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**CONTEXTUAL PREACHING
WITHIN THE DUTCH REFORMED
CHURCH IN AFRICA**

BY

MOETI JOHANNES KOFA

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fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in the
Faculty of Theology, Department of
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Supervisor : Prof. JS Kellerman**

DECLARATION

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Summary

Summary of contextual preaching within the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

This research has proved that preaching is very essential. It is not just an oration that a person or preacher can give to listeners. This means it is very dynamic, and it needs the whole commitment when one is preaching. Not everybody can preach. It comes from God to the listeners and it should be Christ centered. God makes use of the preachers to fulfill and execute His will. The message delivered by the preacher is not his, but belongs to God himself. A preacher is a messenger. As a messenger should always adhere to what the prophets said when saying, that whatever they say is from God. This means that a preacher who is to deliver the Word of God to the listeners should be a person who has been called to carry out God's message. That category is a category of legitimate messengers of God. They are spiritually driven. They are also guided by the type of training they have received from their theological training institutes. So preaching is not just an easy thing to do, its modus operandi needs some certain knowledgeable information, a commitment and self-determination.

The study has revealed that the relevant and effective preaching, as well as the contextual preaching is essential to the lives of today's people, as such preachers should adopt to bring contextual preaching to the congregations they are going to preach for.

Scriptural

It is explicit that there is no relevant preaching unless it emanates from the Holy Scripture itself. This means that the Holy Scripture characterizes both the relevant and contextual preaching. To reinforce preaching itself, a preacher should make use of supplementaries like commentaries, literatures and any other relevant resources.

Historical

A relevant and contextual preaching is the one that a preacher does not regard him as a founder. This means that a preacher is not an alpha and omega in this regard. This is a continuation that he received from his predecessors. He should acknowledge that the congregation he is preaching for does not receive the Word of God for the first time.

Through the historical background in theology it is clear that some of them have been exposed to the Word of God long ago.

Language

God created His people in diversity of races and languages. This has been done through His good will. The Word of God should be conveyed to the people in the language they will understand. Due to this reason a preaching will remain a contextual preaching to the listeners.

Culture

The Word of God was brought to the people of multicultural believes. This means that they have accepted it in collaboration with their different cultures. The diversity of different cultures should not be regarded as detrimental to preaching.

Pastoral

The training of pastors should be contextual and relevant to the prevailing circumstances of the new South Africa. The pastors should adopt themselves positively with the prevailing situations in which their congregations live.

Theological

The most important aspect in this regard is that a preaching that is brought to the people should also be educative to those people who are going to receive it as the Word of God.

Opsomming

Opsomming van Kontekstuele prediking binne die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Afrika.

Hierdie navorsing het bewys dat prediking baie noodsaaklik is. Dit is nie net 'n toespraak wat 'n persoon of 'n prediker lewer voor 'n gehoor nie. Dit beteken dit is baie dinamies en vereis 'n totale oorgawe van die prediker. Nie almal kan preek nie. Dit kom van God aan die luisteraars en dit behoort Christus-gesenteerd te wees. God gebruik predikers om Sy wil te verwesenlik en uit te voer. Die boodskap wat deur die prediker gelewer word, is nie syne nie, maar kom van God self af. Die prediker is 'n boodskapper. Die boodskapper moet altyd trou bly aan wat die profeet gesê het, want wanneer hy praat, wat hy ookal sê, kom van God af. Dit beteken dat 'n prediker, wat die Woord van God aan sy luisteraars bring, 'n persoon moet wees wat geroep is om God se boodskap uit te dra. Daardie groep is 'n groep gelegitimeerde boodskappers van God. Hulle word deur die Gees gelei. Hulle word ook gelei deur die opleiding wat hulle ontvang het van hul teologiese opleiding sentrums. Dit beteken doodgewoon dat prediking nie sommer 'n maklike ding is om te doen nie, die uitvoering daarvan vra sekere kenbare inligting, 'n verbintenis en selfversekerdheid.

Hierdie studie het uitgewys dat toepaslike en effektiewe, sowel as kontekstuele prediking, noodsaaklik is vir die mens van vandag. Predikers moet dus die nodige aanpassings maak ten einde kontekstueel te preek in die gemeentes waar hulle gaan preek.

Skriptuurlik

Dit is duidelik dat daar geen toepaslike prediking kan wees tensy dit op kom vanuit die Heilige Skrif self nie. Dit beteken dat beide toepaslike en kontekstuele prediking deur die Heilige Skrif gekarakteriseer word. Om die prediking te versterk behoort 'n prediker van hulpmiddels gebruik te maak soos kommentare, literatuur en enige ander relevante bronne.

Geskiedkundig

'n Toepaslike en kontekstuele preek is daardie een waar 'n prediker homself nie sien as die uitvinder daarvan nie. Dit beteken dat die prediker nie die alfa en omega van die preek is nie. Dit is 'n voortsetting van wat hy van sy voorgangers ontvang het. Hy behoort te erken dat die gemeente aan wie hy die Woord van God bring, dit nie vir die eerste keer hoor nie. Uit die historiese agtergrond van teologie is dit duidelik dat sommige van hulle lankal reeds blootgestel was aan die Woord van God.

Taal

God het Sy mense geskape in 'n verskeidenheid van rasse en tale. Dit is gedoen deur Sy goeie wil. Die Woord van God behoort oorgedra te word aan mense in die taal wat hulle sal verstaan. Om hierdie rede sal 'n preek 'n kontekstuele preek vir die luisteraars sal bly.

Kultuur

Die Woord van God is aan mense van multi-kulturele gelowe gebring. Dit beteken dat hulle dit aanvaar het in samewerking met hul verskillende kulture. Die uiteenlopendheid van verskillende kulture behoort nie as nadelig vir die prediking gesien te word nie.

Pastoraal

Die opleiding van predikers behoort kontekstueel en toepaslik te wees vir die heersende omstandighede van die nuwe Suid-Afrika. Predikers behoort hulself positief aan te pas by die heersende situasie waarbinne hulle gemeentes hulle leef.

Teologies

Die belangrikste aspek in die verband is dat 'n preek wat aan mense gebring word ook opvoedkundig sal wees vir die mense wat dit as die Woord van God gaan ontvang.

KEY WORDS:

- 1.Context:Context is a link between a sentence or sentences and the whole prescribed passage.
- 2.Preaching: Preaching is to proclaim the Good News about Jesus.
- 3.Preacher: Preacher is a chosen person who is proclaiming the message of God to meet the needs of another person.
- 4.Dutch Reformed Church in Africa: An official name of one of the Reformed churches.
- 5.Congregation:Members of a specific denomination living in a specific region or locality.
- 6.Proclamation:Action of proclaiming or announcing the message of God.
- 7.Pastoral:Relating to a clergyman or priest in charge of a congregation or his duties as such.
- 8.Word of God:A divine communication which comes from God to men in the form of commandment,prophecy,warning or encouragement.
- 9.Relevant:Having direct bearing on the matter in hand.
- 10.New South Africa: South Africa after the democratic elections of 1994.
- 11.Purpose:The aims,the goals or objectives of a preacher.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION:

1.1 TOPICALITY AND PROBLEM

1.1.1 The topic of the research

Contextuality and preaching are both important themes in practical theological discussion. Studies in respect of preaching in this regard within the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa has as far as could be established by the researcher not yet been undertaken.

1.1.2 The research problem

Contextuality has been quite an issue in theology in South Africa in recent years (*Sweazey 1976:12*). Some churches have had more problems in this respect than others. It is, however, necessary for a church to bring a relevant and contextualized message to the world. This is especially true when it comes to the preaching task of the church.

Different questions are to be asked in this respect:

1. What are the basics and perspectives of contextualisation and how does it affect preaching?
2. How can contextualised preaching really assist people to adjust to the new and transforming situation in South Africa?
3. How can preaching help members of the church to live a Christian life amidst the political, social, economical and moral changes that are occurring?

There are many uncertainties as well as possibilities in the new situation in our country.

What relevant role can preaching fulfill in this situation?

How do these questions relate to the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa?

1.2 The basic hypothesis

The following hypothesis will be tested in this study:

Firstly, preaching must be Scriptural (Biblical) situational and relevant to be contextual.

Secondly, it must also be of an universal truth and holistic in nature.

1.3 The purpose of this study

I want to study the meaning of contextual preaching and apply it to preaching in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

The second purpose of this thesis is to determine what contextual preaching means theoretically and to apply it to preaching in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

This study will endeavour to help preachers to the right perspective on their daily preaching within the changing situation in the new South Africa.

1.4 Research methodology

The following methods of research will be used and followed:

Firstly, a literary study.

Secondly, a qualitative empirical study.

1.5 Chapter division

Chapter 1: This chapter covers the motivation and the aims of this study, the relevancy of the subject, the basic hypothesis as well as the method of research.

Chapter 2: This chapter will go into the meaning of preaching in general.

Chapter 3: This chapter will consider the meaning of contextuality in general.

Chapter 4: This chapter will cover the meaning of contextual preaching generally.

Chapter 5: In this chapter, there will be an analysis of the congregation/listeners in general.

Chapter 6: This chapter will consider the choice or the selection of the preaching portion.

Chapter 7: In this chapter, there will be an analysis of the views of church members and ministers.

Chapter 8: This chapter will contain the final results of this study and summarise the consequences in the final conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

2. WHAT IS PREACHING?

2.1 Introduction

Generally speaking, preaching is a living process involving God, the preacher as well as the listener(s). In this chapter, we will try to deal with the definition of preaching in general. Consequently, we first study various attempts to define preaching.

2.2.1 The definition of preaching

Preaching is the credible proclamation of the will of God (*Pearson 1954:15*). Preaching is to proclaim the Good News about Jesus. In the early church pagans were always first brought to Christ through preaching. It is the proclamation of the message of God by a chosen person to meet the needs of another person (*Lloyd-Jones 1971:53*). This means that through preaching, the preacher passes the message of God to the peoples or to the world as a whole. Preaching is the message from God to men, the message which says: "So says the Lord" (*Nel 1996:176*).

Preaching is the proclamation of the truth of God as mediated through the preacher (*Mac Arthur 1992:24*). This means that God gave His Word to be communicated exactly as He gave it. It is to be dispensed as it was delivered, without altering the message.

