Relevant Application to Listeners

In the interviews, participants stressed that real application impacts them. Listeners appreciate applications that are relevant to life and daily issues. Moreover, personal testimony adds power and authority to a sermon because the listeners can see that the preacher's life is consistent with what the preacher preaches. Relevant application demonstrates how biblical teaching applies to life, and storytelling draws the listeners' attention. One participant said,

All preaching is based on biblical principles, and if the preacher sets a good example of it in himself, that adds more authority when he preaches ...If you just listen to somebody saying, "Do this, do that," you do not see the preacher himself setting a good example of what he does. If the preacher demonstrates in his daily life that he is doing what the Bible said, this adds more authority to his preaching.

McKinney encourages preachers to use stories from their own lives to illustrate points in their sermons because it helps parishioners to learn that pastors are human. This understanding can convince the audience to use pastoral experience to inform how they solve their problems. By sharing personal moments with the parishioners, preachers can enhance their relationship with parishioners.³⁰²

Some participants also explained that real life application helps them remember the sermon. Specific application related to life appeals to listeners. One participant said, "Just today, it tells us how to care for each other. The pastor asked if you cared for your friends and parents. I did not pay attention to my parents. They are nonbelievers, I prayed for my parents one day they accept Christ. But honestly, I am not doing well at home. I

³⁰² McKinney, 69.

could not convince them to come to church to know Jesus more.” Specific applications tell listeners what they should do with the biblical principles in the sermon. Listeners want instruction on how to carry out biblical principles in their daily activities. Another participant said, “If you only deliver God’s word, but you cannot link God’s word to daily life, you cannot expect the audience or congregation to work it out.” David Veerman, a primary contributor to the Life Application Study Bible and a partner in the Livingstone Corporation, talks about applications at their best. He says,

Simply stated, application is answering two questions: So what? And now what? The first question asks, “Why is this passage important to me?” The second asks, “What should I do about it today?” Application focuses the truth of God’s Word on specific, life-related situations. It helps people understand what to do or how to use what they have learned. Application persuades people to act.³⁰³

It is clear that a good sermon should have application drawing out from the truth of God to persuade the audience to act. The Bible has authority and the listeners to respond with obedient action. It is clear that Christians prefer to listen to sermons with relevant and real life applications, and they willingly to respond with obedient action if the applications are drawn from the God’s word.

McKinney’s survey indicates that some think a sermon “should bring a message that is distinctively Christian and that will help the congregation manifest distinctively Christian identity and vocation.”³⁰⁴ This idea points all pastors to future research on how to prepare a sermon with distinctively Christian application.

³⁰³ David Veerman, “Apply Within: A Method For Finding the practical Response Called for in a Text,” in *The Art & Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today’s Communicators* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 286.

³⁰⁴ McKinney, 13.

On Knowing the Aspects of God in a Sermon

In the interviews, participants expressed their desire to hear about God's love, righteousness, and will for their lives. Many thirst to know God better. All these aspects of God also relate to their life situations. One participant would like to hear about God's righteousness because there are a lot of unfair things in this world, and people do a lot of ungodly things. That participant shared,

I think knowing God is righteous helps me a lot...I know at the end, God is righteous and I think that is very important...We know there is a future, we are not just thinking of the present. If we see unrighteous things happening around us, God holds us accountable. So I think that helps me to be a better person because at the end I know God will be righteous, and all the unfairness and dishonesty will come out in the end.

The participants sought to know God's care and faithfulness in order to find comfort. However, one participant prefers to hear a good balance of God's love and God's righteousness. This participant said, "So, whenever you listen to a sermon, there are two sides to God's deity--on one side God's love and God's righteousness on the other." In addition to this, one participant also pointed out that God's presence reminds listeners to come to church consistently and to live godly lives. God is always with the listeners, especially in this world in which no commitment is emphasized and people abandon each other easily.