The being of preaching is not determined by questions, trauma, jubilation and safeguarding of a certain period. What preaching is, and should be, is determined by the Word of God.

The contents thereof should solely be the gift of what God revealed. It cannot be prescribed by prevailing circumstances. Malan (1982:219) says that: "Dit is proklamasie van die heil en heilgebeure soos dit in Christus Jesus deur die Heilige Gees en die Woord bekend gemaak word. Daar is 'n gesagvolle aankondiging aan verbonde."

In his book *De Klerk* (1977:62) says that: "Die prediking is die publieke aankondiging (praedicare) van die Koningswoord. Dit is die proklamasie van die bode (keruks) wat hy op gesag en outoriteit van die Koning uitroep. Hier staan die boodskapper met die Woord wat hy op gesag uitroep. Die: "so sê die Here." Preaching begins where all public speaking begins. It is the effort to communicate to a group of people what one believes, feels in order to interest, persuade, convince and move.

De Klerk in Rossouw (1988:274) says that: "Prediking is die opebare aankondiging van die Koningswoord. Die bode proklameer op gesag van die Koning die blye boodskap van die Koningryk. "Preaching is the public proclamation of christianity to the pagan world. It is not religious discourse to a closed group of initiates, but open and public proclamation of God's redemptive activity in and through Jesus Christ. On the one hand, preaching is to proclaim as a herald.

In the ancient world the herald was a figure of considerable importance. A man of integrity and character, who was employed by the king or state to make all public proclamations. Preaching is heralding. The message proclaimed is the good and or the glad tidings of salvation. Long (1989:27) says that: "On the one hand, a herald comes to the people with news from the king. The herald preacher proclaims the biblical message, which always comes to the hearers as a word from beyond them, a word from God."

Preaching is, and should always be service (diaconia) of the Word of God, and solely for that particular Word. Preaching is not rendering a speech with contents regarding christological service. According to Dijk (1952:101) die benaming 'Bediening' (diakonia) is 'n eg-Skriftuurlike woord.' (Hand 1;17;25:6; Rom.11; 5:18 1 Tim. 1:12). Die prediking van die apostels word so genoem. "Therefore, the preacher is the servant of Christ. Preaching is the service of the Word. Preaching on the other hand, is to pass God's message to the peoples or to the world as a whole.

Preaching is also the process in which God reveals himself to human kind. In other words preaching is a prophetic task of a christian who tells listeners what God has revealed to him for the listeners to hear. The source of this revelation is (for our day). The Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit.

In preaching, God speaks to mankind through human relationships. In other words, God reveals Himself first to the preacher. The preacher shares the needs, the hopes as well as the longing of all humanity. Pieterse (1979:36) says that: "In die verkondiging moet God dus weer opnuut ter sprake kom. Dit gaan in die prediking om 'n nuwe ter-sprake-kom van die Woord van God in 'n nuwe situasie."

This means that God spoke with His people through the prophets. He commanded those prophets to bring His message to His people. By so doing God made Himself known to His people through the prophets. Further than this, God revealed Himself to His people through Jesus Christ His begotten Son, the one who was the word that became a human being. In John 1:14, we read the following words: "The Word became a human being....." It is this very same word which God commanded the prophets to proclaim it to His people. God also spoke through the Holy Spirit who was the witness of God and Jesus Christ as well as to the people (Stott 1982:15 and Logan 1987:15).

The Holy Scripture is the Word of God, and therefore can also be the Word of God in preaching. Preaching is a conveyance of Scripture by verbal communication (*Logan 1986:8*). Preaching is the same as the proclamation act, the act of the Word, where by God Himself speaks. Preaching, writes Mounce (1960:153) is that: "timeless link between God's great redemptive act and man's apprehension of it. It is the medium through which God contemporizes his historic self-disclosure and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith."

It is therefore clearly understood that preaching is the way which God uses to reveal Himself to mankind. The one who hears the Word of God, begins to know God. So it is clear that in order to be able to believe in God, man must hear from Him. Man knows God only because He revealed Himself through his Word and especially in Christ (Joh. 14:6; 5:39). Strauss (1999:9) puts it clearly when he says that: "When he study the Bible piously, the Holy Spirit itself enlightens us to understand the meaning and intention of its message. In the reformed theology much is made of the expression *sola Scriptura*, i.e. the Scriptures alone are the norm for what we must believe and how we must understand."

To regard preaching as the way in which God reveals Himself, cannot be taken as a simple fact, but is of vital importance. This means through His Word God reveals himself as the living God. In (Ex. 3:14) God said to Moses: "I am who I am." He is the working God. He is the omnipotent and cannot be compared with anything from this world. It is from his Word God reveals Himself as the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega who is the first and the last (Rev. 2:8). Pieterse (1988:4) is right when he says that: "God het Homself as Drie eenige God deur woord en daad in die geskiedenis van Israel openbaar."

Preaching has to be done throughout the course of history in terms of different preconceptions of understanding. Preaching functions within the limited horizons of human understanding in a specific situation. In the new situation, determined by new conceptions, the preaching of the previous situation can be difficult to understand. We are therefore not simply to repeat our text in preaching because it may not be understood. Pieterse (1987:14) puts it clearly when he says that: "We cannot be satisfied with a mere repetition of the text because the text's message needs to be translated into contemporary terms."

On the other hand, preaching is the interpretation of the Word of God by the preacher to the congregation. It is an interpretation of the Word of God verse by verse. This means that a preacher interprets the message of God which he received, to the congregation. In other words it is not his message but the message of the One who sends him. This is why we read that many times when the prophets brought the message to the people they always say: "So says or thus said the Lord."

For the reformed theologians, preaching consists of interpretation and application of the Word of God. Through preaching, there is a meeting between the listeners and

the Word of God with its special message (Lloyed-Jones 1971:56). One can also say that preaching is the convener of the meeting between the listeners and the Word of God with its special message. Without preaching no such meeting can be existing. The fact that preaching is the interpretation of the message of God, comes clear to us from the historical events of Moses. When God wanted to sent him (Moses) to Egypt to deliver the Israelites, Moses had a problem. Moses was afraid to go to Egypt without the knowledge of God. That is why God told him who He is, and said to Moses: "I am who I am." God went further by saying that: "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the God of your father the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever," (Ex.3:14-15). We can now see that from here Moses is going to Egypt to interpret the message of God to His people. therefore, it is clear that preaching is the interpretation of the message of God by the preacher to the listeners.

Further than that, preaching is the translation of the Word of God by the preacher to the congregation (McClure 1991:20). The Word of God that the preacher should bring to the listeners, is the Word which is written by different authors with their different languages and styles. In the Bible, there are many different books which are written from different places and times by different authors with their different thinkings.

Here we can use the New Testament as an example. The gospel of Mark is full of Aramaic expressions, (*Mark 5:41*) "Talitha koum" also (*Mark 15:34*) "Elo, Eloï, lema sabacthani". These words and sentences hold the message of God for the people. That message must be brought to the listeners. But now since that message is brought to the people of today, who speak the language of today, must understand that message clearly. In order that the people of today can understand that message clearly, a preacher should now translate that message to the spoken language of the people of today. It is clear that if they do not understand that message clearly, it will be very difficult or impossible for them to believe and accept that message. Therefore it is true that preaching is the translation of the Word of God by the preacher to the congregation.

Preaching is also an act of communication. (Brooks 1969:5). It is the communication of truth by man to men. (Baumann 1990:13). It includes both truth and personality. The central part of preaching is God's message. It is important to note that preaching must have a role in the life of listeners. According to Firet (1973:53) preaching concerns the fact that God must be made to speak in the life of the listeners. In other words, a link must be established between the Word of God and the listener's (person's) life.

On the other hand, preaching can be regarded as an influencing medium. Preaching is the communication of Biblical truths with a view to changing behaviour (Baumann 1990:13).

According to Robinson (1980:18) "Preaching is a living process involving God, the preacher, and the congregation, and no definition can pretend to capture that dynamic." Therefore preaching is an official work done by a chosen person to meet the needs of humanity for the sake of the specific work (*Turnbull 1967:1*). Preaching, therefore, is more than just recounting the story about the Word of God spoken by Jesus. In preaching, this Word itself comes to the listeners. Therefore preaching is the Word of God coming to man. It is the communication of truth by man to men.

One can go further by saying that preaching is the announcement of the Good News of salvation through Christ. Through preaching the preacher announces the message of God. God uses a preacher to bring His message to His people. To support this statement, Long (1989:23) says: "It is an action, a spoken event, that the preacher performs in Christ's name. Christ is present in and with the church, and all ministers, including preaching, are expression of this presence."

This fact that preaching is the announcement of the news of God concerning Christ, can be seen during the time of the birth of Jesus Christ. That night, God sent His angels to the shepherds. In Luk.2:10 we read that the angel said to them: "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people." Because of the angels which were sent to them by God, the good news of the birth of Christ is announced to them. The second example is during the resurrection of Christ.

After the Sabbath, as Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the others went to the tomb to see Jesus, but Jesus was not there because he had been risen from the dead. In Mt. 28:8 we read that: "So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid and yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples." It is true then that God uses messengers or preachers to announce His message to His people. Gibbs (1967:160) says that: "A sermon is an oral address to the popular mind, upon the scriptural truth contained in the Bible, elaborately treated and with a view to persuasion."

We must not forget that preaching concerns the message of God, the message which must be carried to the listeners. Preaching is a responsible preaching of the Word of God. The Word of God in its context and according to its true meaning should be so revealed that the people of today could understand it in their reality. The message of God should be captured and should be carried over with authority so that people of today can understand it as the real message of God to them, and for them. It goes on around the living Word of God to His people and to the world.

Therefore the message of God should be brought to the listeners by way of preaching. In this way preaching can also be regarded as a transmission of the message of God to His people. In other words, the preacher has nothing to transmit apart from the message of God. (*Sweazey 1976:49*). This means that in preaching the preacher's duty is and should solely be the transmission of the message of God to

the listeners. Kromminga (1975:414) clearly defines that: "Preaching is the proclamation of the Word of God to men under assignment from God. It is the ordained means for the transmission of God to the world and serves also as an official means of grace for the edification of the church of Christ."

To say that preaching is the transmission of the message of God to the people, means that the message of God should not be kept at one place only, but should be brought to all people of all languages all over the world. In Mt. 28:19 we read that Jesus said to his disciples "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples." So it is the duty of the preacher to distribute this message so that all people can be reached and be fed by this message of salvation. The message of the Word of God should not be kept at one place, but should be brought to all people all over the world.