Hearing listeners express their desire to know God more should guide preachers to draw applications from the truth to appeal to the mind and the heart of listeners. This will help listeners to stay strong in their faith and to bear witnesses to the nonbelieving world. Accounting for ethos, logos, and pathos can help preachers provide relevant applications. One female participant prefers listening to teaching about God's care

because this gives her comfort. Another female participant prefers listening to sermons about God's righteousness. This aspect of God gives her the assured hope of God's righteousness at the end of the world and encourages her to persevere and hold onto God's promises. One male participant prefers to listening to biblical principles related to contemporary issues. This kind of logos listening can help him understand current issues from a biblical perspective, and it encourages him to respond accordingly. It is apparent that listeners resonate with pathos, ethos, and logos language in sermons as they relate to real life applications and contemporary issues. Allen has already indicated that preachers need to preach in these modes of language to connect with the congregation.³⁰⁵ Indeed, these three modes of language can help preachers explain the biblical truth and give specific applications in their expository preaching to their congregations.

In this area, the researcher found that Chinese Christians and Western Christians would like to hear about God's love and righteousness from their preachers. These characteristics of God can give them comfort and hope, helping them to feel that God is still in control of world. The three modes of language could help them to connect with congregations of different ethnicities as indicated in the literature review.

On Preaching in Worship Versus Sunday School Teaching

Participants observed that preachers in a worship service usually deliver their sermons as monologues. However, Sunday school teachers vary their presentation styles. The participants affirmed that their pastors both preach and teach. The participants also affirmed that the content and authority of sermons and Sunday school classes should be based on God's word. Preachers and Sunday school teachers all teach God's word.

³⁰⁵ Allen, 111-112.

Asking the participants to tell the difference between preaching in worship and teaching in Sunday school can help the participants to think deeply about the nature and best practices of preaching.

In the interviews, participants noted that in worship, there is no discussion, but in Sunday school class, there is group discussion led by leaders or teachers. Moreover, in Sunday school, class is more causal, and students can ask questions. More details on biblical knowledge, background, and history are taught in Sunday school. Preaching in worship is usually shorter, about twenty or twenty-five minutes, but the duration of Sunday school is usually longer. Students in Sunday school are homogeneous, and they are eager to study God's word, whereas the audience in worship is very diverse. One participant explained,

But for a sermon, you have to reach a different audience, so it somehow has to cover a broader aspect. It is because your sermon has to cover a different audience. Each sermon can't be limited to covering just kids, just elderly, or just male or just female. You also categorize people for specific lessons in Sunday school-- people who are new in the church or people who have been to church for a very long time.

Indeed the wide audience within a worship service challenges preachers to prepare a sermon that reach people from different backgrounds and educational experiences. However, classes in Sunday school are small, as fewer people come to Sunday school than to a worship service. Therefore, preaching plays an important role in teaching the congregation about the Bible. Because a sermon reaches more people in the worship service, McKinney points out that preaching is the primary format of Christian

education and is the main way parishioners learn about the Bible.³⁰⁶ Therefore, preaching based on God's word is very important. Pastors should use different kinds of rhetorical skills to engage the congregation to listen to God's word. Patterson says, "Good preaching consists in helping people to read the Bible."³⁰⁷

There are some unique characteristics about preaching in worship as understood by the participants. One participant distinguished messages in a sermon from teaching in Sunday school. This participant said, "Sunday school is mainly Bible study and Bible teaching...And then preaching is for you to be able to listen to God's message. The message is more from the sermon. Bible teaching is part of the message, but more knowledge that you can get." Another participant felt that sermons should only be directly from the Bible, but that topics in Sunday school teaching might not be related to the Bible. In this sense, preaching in worship is unique, because people come to worship to hear God's word, and pastors should make known God's will to God's people, rather than their personal opinions.