The following summary can be formulated to sum up the meaning of preaching. Preaching is the Word of God as far as Scripture is proclaimed lively by the Holy Spirit. Evans (1964:11) says that: "Preaching is the proclamation of the Good News of salvation through man to men.

Its two constituent elements are a man and a messenger-personality and truth." Our contents in preaching, are derived from God Himself in Scripture. Truly, preaching as a whole should be guided by Scripture. Preaching is verely invalid without the living Word of God. The living Word of God should be heard in preaching (Forsyth 1907:5).

2.3 The Biblical foundation of preaching

In this section, we are going to deal briefly with the background against which what is preaching and how preaching came to be in the Bible. Since that the Bible is divided into two Testaments namely the Old and the New, we are going to look at how preaching is described from both Testaments. But in this section, we are not going to look or discuss various methods of preaching, but it is necessary to give a brief review of the idea and the circumstances of preaching in both Testaments, especially with reference to contextuality.

2.3.1 Preaching in the Old Testament context

During the Old Testament period, there were times which were set apart by the people of Israel to come together to worship God. Their reason for gathering was to pray and have fellowship together. Amongst them was a leader who brought the message of God to them. For this purpose, the Jews started to gather in their synagogues during the period after the exile.

Preaching in the Old Testament is however clear and evident already from the time of Moses. In the book of Deut (5:5) we read that: "I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord....." Here God gave unto Moses the ten commandments which Moses brought to the people of Israel, and read them for the Israelites. He went further by teaching the Israelites those commandments. This shows that even from the Old Testament, preaching was also regarded as teaching.

On the other hand, in the book of Deut (6:4) we read that: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord. "We see again that Moses bring the message of God which is also an instruction to them. Further than that, in Deut (31:9-13) we find that here Moses is teaching the people of God His message. So then, the book of Deuteronomy can be regarded as the first book of the Old Testament that carries the preaching of Moses.

It is not only Moses who received commands from God to preach to the people of Israel. But also the prophets and priests who followed after Moses brought teachings of God's ways to the people of Israel. Esra for example was one of those who proclaimed the Word of God (*Neh.8:5-10*).

Then there was the prophet Isaiah who also preached God's word and God's will for the people of Israel (*Isaiah 66*). The message that Isaiah brought to the Jews, was not his own message but a message from God. That is why he sometimes said: "Thus saith the Lord" or Thus saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

Another example that shows that preaching was a familiar event in the Old Testament is the ministry of Jeremiah. Jeremiah brought the message of God to His people. To testify that the message was not his own but the message from God, he always said that: "Then the Lord said unto me, proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah, and the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear the words of this covenant, and do them" (*Jer.11:6*).

Ezekiel was another one of the Old Testament prophets who proclaimed the message of God to His people (*Ezek.11:14-17*). Jonah again is a good example of one who received the command from God to preach his message. In the book of Jonah (3:1-2) we read the following information: "And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee. "Jonah delivered the message of God unto Nineveh faithfully. Many more examples can be mentioned but these can suffice to state the point that preaching dates from the time of the Old Testament. So preaching is dependent also on the Old Testament. Our modern preachers should know also therefore to preach from the Old Testament. Preaching and teachings also from the Old Testament can be good examples for the biblical foundation of our modern preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, especially if notice is taken of the contextuality of Old Testament preaching.

2.3.2 Preaching in the New Testament context

In the New Testament, there are many different examples of preaching which have been made by various preachers. Those preachers gave us some good examples which show us that also in the New Testament there are sermons concerning the message of God. Among those preachers, there are John the Baptist, Jesus Christ Himself, the apostles such as Peter, Paul, the author of the Hebrews that remains anonymous, as well as the believers themselves.

Jesus Christ was a preacher and a teacher. At many occasions he preached the Word of God His Father to the people. In Math 9:35 we read that: "Jesus went round visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom...." (*Stott 1982:16*). In his sermons, he always used illustrations as well as parables. In Mark 4:43 we read that: "He would not speak to them without using parables....."

The history of the New Testament church starts on the day of Pentecost according to the book of Acts. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, the first believers which is the church of Christ received the message of the Word of God. From the book of Acts (2:42) we read that: "They spend their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and prayers. This was the beginning of the early church and the preachings of the New Testament.

From the first chapter of the book of Acts, St. Luke, the author of this book, gives us various examples of preaching. In this book, the author speaks solely about the great work which has been done by the apostles, and also including even some examples of the preaching of the apostles.

The first sermon was a sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost. His sermon consists of the required steps of preaching like interpretation and exposition as well as the application. His application was very effective and relevant. Because of the effectiveness of his preaching, many people became Christians upon that day. Cleverley-Ford (1979:53) says that: "The church came to birth with preaching and preaching came to birth with the church."

In Mark 1:38 it is reported that Jesus did not return to those who wanted His healing power but pressed on to other towns in order that He might preach. "But Jesus answered, We must go to the other villages around here. I have to preach in them also, because that is why I came." Dudley (1987:76) emphasized this truth by saying that: "The sources are clear that Jesus proclaimed the imminence of the kingdom."

Another preacher that can be mentioned in the New Testament, is St. Paul. Paul made some good contribution in the New Testament as far as preaching is concerned. Immediately after his repentance on the way to Damascus, he became one of the greatest preachers. On the other hand he was not only a great preacher, but he was also a great missionary. He took various missionary journeys, to visit many different places, to preach the message of the Word of God. He also established some congregations so that those who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Saviour could be able to continue as the church and the body of Christ.

Apart from Jesus Christ and his disciples, the first Christians also became preachers in the New Testament time. During the time of the great persecutions of believers, Christians were scattered all over the world, because they were afraid of their persecutors. They left their homes and places to look for their safety. The church in Jerusalem began to suffer cruel persecution. As we already said, all the believers were scattered throughout the provinces of Judaea and Samaria. The believers who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the message.

So the Christian ministry of preaching is grounded in the ministry of Jesus and the commissioning of the apostolic church. At the core of Jesus's own ministry, was his proclamation of the reign of God. Jesus announced the good news of salvation in his presence and his action as well as in his words. Further, Jesus gathered a band of disciples and sent them to preach even to the end of the world. (Mt. 28:18;19).

After his death and his resurrection came the apostles who proclaimed salvation in his Name and in the power of the Holy Spirit. The apostles as well as the believers announced the Good News of the resurrection. The central message of the apostolic preaching is reflected in the book of Acts of the apostles and in the Pauline letters. Their main message was that Jesus who was crucified has risen as the Lord and Christ, and everybody who repent and believe in Him will be saved and have eternal life (Ac. 5:42).

Therefore, according to the New Testament, preaching is the public proclamation of the Christian message to the non-Christian world. It is not a religious discourse to a closed group of initiates, but the open and public proclamation of God's redemptive activity in and through Jesus Christ.

2.4 What preaching is not

A sermon is not a lecture, it is not like teaching. There is a great difference between the two. Preaching is an exposition of a text of Scripture in terms of contemporary culture with the specific goal of helping people to understand and obey the truth of God. Even preaching as teaching is different to ordinary teaching of one or another subject.

Preaching is not all about what people want to hear. Many people want sermons to say what they like most. If a preacher unveils or expose the Word of God, they think that he or she is talking about them. Basically one must start his or this assignment by referring to (Hebr.4:12- 13) "The word of God is alive and active, sharper than any double-edged sword. It cuts all the way through, to where joints and marrow come together. It judges the desires and thoughts of the heart. There is nothing that can be hidden from God; everything in all creation is exposed and lies open before his eyes. And it is to him that we must all give account of ourselves."

For preachers the starting point is God. One should approach preaching through prayer. A preacher who does not pray is like a motor mechanic without his tools. Preaching, as we indicated, is not like addressing people with my own speech, but addressing people with someone else's speech. In other words, preaching is not some human thoughts, or a personal message.

Preaching is not an ordinary human speech. It is also not a composition or a human conversation. Thus the preacher has to feel the pressure of God first (*Turnbull 1967:1*).

Preaching is sometimes or even many times misunderstood. Some preachers bring to the listeners what can be called a speech, and they say that what they brought to the listeners is a sermon. But in reality what they consider as preaching is totally not a preaching at all. Some preachers have their own words and sermons. What they do is only to go to the Bible and look for a passage that will suite what they want to say. Preaching has an intention, a Biblical one and not that which evolves out of a human heart.

Preaching is not just story telling. Some preachers gather information first, then they start moving their fingers on Scripture for what they think is a relevant text. This is totally not the way. One should plan with or together with the text. Preaching is not telling what one's intentions are but what the intention of God is.

In his book Adams (1982:19) says that: "Preachers today have no authority for preaching their own notions and opinions; they must 'preach the Word' the apostolic Word recorded in the Scriptures." On the other hand, some preachers bring their own thoughts to the listeners and say that they brought the message of the Word of God to the listeners. Some of them proclaim the daily happenings of their areas and say they brought the message of the Word of God to the listeners. But the fact remains that daily happenings of their areas, are and will not be preaching. Preaching is and will remain to be only the Good News of salvation (Logan. 1987:8). This is also not contextual preaching. Contextual preaching is only contextual when the Word of God is applied to the particular situation.

Further than that, preaching is not child's play. The preacher should plan his preaching. He must also be a gifted person and realises his dependance on the Holy

Spirit and invites the Holy Spirit to guide him. Preaching is not a personal instruction, but preaching bears the instructions of God. Preaching does not provide time for the preacher to insult or preach a false message to the congregation. Ellicott (1879:83) puts it clearly when he says that: "We do not want a sermon that shall break the bruised reed of compunction or quench the smoking flax of divine love in the heart."

Preaching is not a political speech or a speech in a conference. Some of our modern preachers bring earthly politics to the congregation while others talk about the daily news from the media and claim that they actually brought the Good News of God to the congregation. Politics, news papers and the media may be used only as teaching or helping aids, but not as the source of preaching; only Scripture is the main source of preaching. It is true when Perry (1973:9) says that: "Sermons today are spiritless, dull and badly delivered."

On the other hand, preaching is not a lecturing on a certain subject. It is very essential for the preacher if he can realise that preaching can be dangerous if it be taken as a specific subject that a preacher can use in his preaching. This means that there is no way that preaching can be regarded as lecturing.

Apart from that, preaching is not aesthetic recitation, because God of preaching is the God of supremacy and above all nature and Scripture as well. In the aesthetic recitation it mainly goes about joy that the listeners get from the recitation and the way they are entertained by it. Even if the preacher in a certain sense bring forth some pleasure/joy to his listeners he is never an entertainer who should make use of the pulpit to indicate his skills and abilities.

Preaching is not an essay. An essay is compiled to be read whereas preaching means to be heard as a proclamation of the Word of God. Preaching is also not a dramatic announcement of the Bible. Preaching is not a continuous commentary on a specific text.

2.5 The purpose of preaching

The purpose of preaching is not to tell the people about my self because I am a sinner. But the main purpose of preaching is only to proclaim the Good News about Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour (*Pearson 1954:15*). It is to tell the people about Jesus who was crucified on the cross for their sins. Through preaching the preacher makes people aware of sin, and to tell them that to sin is to be against God and therefore only God can forgive sin. God sent Jesus Christ to this sinful world to come and save man from sin and from the punishment of God (*Sweazey 1976:17*).

John also indicates what the purpose of preaching is in his gospel: "That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (*Joh. 20:31*). It is also very clear that the preaching of the apostles

and of everyone of them, as recorded in the New testament, had one purpose, to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ.

Proclamation conveys not only the action of preaching, but also the content. It is the preaching, the proclamation of the unique gospel here and now. The purpose of preaching is to let the people to accept Jesus Christ as their personal saviour (*Turnbull 1967:51*). It is also to reveal to them that God is great and above everything on the world. He is the only one who has power over the earth He created. It is also to bring salvation to the listeners. Ellicot (1879:83) says that: "Its function is to bring their venerable truths into immediate contact with the understanding, the feeling, and the will of those who are present." In other words, to make the Word of God applicable to the life situation of the listeners - to contextualize the eternal truth to their lives.

In the Heidelberg Catechism this view of the purpose of preaching is expressed in Sunday xxv question 65: "Since, then, faith alone makes us share in Christ and all his benefits, when does such faith originate? Answer: The Holy Spirit creates it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel....."

According to Adams (1982:13) "The purpose of preaching, then, is to effect *changes* among the members of God's church that build them up individually and that build up the body as a whole. "On the other hand, the aim of preaching is to change the lives of the people by applying the Word of God to their lives, also to live a life that is pleasing to God, and to be born again and be separated from their sins. The purpose of preaching is also to lead or take people from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light (*Sweazey 1976:22*).

The purpose of preaching is concerned with the evoking of faith, but also with building up and strengthening and instructing in the implications of faith for one's whole life. It aims to inform and convince and to change certain views. Preaching brings people near God and to live according to His will.

This is quite true because even Kim (1994:165) also says that: "Preaching has a unique goal like a worship service. Preaching is to bring people to the living God through its message." This is to be done in order that faith can be awakened.

On the other hand, the purpose of preaching is to build up and equip the members of the congregation for ministry and to build them up in faith so that they can stand in a deeper relationship with God and with all people (*Adams 1982:12*). In the letter to the Eph (4:11-12) we read that: "It was he who gave gifts; he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers. He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of christian services, in order to build up the body of Christ."

According to Paul in the letter to the Romans (11:36) the aim of preaching is to glorify God and to work in and uphold faith in the heart of the believer. On the other hand, the purpose of preaching is to bring salvation by conversion to people who do not know (*Pearson 1954:18*). In this regard, Geluk (1995:A:12) says that: "The aim of preaching is to have people call on the name of the Lord for salvation." Baker (1985:28) puts it this way: "The ultimate purpose of preaching is to sanctify and save souls. This is accomplished by moving them to know and love God by installing in them a sense of sorrow for the past sins and a desire to carry out God's will."

Apart from that, the purpose of preaching is to teach (*Sweazey 1976:20*). In other words through preaching, the listeners are taught about the Kingdom of God and about the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ also taught people and He also gave his disciples and with them all who were to preach, the commission to teach his teachings. The church's teaching does not replace the teaching of Jesus. Jesus Christ is, was and will remain the teacher to the end of the world. Preaching as teaching, strives to build up the church in its faith. Kellerman (1997A:19) is quite right when he says that: "The purpose of preaching within the context of the congregation as a fellowship of believers, is to build them up in their faith." we are told that Christ gave 'teachers, to equip God's people' (Eph.4:12-13).

Another important aim of preaching is to bring comfort and or admonition to the congregation (*Sweazey 1976:21 and Adams 1982:12*). From their sufferings and problems, people are comforted by means of preaching. Comforting and admonition is on the grounds of salvation in Christ, His compassion, His love, His gentleness and kindness. Through preaching, the preacher can request, encourage, comfort, cheer and urge the members of his congregation to believe deeply in Jesus Christ.

The purpose of preaching is to help people in this world to get salvation by conversion through faith in the living God as is already said. But it is also to strengthen and encourage new converts to be mature spiritually in their faith. To evoke the mature believers spiritually to serve and devote themselves to the expansion of the church of God.

Amongst other purposes of preaching is that preaching should be to proclaim the judgement of God over the sins and evil deeds done by men. In his book Sweazey (1976:22) says that: "Preaching must declare God's judgement on private sin and social wrong." The church is the body of Jesus Christ. It is established on this world but not that it should live like the world (*Strauss 1999:47*). The church must differentiate itself from the world. It must always prove itself to be a living body in this perishable world. In this way the church can really be relevant and contextual.

Preaching should bring conversion in lives of men, with the view that through them others can also be converted. The preacher brings forth his preaching to the people with the purpose that those who are hearkening him should be converted in their lives according to the will of God. The converted person should have the liking in

assisting the conversion of others. This means that a person who have been converted by the sermon shall start immediately with participation in the missionary work of Jesus Christ (Sweazey 1976:23).

2.6 Conclusion

What preaching really is, is best understood in terms of its relation to the wider theme of revelation. Revelation is essentially God's self-disclosure apprehended by the response of faith. God reveals himself through preaching of His Word because preaching is the timeless link between God's great redemptive act and man's apprehension of it. It is the medium through which God contemporises his historic self-disclosure in Christ and offers man the opportunity to respond in faith. The content of true preaching should and must be Christ Jesus and Him crucified.

So it is the duty of the preacher to bring this gospel of God to His people. But in order to do that well, the preacher must be well studied. To do it exceptionally well he must have exceptional understanding of the passage in Scripture that he is expounding. He should also understand the culture of the people for whom he is expounding the Word of God and also the spirituality of these people he is helping to obey the Word of God.

Due to this it can be of great importance if the preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa can understand the reality that preaching is the way of conveying the Word of God to the congregation. The preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa have been called to proclaim the gospel of God to His congregation. They also have to understand that their proclamation is nothing other than the Word from the Bible to the listeners being the Word of God (Nel. 1996:173).

That their preaching in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should be relevant, the preachers should always remember that preaching is the service of the Word of God. They as preachers are the servants in the congregations of Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. This means that the preachers should understand that they are there for service and not to be served (*Mt 20:28*). "like the Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life to redeem many people." This is a grievous mistake done by most preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa by neglecting their call of preaching the Word of God and they perform their extraordinary tasks (Kellerman 1999:8 and Janse Van Rensburg 1998:11).

Again it shall be of paramount importance for today's preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to understand that preaching is the communication between God and His congregation. They should understand that they are instrumental in the proclamation of the gospel between God and the congregation. This means that the message they are proclaiming is not theirs, but it is from God Himself.

To maintain relevancy in their preaching, the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should understand that preaching is the spiritual interpretation of the message of God. This is justified by the utterances of the prophets when they used to say: "So says or thus said the Lord" (*Ex. 3:14;15*).

Another important factor is that the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should always bear in mind is that preaching should be purposeful. Preaching without purpose is totally not a proclamation of the Word of God, but it is just an empty speech. Our preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should always see to it that their preachings should be goal directed and have a specific purpose. The main purpose of preaching should be to reveal the existence of God through Jesus Christ his Son. (*Pearson 1954:15 and Sweazey 1976:18*).

Another important aspect of preaching is that it will be important if our preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa can understand that is not human centred ideas govern by self humanity but the Good News from God (*Logan 1978:8*). Preaching as said is not just a public oration but a redeeming Word of God to all those who are the believers.

There is a shortcoming committed by our preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa that they always preach out of one Testament, that is the New Testament. It will be very important for the preachers to understand that the Bible is made out of two Testaments namely the Old and the New Testament. Therefore, they should preach out of those two Testaments continuously pending on the purpose of the preaching (*Adams 1982:18*).

CHAPTER 3

3.1 WHAT IS THE MEANING OF CONTEXT?

3.1.1 In general:

Context is for example and with regard to language, a link between a sentence and or sentences and the whole prescribed passage. The meaning of a sentence should be interpreted together with its holistic derivation. The whole determines the meaning of individual sentence. Just as the sentence contributes towards the whole context, it is the same with each sentence. Its context is determined by the whole context. In other words or put it in another way, context is the parts of a piece of writing or, speech that precede and follow a word or passage and contribute to its full meaning.

On the other hand, one can say that it is the conditions and circumstances that are relevant to the fact or to an event (*Nel 1996:176*). With regard to preaching, Evans (1964:39) says that: "The context is what goes before and what follows after the special portion of the sacred text under consideration. "This means that for a preacher to find the real context of a text, he or she will have to go back one or more chapters.

The preacher must study the context, reading carefully what goes before and what comes after the portion he is seeking to explain. In this connection, Long (1989:64) is quite right when he says that: ".....all texts are linked to their surroundings....."

Berkhof (1977:104) he is not defining context, but rather explains what the connection is by saying that: "The absolute necessity of taking particular notice of the preceding and following, the near and remote connection of a passage, can scarcely be over-emphasized."

Context are those parts that precede or follow a passage and fix its meaning in this context. It is how you see something. Sometimes it is the place and situation in which people live. As far as preaching is concerned, context refers to all the circumstances surrounding the listeners. That includes aspects such as personal, environment, political as well as socio-economical circumstances.