The participants viewed learning God's word together in worship and in Sunday school as fellowship. God not only speaks to preachers while they are preparing their sermons, but he also speaks to the preachers while they are delivering those sermons. Therefore, the preachers and the congregation learn God's word together in worship. One participant elaborated,

And I would say whether it's in a sermon or Sunday school it's also fellowship. Even if it's different in the sermon, it's also fellowship to me...Sunday school [is fellowship] of course, because there's more interaction and open sharing a lot of times. That to me is fellowship, but even for sermon, I don't know how to explain,

³⁰⁶ McKinney, 17.

³⁰⁷ Patterson, 26.

but it just is. To me, fellowship is when we learn together. So even the person giving the sermon learns more while he or she is giving the sermon. I believe God continues to speak to that person during the sermon, and he or she may have more thoughts during the sermon than when he or she was preparing the sermon. To me, it's the sharing part that is kind of like a fellowship.

Preaching in worship is unique and different from teaching Sunday school.

Preachers should not say anything other than God's word when preaching in worship.

Therefore, expository preaching is the best safeguard for the preacher, and it is also the only means of explaining God's word to his people while challenging the listeners to respond to God's word with action.

The researcher found that the Chinese lay leaders, much like the Western Christians, understand that preaching is unique and different from teaching Sunday school. Despite the fact that preaching is a monologue, it remains the primary format of Christian education. The congregation learns about God's word in worship because not all people in the congregation come to Sunday school. Therefore preachers are reminded not to say anything other than God's word when they preach.

On Expository Preaching

Most of the research participants understood that preaching should be based on the Bible, rather than merely expressing human thoughts and ideas. One participant said,

Biblical preaching is just like you are preaching God's word. It's based on the Bible and is more focused on God's word, less on man's word. Don't talk about your own experience, and all those garbage. I think this is very important. The pulpit is a place to teach God's word, it's not the place to teach secular values, or some other business.

Another participant said, "You must believe what the Bible said and everything must come from God. You cannot have your own meaning and put that back in the word."

Everything must be from the Bible. The pastor is only passing out the message. He's not making some modifications as the passage goes out--it must strictly be from the Bible."

Chapell agrees:

The expository preachers do not communicate their opinion but rather show the will of God to their people revealed in God's Word. In this case, the listeners can see that the concepts in this preaching derived from Scripture and apply to their lives. Therefore such preaching puts people in immediate contact with the power of the Word. Furthermore the Scripture determines what expositors preach because the expository preachers unfold what the Scripture says. Therefore the meaning of the passage in the Scriptures is the message of the sermon.³⁰⁸

Throughout the interviews, only one participant could define expository preaching. Even though many participants expressed understanding of different aspects of expository preaching, it is not surprising that they could not define the term. When David Allen was interviewed by Michael Duduit, the editor of *Preaching*, about the challenge of biblical preaching today, he said,

The term expository preaching has been stretched to such a point that it covers so many things that we're not really sure belong under the rubric or the umbrella of expository preaching. It's sort of like the word evangelicalism. Evangelicalism is now an umbrella term that covers so many things that fifty years ago never would have legitimately fallen under that term.³⁰⁹

Christians in American churches have a similar problem understanding what expository preaching is.

One participant just guessed that biblical preaching is similar to expository preaching. This participant said, "I honestly do not know, but if I have to compare, they look similar. It has to be from the Bible, because people try to explain God's word."

³⁰⁸ Chapell, 32.

³⁰⁹ David Allen, "Text-Driven Preaching: An Interview with David Allen," *Preaching* 26, no. 4 (Jan/Feb 2011): 8.

Another participant perceived that biblical preaching should have a theme or topic, based on God's word, and points with supporting scriptural references in that text. This participant said,

Expository preaching is like you go into the Bible and you start to explore what is the meaning of that scripture [passage] and then you explain more, and of course you have observation, you have explanation and you have application from that scripture. Maybe you have some supporting scripture [references] of that scripture too, but mainly you deal with that scripture [passage]....

Broadus discusses some characteristics of the expository sermon and confirms the participants' views saying, "In practice, the main points and the subdivisions of the sermon come from the text. In other words, the entire thought content comes from the Scripture."³¹⁰

Broadus also points out that an expository sermon has both unity and an orderly structure. Unity is essential in discourse, whether it is in the form of instruction, conviction, or persuasion.³¹¹ The orderly structure of an expository sermon gives the listeners the sense that a scripture passage has a well-chosen and well-handled topic.³¹² One participant talked about the advantage of having a theme in the sermon or the Sunday school lesson. This participant noted, "I see our pastors use different methods...That's fine as long as you start it with a good theme." This participant then defined a theme as follows:

Well, the situation is like this. You always think that your students have a very short span of so-called reasoning. If you have a theme to start with, they always remember that theme. In your storytelling, emphasize that theme, illustrate how that theme works, then they will really remember your teaching with the stories

³¹⁰ Broadus, 58.

³¹¹ Ibid., 60.

³¹² Ibid., 60.

and illustrative examples. Sometimes I even use my own experiences to explain that theme.

In this sense, the theme in a sermon is the main thing that links the points, illustrations, and applications together so that listeners can bring something home after listening to a sermon preached in the worship. If the story illustration touches a listener, the listener remembers that story and also remembers the sermon theme because the story illustration is linked to the theme of that sermon. Turnbull said that the expository sermon “is the sermon ‘par excellence.’”³¹³

This study found no difference between Chinese lay leaders and Western Christian with respect to understanding the nature and purpose of preaching. They all understood that the three classical rhetorical elements could help them listen to sermons. Both Chinese and Western Christians do not have a clear understanding of expository preaching, even though they understand that preachers should preach God’s word and not simply express their own thoughts and ideas. However, they cannot explain that expository preaching could be the safest guard to help a preacher to preach from God’s word. Preachers cannot use the Bible to support their imposed thoughts and ideas to the congregation. Therefore it is vital that all preachers learn the method of expository preaching. This study also points out that preachers should train their congregations to recognize the characteristics of expository preaching.

This study explored how Chinese Christian lay leaders view the nature of preaching and how they perceive expository preaching in the Chinese church. The participants understood that preachers should base their sermons on God’s word because

³¹³ Turnbull, 59.

a sermon's authority and power comes from God's word. Their overall understanding of the nature and purpose of preaching aligns with many of the experts' views from the literature review. The classical rhetorical elements help ministers connect to the congregation as they motivate God's people to obediently live out God's word. Although pastors should use means such as the rhetorical elements, preachers must remember to preach God's word only. They should study hard to explain the scriptures accurately because preaching brings God's word and explains God's will to the congregation.

The participants explained the benefits of sermons that have a good themes, good illustrations, clear and concise structures, accurate explanations of God's word, and good life applications. Indeed a good and effective expository sermon also has those characteristics. However, Chinese lay leaders do not have a clear understanding of expository preaching. Allen points out that Christians in American churches have the same problem giving a clear explanation of expository preaching.³¹⁴ They do not understand that expository preaching in the pulpit ministry plays a significant role in helping to ensure the preaching of God's word. Therefore, all preachers should educate lay leaders of East and West on expository preaching, and preachers should put expository preaching high in their priorities. Then, their congregations can learn God's word in the worship every Sunday instead of listening to motivational speeches.

Recommendations for Further Research and Practice

In the course of this study on how Chinese lay leaders view the nature of preaching, particularly expository preaching, several areas of study came to light.

³¹⁴ Allen, 8.