Preaching in its origin and thereafter, takes place within the context of the community of believers. It also takes place from the context of an understanding of the message of the text, the understanding of the language as well as terminology and idioms in the time of the text situation, which translates itself into the language and terminology of the contemporary circumstances and makes sense. The text needs to be translated because preaching is on the one hand a translation. The message of the passage needs to be understood and explained in the language, terminology as well as the idioms and the spirit even in the thoughts of the

contemporary listeners. Pieterse (1987:16) is quite right when he says that: "The text bears fruit, speaks when it meets the esent, concrete situation. The text and the congregation's situation must be considered....."

On the other hand, context can or may mean the relationship between the preacher and his God. Furthermore, context can also explain the interwoven or the relationship between the message of the Word of God and the people of that particular place. It is the relationship of the preaching message and the circumstances of the concerned place. By explaining this relationship, the preacher is correctly relating the news of his message and the contemporary situations from that kind of preaching then, there is also some mutual relationship of the Spirit of God and man.

Apart from that, preaching had to be done throughout the course of history, in terms of different preconceptions of understanding. Preaching functions within the limited horizons of man's understanding in a specific situation. In a new situation which is determined by new preconceptions of understanding, preaching of the previous situation can be difficult to understand. To emphasise this fact, Pieterse (1987:14) says that: "We can not be satisfied with a mere repetition of the text, because the text's message needs to be translated into contemporary terms." In other words, we should not therefore simply repeat our passages in preaching because it may not be understood. So the Biblical message should be translated into the language, terminology as well as into the idioms and proverbs of post modern listeners.

3.2 Contextuality with regard to preaching:

3.2.1 The historical context:

When we speak of preaching, we must remember that we refer to the message of the Word of God. That message is brought to the congregation by the preacher. The preacher brings the message that is written in the Bible. It is thus understood that the preacher uses the Bible which has God's message written in it. The Bible was not written yesterday but many years ago. The Bible has its own historical times which are also written about (*Craddock 1985:36*). It also speaks of ancient and Biblical ways and events and also brings a message from God through these times. To emphasise this fact Long (1989:72) says that: "Biblical texts often speaks of events in history such as the reign of a king or the destruction of Jerusalem."

Although the Bible is the Word of God to us today we must remember that we are not the first group of people to read the Bible. The first readers of the Bible lived long before us. These people lived in their own places who were totally different from us today. They also lived according to their own customs and traditions. Their norms and values are not similar to ours today. This illustrates the need for

background information for us to understand the passage we are reading. The historical context has a great influence on preaching today.

The gospel is the history of the great deeds of God in Jesus Christ. Preaching of the gospel simply means that the historical events which are found in the Scriptures, should be preached by the preacher to the congregation. The Bible contains nothing less than the message of redemption of God through His Son Jesus Christ. The Bible is the reliable witness of this great work of God in Christ. Therefore, it is the duty of the preacher to bring this message of God to the people of today with the authority from God.

If the preacher uses the passage outside of its historical context, it will be difficult to understand. The end results will be that the text has little or no meaning to the congregation at all. Biblical texts have historical events. Apart from that, some Biblical texts were written within a specific situation and were intended for a specific group of people or readers. Therefore, it is very important for the preacher to know the history of the concerned text and use its message in the correct context.

Another important fact to consider is that the Biblical books were written for people who lived at the same place, under the rule of the same government. Each and every book of the Bible was written for a specific group of people and has also a specific aim of the author. In other words the historical background of each book reveals to us who the author was, whom he was writing for as well as what time and from where, and why he was writing that book.

Therefore it is clear that each book in the Bible originates from a specific time and place. The author of each book of the Bible wrote it for certain reasons. It is for that reason that the preacher must know and understand the history of each book and be able to place it in context for the congregation and make it more easily understood. The greatest task of the preacher is to reveal the historical background and context of the passage and apply it to the contemporary context. It is true to say that this would take a great deal of effort and of time. Nevertheless, it will be of help to the preacher and the congregation to have, as far as possible, a clear knowledge of the writer and the text. The preacher will know when the text was written and by whom. A knowledge of the customs and traditions of the people at that time will be of great help to the preacher.

We have already pointed out that the Bible was written very long ago. Many changes have taken place with the duration of time. The times which the Biblical people lived differ vastly when compared to the modern day people. Apart from the times they lived in, the customs of the Biblical people differ to those of today. So the hearers of today have also their historical context. Traditions have also changed and some may even have fallen away. The deep knowledge of all these can be of great help to the preacher and enable him to become a successful preacher.

Further than that, when a preacher takes the Bible and reads it, he should always remember that he is not the first preacher to read the Bible and preach on it, but he must remember that there were many preachers who came before him and read the Bible and preached on it before him. Therefore his interpretation and understanding of the Bible is influenced by the way this book has been read for many years by various preachers through the ages. To put emphasis on this point Craddock (1985:33) says that: "For the preacher there are those who have by their influence provided an information and yet working definition of what it is to preach."

On the other hand, a preacher should remember that he is not the first preacher to bring the Word of God to his listeners. By themselves, from their childhood they heard and saw people reading and preaching from the Bible. Perhaps some of them come from the family where the father is an elder or a deacon or even a minister of religion of a particular congregation. The ways in which their parents as well as their church leaders used to read and preach from the Bible, worked as an example of how they can use and understand the Bible. Concerning this fact Tolmie (1998:18) says that: "All the sermons that you heard during your life and all the religious books that you have read until now, will influence the way in which you read and understand the Bible."

Nevertheless, this does not imply that now the preacher in his duty of bringing the message of God to the congregation should imitate or copy the preacher of Biblical times. What the preacher must do, is to know and understand the origin and historical context of preaching.

The gospel is directed to the person, and bound at the duty and the history of Jesus Christ. The work of salvation of Jesus Christ in history is the good news of redemption. This gospel has been proclaimed by God through His prophets in the Holy Scripture, and is dealing with His only begotten Son, Jesus. As a human being, Jesus was born from the house of king David. Due to his (Jesus) resurrection from the dead, he is designated as Son of God by the Holy Spirit with authority and power, Jesus Christ our Lord. In the letter to the Romans (1:2-4) we read the following words: "The Good News was promised long ago by God through his prophets, as written in the Holy Scriptures. It is about his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ; as to his humanity, he was born a descendant of David; as to his divine holiness, he was shown with great power to be the Son of God by being raised from death."

The gospel is dealing with the core of the wonderful deeds of God in Christ with the cross and the resurrection. In his letter 1 Corinthians (1:18) Paul says that: "For the message about Christ's death on the cross is nonsense to those who are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power."

Therefore, it is the duty of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa's preachers to devise means by bringing this kind of message to the congregation of today.

3.2.2 The pastoral context:

Verily when we speak of preaching, we have to get a clear concept of the origin of its origin. Actually preaching starts or emanates from a pastoral context. Generally most of the preachers commit a great mistake by assuming that preaching starts in the pulpit only or preaching takes place only in the pew in front of the members of the congregation. Craddock (1985:38) puts it more clearly when he says that: "Actually it would be more correct to say that preaching not only occurs in a pastoral context but is itself pastoral activity" (*Stratman 1983:15*).

In his book Stratman (1983:32) states that: "Whatever the method or the mode of pastoral preaching, it is not pastoral unless the preacher sensitively listens to the needs, concerns, fears and hopes of his or her people. "In other words, active preachers who are devoted and committed to their call know the members of their congregations very well because of their day to day pastoral activities. Such preachers are regarded as true spiritual feeders. Their aim is to know their flock and to deal with them at all times. By so doing they are always at the closest proximity of their congregations. They hearken and comprehend their joy and pleasure, their threats and frustrations, their melancholy as well as their doubts (*Stratman 1983:31*). An outspoken preacher is the preacher who belongs to the congregation the one who are nurturing their spiritual life. Long (1986:374) says that: "Remember, he is not handling ideas or themes (as does a lecture), but the life-changing Word of God. He must therefore, know the lives that need changing."

It is a none acceptable and shameful event to realise that there are some preachers who do not consider their pastoral duties to the expected level. These are the preachers who are not even prepared to listen to any report on the illness sustained by their congregations as well as their difficulties in life. But Stratman (1983:32) says that: "Listening also to the best in current thought in the human arts and science is important.".....If we are to shepherd God's people, we will have to proclaim as well as to listen, doctrine along with dialogue." The congregation is abandoned to rove aimlessly and hopelessly like the lost sheep without a shepherd. In most cases these are the egocentric preachers who are only interested in their own affairs and concentrate solely on their own interests. To put emphasis on this, Janse Van Rensburg (1999:37) says that: "Such leaders will easily and without remorse concoct a message' of the Lord to his congregation' on Saturday or (even worse!) on a Sunday morning before the worship service."

We have to understand that the preacher and the pastor are not standing in diversity, but is one and the same person. A preacher should always remember that he is a spiritual therapist who always cares for the spiritual life of his congregation. In the gospel of John (21:15,17) Jesus said to Peter: "Take care of my lambs.." "Take care of my sheep." This means that the preacher as a spiritual healer should lead a

clean and faithful life by preaching the Word of God. He must also be faithful in his pastoral activities. It is through house visits where he shall know the members of his congregation well. He should be a devoted person who understand that he is driven by a call from God, and he should execute this with the full commitment. Long (1989:32) emphasises this fact by saying that: "In other words, the pastor must be a certain kind of person in order to establish the sorts of relationships with hearers necessary to do the therapeutic pastoral task."

The example that we can side in this regard to testify that a preacher is and should be a pastor, is explicitly stated in the New Testament, in the historical events of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was a preacher who preached about repentance and the coming of the Kingdom of God (*Sweazey 1976:257*). Jesus Christ was not just a preacher, but he also initiated many pastoral duties. He visited many people at their homes discussed with them, shared ideas with them and had relationship with them (Godly relations). In Luk.19:5 we have a clear example of this when Jesus said to Zachaeus: "Hurry down, Zacheus, because I must stay in your house today." His approach to the people strengthened his preaching.

The apostle Paul was also a preacher, but he was not just a preacher who did not do house visits. He visited different homes, different congregations, different friends. He wrote to the Romans on this matter and said: "I ask that in his good will may at least make it possible for me to visit you now. For I want very much to see you, in order to share a spiritual blessing with you to make you strong. You must remember, my brothers, that many times I have planned to visit you,....." (Rom.1:11;13). More than this to witness that Paul was a preacher, he reminds the elders of Ephesians that he preached to them the Word of God without restricting any information. In the book of Acts (20:27) we read the following words: "For I have not held back from announcing to you the whole purpose of God."

If we look at verse 31 from the same chapter of the same book, we realise that his preaching emanates from his pastoral journeys. We say this because from this verse it is clearly stated that Paul did have time to discuss with the individuals about their lives, their problems as well as their difficulties: "Watch, then, and remember that with many tears, day and night, I taught every one of you for three years" (*Acts 20:31*).

Due to this above illustrated reasons we state without any doubt that true preaching is from a pastoral context, and it is influenced by that context. This clearly means that the preacher who does his pastoral duties, is the preacher who cares for his congregation. Furthermore he has a respect for his congregation. He is flexible and adaptable. Such a preacher is the one who believes in the Scriptures as well as its message. He is moved to the Scripture by his congregation for consultation and visa versa he moves the congregation to the Scriptures for consultation or reference.

3.2.3 The liturgical context:

We have already considered the historical and the pastoral contexts of preaching and we saw that preaching is not something which is like an island in the water. But preaching participates and functions in different contexts. Actually preaching is not only a part of history but is itself an act of history. Preaching is also not a part of pastoral context but is itself a pastoral act. Now we will also see that preaching is not only a part of liturgical context, but is itself a liturgical act.

But perhaps before we can go on with our explanations or discussions it will be very important to have a little explanation of the word "Liturgy" According to Deist (1984:96) the word or the term "liturgy" means: "The prescribed form and order of the acts to be performed at a public religious ceremony, e.g. the rituals for celebrating the eucharist, and the sequence of vatum, song, prayer, sermon etc. constituting a church service." In other words liturgy simply means the forms of public services officially prescribed by a church. On the one hand we can say that liturgy is the way in which every gathering is conducted by its leaders and followers.

Long (1989:10) says that: "Liturgy is when a community gathers to hear the proclamation, or for a baptism, for the common meal, for the feast and talk together. Then one person or more gets up in front of the congregation in order to preach the gospel. It is not they as "office bearers" who confront the congregation, it is Christ. What they do and say is in the name of the triune God."

This means that also preachers come from the very same people of God, i.e within the community of faith. God calls the whole church to proclaim the gospel, and every disciple of Jesus Christ is part of this calling. The whole church proclaims the gospel, and the preaching of sermons is but one part of this larger ministry.

Preaching as one of the liturgical events, comes as the homiletical aspect of the liturgy. It is another aspect in the worshipping events whereby God through the preacher is speaking to His people. The preacher is being used to communicate the truth, and the people of God are listening to this truth. Therefore preaching, listening, singing and praying could be assigned to the work of the people of God.

Any gathering, even if it is not a worship or praising gathering, has its own path which it will follow. The simple reason is that it is important that the gathering runs smoothly so that the members in attendance will be satisfied. The second reason is that the gathering must also be conducted in an orderly fashion. Even if the preacher can be invited to open such gathering with a short prayer and the reading of Scripture, he is obliged to follow the order of that gathering.

When we look at the side of the church, we find that the members of the congregation get together for worshipping (*Martimort 1987:93*). In other words their gathering is solely for fellowship. These people are gathered to worship God with their own words. They come to glorify God with their songs and hymns and also to

bring their offerings to God. These people come to the gathering to worship and praise the redeeming God, their forgiving God and the God who sustains and protects His children. It is then at such a gathering that the preacher will have a great opportunity to preach the Word of God to the worshippers.

In order for the gathering to be efficient it is essential that some form of guidelines are laid down by the church and the gathering must follow those guidelines correctly (*Martimort 1987:17*). These guidelines of the church are known as liturgical order, and it will allow the freedom of the preacher to preach. This means that the preacher will be able to bring his preaching freely because he knows that he is within the guidelines set by his church. Then the preacher will bring the Word of the living God to the members of the congregation with a thorough preparation. It is due to this fact that Van Dooren (1980:14) have said that: "Does our attitude, our preparation for going to church, our behaviour during each part of the worship service, show that we are filled with awe for being in the presence of a holy God". If the preacher is not preparing for his duty then it will mean that he cares less about the God who called him for performing that work.

We have already learnt that the liturgical context of preaching is important because it allows the preacher to preach more freely. The worship service has its own way or order which must be kept to ensure an orderly service. The worship service also has its own structures. Further more it has some various patterns. These patterns of services are according to the church's programme. Some times it is time for Holy communion service, and another time there will be a service for baptism. There are also wedding ceremonies. They are all for the same church but are not taking place at the same time. They are also conducted according to the guidelines of the church concerned.

This does not mean that the pattern of the service cannot be changed. Since that a preacher has a freedom of conducting any kind of service, he may also be free to make some changes concerning the pattern of that particular service. We know that in many churches, even in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, the Word of God is proclaimed or preached always before the sacraments, whether it is the baptismal sacrament or that of the Holy communion. The preacher always brings the message of the Word of God first before the sacraments. But he is also free to reverse the pattern in which that kind of service is concerned. This means that he can start by conducting the sacraments first and then there the Word of God. To emphasise this point Van Doorn (1980:71) says that: "For those freedom-loving spirits who 'by nature' oppose uniformity, it may be stressed that being bound to a specific order of liturgy does not mean losing your freedom." Nevertheless, even if the preacher is free to make any change concerning church services he must also be aware that those changes must not bring or create confusion among the members of the congregation and it must be well thought through.

Another important point that can be mentioned here is the Word of God and the sacraments. The Word of God goes hand in hand with the sacraments. In each an every service, the Word of God is present. We can also emphasise that the Word of God must be present. It is important for the preacher to know that no service can be conducted without preaching the Word of God. In any service, be it baptismal or Holy communion, the Word of God comes first and then the rest of the service. We have the following practical example from the gospel of Mat.(28:19) where we read the following words: "Go, then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father the Son, and the Holy Spirit and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Apart from that, in prayer meetings, the preacher must remember that he is there to bring the Word of God to the worshippers. The word that he preaches comes from the Biblical texts. Those passages speak to the worshippers. This means that the message that comes from the Bible is directed to the worshippers and it is important to note that the word comes from the Bible to the congregation and not from the church. The main reason being that the Word of God is the real word. It is th word because it it unchangeable. Yes it is and remains unchangeable for ever.

The worship service is always begun by the preacher in prayer (*Martimort 1987:102*). He does not pray for the sake of praying but there is a reason for his prayer. Firstly the preacher will pray for the message that will be brought to the congregation. The preacher needs thorough knowledge of the Word as it is not his own but the Word of God. This requires a great knowledge to bring the Word to the congregation in an understandable and acceptable way. By so doing, the preacher shows that there is also a great relationship between a prayer and the Word of God.

Immediately after prayer of the Word, the preacher will pray again. This time the preacher is praying for those members of the congregation who attend that service. He prays for those who have heard the message of God. He prays for the needs of the worshippers. He also prays for their problems and difficulties. By so doing the preacher emphasises that the message which they have heard, is really their own message. To emphasise this point Craddock (1985:44) says that: "And the pastor does so, the people say in their hearts, 'Yes, that is it; this is our message; that is our faith.'

Another matter of great importance is the hymns and songs of praise which are used by the congregation in a worshiping service. The preacher will select songs and hymns that complement the Word on that day. This means that the preacher will try by all means to select those hymns that will correspond correctly and directly with the selected passage of Scripture. By doing so the preacher is showing the good relationship between the Word of God and the songs and hymns. This also emphasise the true fact that preaching is not simply in a setting of worship but is itself an act of worship.

3.2.4 The theological context:

If we examine the Bible with the question whether we should preach at all, the answer is yes but we must also remember what preaching is. We already stated preaching is the message of the Word of God brought to the congregation by the preacher. That message which is preaching cannot be isolated but stands in relation to something. What we are trying to explain here is that preaching is closely knitted to theology. Preaching is related to that specific theological context. Craddock (1985:47) puts it in this way: "We shall see that preaching not only has a theological context but is itself theological act."

Before we can go further on this point, we first have to understand what theology is. The term consists of two words, namely Theos (God)+Logos (Word), which means theology is the study of the Word of God.

People like Deist (1984:258) in one of his definitions, perceived theology as a systematic reflection/description of the theological contents of a Biblical author, a Biblical book, a particular Biblical tradition or a Biblical community or a period e.g. the theology of Amos, Paul, the Corinthians congregation etc.

But theology in preaching is about a message, the interpretation of a particular text for the contemporary situation. This interpretation is analogous to the so called hermeneutic principle, an interpretative key presupposed by the interpreter when interpreting a text (*Deist 1984:113*) The theology in preaching i.e (message) in preaching is termed the theological intention.

Snyman (1996:546) defines this "message" as the final characteristic mark of the exegetical process. By this we mean what theological sense does to a particular pericope make what is the message being the overall pericope, since for today, a particular pericope has to be understood from its today's context.

Theological intention is not just the reading out and compiling of information read from different sources during the exegetical process, but it is the creative processes by the one who does exegesis. One has to derive the message from the information compiled through exegesis.

Therefore in this way, the processes of exegesis is seen as both science and art. By science we mean the doing processes of exegesis as seen from following certain rules of literary and textual investigation, whereas the latter (art) means creative aspects of deriving the message.

As we see and agree that preaching is a theological act, or agree that preaching has a theological context, we can thus deduce that the preacher must also be a theological person. In other words, the preacher must have a thorough knowledge of theology. Due to that knowledge the preacher will be able to understand that preaching has a

theological context. Due to the need for theological knowledge, proper training is essential for any preacher. There are so many institutions in our country where training can be obtained, but the person must be sure of his calling and what form of training he should undergo.

Another important point concerning the theological context of preaching is that the message of God is written for us in the Bible by different authors, who come from different places, who wrote for different groups of people at different times. This implies that each and every author of the book of the Bible has his own theology. To write and to compile his book he used his own theology that is different from that of other authors. To support this statement Tolmie (1998:12) says that: "Each New Testament writing was written to a particular congregation and had a very specific purpose in mind."

When we study the gospel of Matthew we find that it has been written to a group of Christians who followed some Jewish customs and traditions. This emphasises the fact that the author of this gospel stressed these matters in his gospel. Then we can now say that a preacher has a theology which can be based on those matters which he stressed most (*Tolmie 1998:12*).