Recommendations for Pastoral Practice

In order for pastors to improve their preaching delivery, I recommend the following practices. First, preachers should explore references, such as preaching magazines and resource books for today's communicators, in order to help them connect their sermons to their congregations. Second, preachers should study rhetoric and some literary works in order to preach vividly and with freshness. Third, preachers should divide their time between studying God's word and caring for their congregants. When congregants feel that their pastors care for them, they will listen more readily to their preaching. However, the highest priority should be put on studying God's word and preparing the sermon. Fourth, preachers need to cultivate the habit of noting any insights and good stories that pop up in their daily lives. Carrying a small writing pad with them all the time will allow preachers to record such moments. Good stories are powerful to illustrate the points in a sermon.³¹⁵ Fifth, I suggest that preachers read one book of preaching and some good sermons monthly. Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois, and author of *Courageous Leadership*, says, "In almost every discipline, if you want to improve, you need to watch others."³¹⁶ He then further points out that one should "listen to great preaching and teaching not with the intent to mimic it but rather to learn lessons that can improve your own preaching and teaching."³¹⁷ Sixth, preachers should use common language, the language that the congregation can understand. Moreover, I suggest using words that appeal to the five

³¹⁵ Haddon Robinson, "Clearly," in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resources for Today's Communicators* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 335.

³¹⁶ Bill Hybels, "Growing in Your Preaching," in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resources for Today's Communicators* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 44.

³¹⁷ Ibid., 45.

senses--sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing. According to Mawhinney, senior pastor of New Covenant Fellowship in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, “Words that appeal to the five senses will help people sense what the preachers saying, understand it better and remember it longer.”³¹⁸

In order to deliver relevant applications in responding to the results of the interviews, I recommend the following for pastors. First, preachers should be bold and specific in giving application because most Chinese pastors are polite and do not challenge the congregation to act out God’s word. Second, while giving specific applications, preachers must take care not to fall into legalism. Chapell’s article “On Application Without Moralism” can help the preachers to use application without moralism.³¹⁹ Third, when pastors draw applications from good illustrations or stories on biblical principles, they should save those applications and build up a system for filing the good stories and contemporary events that they collect. Fourth, from the idea of Robinson, I suggest that preachers read a wide variety of books, such as biographies, novels, and weekly magazines as a means of observing and interpreting daily life. Robinson says, “Reading books and magazines and watching movies and television—even commercials—is another way of observing life.”³²⁰

In regard to expository preaching, I recommend the following for preachers. First, I encourage preachers to read books on expository preaching. I also recommend that preachers read books specifically on the sermons of great expository preachers in order to

³¹⁸ Bruce Mawhinney, *Preaching With Freshness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), 178.

³¹⁹ Chapell, 289-294.

³²⁰ Haddon Robinson, “Busting Out of Sermon Block,” in *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resources for Today’s Communicators* ed. Haddon Robinson and Craig Brian Larson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 539.

obtain new insights applicable to preparing expository sermons. Second, preachers should regularly reference good commentaries for accurate scriptural interpretation, especially finding writers who have a high view of scripture. Third, when developing a series of expository sermons on a biblical book, I suggest that preachers try to complete the series in no more than eight weeks. Otherwise the congregation may grow weary of listening to sermons on a book for a long period of time and may lose track of what was taught previously.

In regard to the preparation of sermons to reach congregations effectively, I recommend the following practices. I implore pastors to devote time to prayer and reliance on the Holy Spirit as they prepare and deliver their sermons. They should pray for their congregations, asking God to create a desire to listen to God's word, to open their hearts to receive God's word, and to act out God's word with faith. Preachers should also pray for guidance in preparing their sermons.

Recommendations for Educating Lay Leaders on Expository Preaching

Since the results of the interviews indicate that most of the lay leaders do not know what expository preaching is or understand the role of expository preaching in the pulpit ministry, I suggest that preachers devise a mechanism for educating their lay leaders on expository preaching. Hopefully, with education, lay leaders will develop an appreciation of expository preaching's effectiveness in communicating God's word to the whole congregation. I developed a sample of such a mechanism, found in Appendix B. Pastors can give this form to lay leaders to fill in when listening to a sermon on Sunday. The form requires them to write down the proposition of the sermon, the theme or the

topic of the sermon, the main points and the sub points in order to observe whether those points link to the theme or topic.