Concerning the gospel of John, the author wrote to the Christian congregation that was expelled from the Jewish synagogues, because of the fact that they believed that Jesus is the Messiah while the Jews did not believe that (*Tolmie 1998:12*). According to this argument, we can expect that the Jews had a very negative attitude towards this gospel. Therefore John used his own theology to write this gospel, and his theology is different from the theology of other Biblical authors. Therefore it is necessary for the preacher to have a clear knowledge of the theology of various authors of Biblical books before he can bring the message of God to the people.

It is very clear then that a preacher cannot be able to do the interpretation of the text with confidence if his interpretation is not based on the theology of the author who is the original writer of that particular text. All the passages from the gospel of John must without any doubt be preached to the congregation according to the manner in which John saw things.

When the apostle Paul wrote his letters to the different congregations, his texts also agree with his theology. In the letter to the Romans, it is clear that he had never visited them prior to the writing of the letter to them. Therefore his message and preaching was unknown to these Christians of Rome. This is very important that the preacher should know it before he can bring his message to the congregation. He must have a clear knowledge concerning Paul's theology. In other words, it is very important for the preacher to try by all means to understand the intentions and objectives of the original author before he can bring his message to the congregation. Concerning this point Craddock (1985:116) says that: "The need to

stress interpreting texts in their appropriate theological contexts arises primarily out of the nature of the Bible itself."

Therefore the preacher should understand that there is a great relationship between theology and preaching, and there is no other way in which theology can be separated from preaching, and preaching from theology. Actually it is theology that assists and equips the preacher with the necessary tools and methods which can be used in the preparation of the sermon (*Craddock 1985:48*). Theology also provides the church with the necessary ways that the church can follow in order to follow the true Word of God. In that way the teaching that a preacher brings to the congregation, will be a teaching that originates from the living Word of God.

Further than that theological context is important to the preaching of the preacher in the sense that in the Bible like in any other disciplines like Biology, Mathematics, History and the like, there are some Biblical terms which are used only to refer to the Biblical meanings such as justification, sanctification, grace, covenant, forgiveness even judgement and the like. So it is important for the preacher to be familiar with these terms and be able to bring them to the congregation in an accurate and understandable way.

Another important factor concerning theological context of preaching is the language. In most cases the language which is used in preaching is the language which is called a theological language. This means that when a preacher brings his message to the people, he should bring that message through the language with which those people concerned are familiar with. The preacher must use an understandable language when bringing the message to the congregation. The choice of the language rests entirely on the preacher, but his language will be different from the language which can be used in an ordinary school's gatherings or the political meetings. His language will be a theological language as he is also a theologian, but with the prerequisite that it must be understood by the listeners. It must be intelligible to them.

Again we must not forget the aim or the purpose of preaching. The purpose of preaching is to bring people to God. Through preaching, the preacher is trying to bring people to God, so that they can believe in God. In order that they may believe in God, they should know God first. They can know God only if God reveals himself to them, and surely God revealed himself in the past to the people in two ways namely generally and in a special way as seen in the Bible.

In his general revelation God revealed himself in creation and the conscience of man. In Rom (1:20;21) Paul says that: "Ever since God created the world his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. So those people have no

excuse at all! They know God, but they do not give him the honour that belongs to him,....."

In his special revelation God revealed himself in Christ and in his word through Scriptures. In the gospel of John (14:6) we read that: "Jesus answered him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me." And in John 5:39 we read that: "You study the Scriptures, because you think that in them you will find eternal life. And these very Scriptures speak about me." We study the Word of God theologically. Therefore it is true and we agree with Craddock (1985:50) when he says that: "Preaching takes place in a theological context, but is itself a theological act."

We already stated that God revealed himself in his Word through Scriptures. (Nel 1996:22) states as follows: "Die drie-enige God openbaar Hom nie net in die Skrif nie, Hy openbaar Hom meermale in die prediking van die Skrif langs die weg van indikatief, imperatief en belofte." That revelation is the action and God himself is the subject. The Scriptures tell us that this saving revelation of God was given in his words and deeds in the historical events of Israel and in the life and the death as well as the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ was the history of God with his people.

According to the Scriptures the revelation of God is always a combination of words and deeds. The fact that the words are fulfilled in deeds prove that they are really the words of God. We see all these in the history and the life of Jesus himself. The christian faith is a movement in which preaching occurs from the beginning.

3.3 Conclusion:

We already considered the four contexts of preaching namely the historical, the pastoral, the liturgical as well as the theological. And we saw that preaching is not something which is isolated, something that is without any relationships. But preaching participates in those contexts. Actually preaching is not only a part of history but is itself an act of history. This illustrates the need for the background information for the preacher in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to understand the passage he is dealing with. The historical context has also a big influence on the message of today, even in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

Secondly we said that preaching is also not a part of pastoral context but is itself a pastoral act. This means that before a preacher can come to the stage where he wants to preach, he must first of all do house visits. By so doing, he will be able to know his congregation and he will know their needs and their problems. Through his preaching, he will be able to address those problems and comfort them. This is the duty of the preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to do house visits so

that they can know the members of their congregations. This will help them when they come to the preparation of their sermons and to preach contextually.

Thirdly we saw that preaching is also not only part of liturgical context but is itself a liturgical act. We have already learnt that liturgical context of preaching is important because it allows the preacher to preach freely. On the other hand the worship service has its own way or order which must be kept to ensure an orderly service. So it is very important for the preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to know that preaching cannot be separated from the whole liturgical aspect.

Lastly we also saw that preaching is not only a part of theology but is itself a theological act. This means that the message which we bring as preachers, is closely knitted to theology. The preaching is related to that specific theological context. So it is very important for the preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to be theologians so that they may know the theology of authors of the books of the Bible. By doing this then they will be able to bring the message of the Word of God to the congregations without any doubt or fear.

Again it will be very essential for the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to know that the theology of a pericope in preaching is important because it says the message to an ordinary believer sitting in the church every Sunday. Therefore, the homiletic aspect of exegesis that is the sermon, is based on the theological intention (message) of a particular pericope.

CHAPTER 4

CONTEXTUALITY IN GENERAL:

4. WHAT IS A CONTEXTUAL PREACHING?

4.1 Introduction:

Choosing the passage or the text to preach on is very important. Evans (1964:20) puts it in this way: "The importance of the right choice of the text upon which the sermon is based should not be underestimated. "This should be done in prayer and in dependance on the Lord of the Word. A good and wise preacher will do every thing possible to develop his preaching skills (*Kellerman 1997:3*).

In the selection of a text there are some factors that influence our choice. Firstly, the preacher should follow a particular order in his preaching. The order must be determined by what is called the church year (*Kellerman 1997:4*)

Taking the church year into account, will help the preacher to select portions from Scripture to preach on and in this way help him in the difficult task to preach on the whole counsel of God (*Kellerman 1997:4*).

Secondly, events of the day are factors that fill the minds and lives of people and make them call for guidance from the Word of God. A preacher who takes the members of the church serious will take notice of these events and the way they influence the lives of the people (*Kellerman 1997:4*). He will study Scripture in order to find a message from God to address the needs of the people. By following this method, it is then that preaching will be contextual (*Lenski 1968:19*).

Thirdly it is very important that the preacher himself should be in a full knowledge of the Word of God. He himself (the preacher) should be a part and parcel of the Word of God. In his book Evans (1964:23) states that: "If the mind and soul of the preacher are being continually steeped in the Word of truth; if there is a daily walk and fellowship with God; then it will be a comparatively easy matter to find a text from which to proclaim God's message to a hungry world". If the preacher can follow this format in his life, his preaching will be contextual (*Kellerman 1997:5 and Lenski 1968:19*).

Another important issue that a preacher can continuously practice is that he should visit members of his congregation, and by so doing the preacher will learn to know the people whom he is working with. And also he shall know their spiritual shortcomings. In his book Evans (1964:26) says that: "He should remember these three general principles when choosing a text; the spiritual needs of the people; the cycle of truth preached; and his own ability to present the subject." (cf. Stratman 1983:34). We also have a clear example from the gospel of John (10:14) where

Jesus said that: "I am the good shepherd. As the Father knows me and I know the Father, in the same way I know my sheep and they know me."

In simpler terms contextualization means to bring the text (sermon) in the present context, the context of the preacher and the congregation. Deist (1984:56) says that: "Contextualization is translating the gospel the gospel and Christian values in such a manner that it becomes part of, yet addresses the (new) culture in which it is preached hence contextual theology which is theology done from the basis of the (social, economical and political) context in which the theologian finds himself as well as with a view to address that context and not for the sake of intellectual speculation."

4.2 A homiletical theory for contextual preaching:

Contextual preaching is preaching which takes seriously and or deeply both biblical text and its context, as well as the listener and his or her context (*Lane 1967:33*). In other words, it is preaching that communicates God's revealed will to people in such a way that they can easily apply God's revealed will for them to their personal lives within the situation in which they are living (*Strauss 1999:9* and *Logan 1986:8*).

The major aim of contextual preaching is to point out several realistics which need to be taken into consideration when preaching is done with the intention of making the Gospel message relevant to a specific situation.

Contextual preaching, is a method of preaching in which both the Word of God and the people's context are taken seriously. Its aim is therefore to do justice to both the Gospel message as well its hearers. Contextual preaching must walk with the people from the known to the unknown (*Marais & Dippenaar 1992:118*). De Villiers (1973:239) puts it clearly by saying that: "Die evangelie moet in verband gebring word met die omgewing, die samelewing waarin die mens leef, en beweeg. Eintlik is dit 'n uitbouing van die ou begrip van 'verinheemsing' die bring van die evangelie op so 'n wyse dat dit die mense in sy eie kultuursituasie aanspreek."

The task of contextual preaching is not only to deliver the Word of God for consumption by people but as a saving message which needs to be understood and to be relevant to the people's problems.

Contextual preaching, is a kind of preaching that seeks to bring together the culture of the biblical world and the culture of today's reader of Scriptures. One can say that it is a bridge building preaching (*Padilla 1978:11*).

Contextual preaching has a double task, namely the critical task and the creative task. The critical task serves to test the adequacy of yesterday's telling of the Gospel, and to make sure that the Gospel will be preached at least a little better tomorrow (*Marais & Dippenaar 1964:7;8*). The creative task of contextual

preaching is that task which seeks to enable the Gospel message to reach or to touch the hearts of humans in every new generation.