Such an exercise may help lay leaders to see that all the sermon points come from the scripture text. The form also requires lay leaders to write down what captured them the most, the applications that help them to live out God's word, and the illustrations that help them to understand the biblical principle or truth. They are also told to write down the conclusion that the preacher gives. After the sermon, the form asks them to record their responses to the sermon and their suggestions to the preacher if there are any. Then they may make one copy of that form for their future use and return the other copy to the pastoral staff as their feedback to the pastoral staff. If some leaders teach Sunday school classes or lead Bible studies, they can then use this form to guide their class or groups in listening to expository sermons. By adopting this mechanism for lay leaders listening to sermons, a team of preachers in a church could prepare their sermons accordingly despite their different styles in preaching.

Recommendations for Future Research

According the literature review and the results of the interviews, I would like to propose the following possibilities for future research. First, many religious organizations of other faiths have inspirational magazines and good motivational speakers giving speeches. I suggest conducting a future study on what characteristics of Christian sermons are distinct from the preaching of other faiths.

Second, specific life applications can appeal to listeners to act out God's word as indicated in the interviews and literature review. However, application can easily become

a legalistic principle that people have to follow. Therefore, I feel that it would be good to conduct further research in that area in order to avoid falling into this trap.

Third, since scripture uses a lot of emotional language in describing events, I suggest further study to explore how to apply pathos in preaching and application so that the listeners are not manipulated.

Fourth, since illustrations can impact the listeners, helping them to understand how the truth should be applied, I recommend further research on the role of illustrations in sermons.

Fifth, in regard to communication skills, I suggest researching the application of rhetoric in preaching in order to discover the advantages and disadvantages involved in using these skills.

Sixth, one participant in this study regarded learning God's word together as an act of fellowship in worship. I recommend further research in this area, exploring questions such as how congregants who have been listening to a preacher for a long period of time still appreciate the sermons and applications.

Seventh, I recommend further research to find out how preachers can maintain expository preaching for a long period of time in a church so that the congregation does not tire of listening to expository preaching.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

The following questions will be used when interviewing the lay leaders. Some questions may be left out and additional questions may be added if it is beneficial for gathering rich and descriptive data relevant to this study.

Section 1: Background:

- (1) Name:
- (2) Were you a Christian before coming to this church?
- (3) How long were you in your previous church before coming to this church?
- (4) Who is/are your favorite preacher(s)?
- (5) Did you serve in this Church in the past? How long did you serve in this church? What ministry?
- (6) What is your current ministry or ministries in this church?

Section 2:

- (7) Tell me about your history as a person listening to sermons. What captures your attention or what stands out to you in a sermon?
- (8) Tell me about your relationship with the pastors and preachers (past and present) that you have had.

(9) Please tell me from your experience of the preaching in this church how the preaching is different or similar to the preaching of your favorite preachers.

(10) What do you like about their preaching?

(11) What role does/should the Bible have in preaching?

(12) What are the characteristics of a sermon that has authority?

(13) What aspects of God do you want to know most about when you hear a sermon?

(14) What do you think God is doing during the delivery of the sermon?

Section 3

(15) How do you think preaching in worship is different from bible teaching in Sunday school? How do you think they are similar?

(16) Describe your learning experience in a Sunday school class.

(17) Please tell me how you see preaching as different or similar to Sunday school teaching.

Section 4

(18) Tell me what you think are the characteristics of biblical preaching is?

(19) How would you describe expository preaching? Or, when you hear the term expository preaching, what do you think it means?

(20) Tell me what you think are the characteristics of expository preaching.

(21) How is it different from other preaching which you listened in the past?

(22) Last question: Tell me your expectations of preaching in church.

APPENDIX B

Sermon Evaluation Form for Lay Leaders

Date of the sermon:

Scripture Text:

- (1) Theme or topic of sermon:
- (2) Propositional Statement if any:
- (3) Main points with sub points with Scripture references:
- (4) Illustrations related to the points
- (5) Applications drawn out from the points or illustrations
- (6) Action to do this week or in the future
- (7) Suggestions and feedback

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