It is also assumed that only in the context of the whole, can that which is partial in principle, achieve a genuine meaning. The meaning of utterances are not determined solely by the choice of words or the manner in which the sentence is structured, but also by the context in which an expression is embedded (*Marais & Dippenaar 1992:119*).

Preaching should not be according to a person, but it should be for the person. It should also not befit in the likings as well as the satisfaction of the modern man, but it should address the concrete need of a modern man.

In preaching, the preacher should be real. It should be well understood that the real not necessarily only be obtained from outside. It is derived from the contents, in the manner in which the Word of God is revealed, so as to create a pathway through which God can reveal Himself, in that the Word of God should be brought to the concrete life.

4.3 The contemporary need for contextual preaching

The world on which we are living, is not a static world. But it is a world of multiple facts and activities that differ. That is to say the world is developmental. These activities also affect the daily living of all people.

These activities bring fast moving changes, bring and affect the style of living of all people as well as their way of thinking. Some of practicalities that are brought by these changes are admirable, but some are not (*Lategan 1991:83*).

Due to the above mentioned explanation, it is explicitly indicated that the necessity of contextual preaching is very vital (*Lategan 1991:14*).

First and foremost, we find that our country South Africa, has undergone many changes. These changes have been visible since 1994. It is in this year when changes existed due to democratic government of our country.

South Africa has suffered for many years due to apartheid regime. During that period, many races like the blacks, were deprived opportunities, since they were only for whites. From 1994, South Africa undergone drastic changes. As the results of these changes it is important that the preachers of today, should adapt their preachings through "contextual preaching" (*Lategan 1991:85*).

After 1994, when South Africa became a democratic country, the whole constitution of the country was repealed and revised, so as to be the constitution of the people. Influx control was doomed to non-existence, as such, people had the right of mobility and residence. This resulted in great migration. New life was started. This condition affected the lives of the people of our country. It is therefore necessary that the message from the preachers should be changed and adapted, and be circumstantial. It should be collaborative to the present way of living.

Some of the people of South Africa, migrated to big cities as well as the small towns. Here they started amalgamation of cultures, races, and the style of living. This amalgamation also affected their lives. It is at this stage where the Word of God should be so directed to the people so as to be acclimated to the prevailing situation.

New changes affected work as well. Nowadays, people get employment through capabilities irrespective of race, colour and sex. Racial discrimination is no more applicable. The most important factor is education. Hence the Word of God should be direct contextual also in this respect. Preaching is therefore very important.

Secondly, even if there are so beautiful and important changes in the country, there are still hawks among the doves. These affect the lives of the people in great numbers. The overwhelming movement of people to urban areas, resulted in great joblessness. Joblessness resulted in high rate of crime. Perpetrators or criminals are arrested and correctional services are overcrowded. A strong Word of God directed to this situation is needed.

The financial constraints resulted in prostitution. This practice in South Africa, seemed to have turned into a hobby. Some of the people regard it as their constitutional right of decision. What does the Word of God say to these circumstances? Remember the law or the commandment of God- "Thou shalt not commit adultery (Ex.20:14). It is here where the Word of God that is direct is needed, and this is what termed contextual preaching.

The matrimonial life is also affected by these vast changes. The family lives as well as their living has changed. Every body marries according to his likings irrespective of what races. There is inter marriage (*Judges 14:3 and Gen.28:2*).

The preceding verses clearly indicate that it was good that there should be no inter marriage. This was to keep the validity of each race clean and pure. The offspring of such marriage could always be very indigenous descendants. This would keep the dignity of each race.

It is a well known fact that each race has its own ways of living. These habits are sustained by its youth from generation to generation. In case of inter marriage it is clear that there will be an assimilation of cultures.

As far as diversity in marriage is concerned, the language of each race is kept. The children of such marriages will learn the original language of the races in which they belong. This will enable the preacher to preach without much language problems as he will be using not many languages at the same time. His preaching will be well understood and accepted. In terms of mixed languages it will be difficult to cascade the message clearly.

These inter marriages affect the culture and the language of the people. It is all clear that the culture of the people in South Africa is going to be either positively or negatively affected. It is here again where the Word of God that is direct is of vital importance. And this type of preaching is called contextual preaching.

The fast changes in South Africa, has resulted even in freedom of religion for every body. Every body has the right to choose the religion in which he believes. As such, we can name a few kinds of religions, that is 'traditional religion' and also satanism. Without any doubt, a contextual preaching to carry over the living Word of God is needed. Here again, the commandment of God says: "Worship no god but me(*Deut.5:7*).

4.4 The role of language:

In his book Nel (1996:29) says that: "Taal is die medium of kanaal waardeur die boodskap aan die hoorder oorgedra word. Daarom moet taal van so'n aard wees dat dit nie die boodskap verduister nie, maar verhelder." In other words, it is very essential that we must have a clear understanding that for the preacher to reach a contextual preaching, have to take into cognisance the indigenous language spoken by the people he is going to preach to.

We say that because the Bible is bringing forth the message to his listeners was written in the original language of the author. As a result, a preacher should make all endeavours to know the language. If a preacher does this, we shall know that his preaching is contextual (*Nel.1996:32*).

A language plays the most important role in the lives of the people because the manner in which they speak reveals the way of their thinking and reasoning. The two factors mentioned above, are concurrent. If a preacher can know the language of his congregation, he shall also understand their way of thinking. His message shall therefore be brought in their language as well as in the manner in which they are thinking. It is true when Nel (1996:43) says that: "Taal kan 'n preek menslik gesproke maak of breek. Dit kan 'n preek laat vonkel of verdof."

To illustrate this, the following example is given: Way back, in the past, distance was measured in miles and nowadays it is measured in kilometers, and again, mass was measured in pounds and nowadays it is measured in kilograms. A person who lives

to day shall not understand the mentioned language of the by gone days, as the person who lived in that era.

It is therefore all clear that language plays the most important role in the life of a person. It has a great influence in the preaching of any preacher. So it is very important for the preacher to know the language of his congregation very well (*Nel. 1996:54*).

It is also very important for the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to know the people they are going to deal with. All of them should know the cultural background of their congregations. This will assist them when preparing their sermons. Their preachings will be relevant to the congregation and therefore they shall be contextual.

It is also very important for the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa's preachers to take initiative to know the life situation of the members of their congregations. The preacher can know their life situations including political differences. It is through this knowledge that the preacher can detect whether there is a unity amongst the members of his congregation. He can also detect whether there is still discrimination amongst the members of his congregation, and whether the past has still its legacy amongst the members of his congregation. If the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa can know the conditions mentioned, they will then be able to prepare their sermons according to the life style of the members of their congregations. By so doing, they will be able to deliver the gospel that is relevant to the prevailing circumstances. Their sermons will then be contextual.

It is of paramount importance that the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should know the language of the members of their congregations for the sake of clear communication. The sermon shall then be effective if it be delivered through the language that the members of their congregations understood. If the Word of God is proclaimed through the language that the congregation understand then that message will be effective to those congregations. If they understand that message, they will then accept it.

Nowadays sermons lost their meaning. In his book Stott (1982:7) says that: "The standard of preaching in the modern world is deplorable" (*Stratman 1983:11*). Many sermons brought by many preachers today are very deplorable. This can also be seen even amongst the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. There are various reasons for this. The most important one is that the language of the congregation is not always taken into consideration.

Some of the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa do not take the language of the congregation into consideration because when preaching, they mix different languages. They don't use the language of the congregation straight away.

from the beginning to the end. For an example, when they preach in South Sotho, they also add some Afrikaans and English words. They are doing this under the impression that they put more emphasis on what they are saying. By so doing, the sermon loses its credibility and its value. Such preaching is totally not contextual.

Another important factor that affects our Dutch Reformed Church in Africa's preachers is that they should know the original language in which the Bible was written. In other words they should know the language that had been used by each author of the book of the Bible. By studying the language used by each author of the book of the Bible, the preacher shall have a clear comprehension of that book. That knowledge shall assist him to convey the gospel to the congregation with its necessary validity. His message shall therefore be contextual.

4.5 Conclusion:

In conclusion we can also say that as a preacher, you must know the people whom you are going to preach to. You must at least know what are their culture, their situation, their life style and their way of worship. Television, Radios and books, also play an important role in the life of a person (*Kellerman 1997:4*). What are these influences and what has the Word got to say?

The purpose of contextual preaching is to transpose the Biblical message from its original context into a particular twenty first century situation. In other words, the aim of contextual preaching is to proclaim the will of God in such a way that it will make a difference in people's everyday life (*Padilla 1978:2*).

CHAPTER 5

5. ANALYZING THE CONGREGATION/LISTENERS IN GENERAL:

5.1 Introduction:

Reading and the study of a text or passage in an analysing way, is not solely done at the passage or text, but also at the congregation, audience and other listeners.

Preaching is specifically directed to a special congregation. It is listened or conveyed to this gathered community of faith according to specific times and places and emphasises contextuality.

When the preacher prepares a sermon for a certain congregation, the same preparation won't be relevant or applicable to the same congregation next time. There is always a diversity of times and places. The differences in circumstances are easily influencing the message of a preacher.

If a preacher uses one and the same prepared sermon continuously, it shall not have the same impact that it had before on the very same congregation. Every preaching situation differs from the other.

It is explicitly imperative for the preacher to be realistic as to which congregation he is preaching to. He should also consider seasons in which he is preaching as well as the environment. It is therefore very important for the preacher to be analitic.

Amongst many other methods that a preacher can apply or follow in preparing a sermon, the following are applicable for the purpose of analysing the listeners or the congregation.

5.2 Geographic and Demographic situation:

It is of paramount importance for a preacher to be versatile with respect to the geographical as well as demographic situation of his congregation (*Lloyd-Jones 1971:143*). Members of his congregation are from rural or urban areas, small cities as well as big cities.

Those from rural areas don't have the background as those from urban areas as well as big cities. Their background is not the same. They don't enjoy the same theological resources. They also don't have the same motivation that encourages them to attend church services. They also don't have transport and or any easily obtainable means to go to the church services. Kellerman (1997:12) puts it nicely when he says that: "Do they live near the church or do they have to transported there by public transport or some other way?"

This is direct opposite from the others. So a preacher should therefore take an initiative to study these backgrounds to make his preaching effective and relevant (*Lloyd-Jones 1971:145*).

Apart from all these, a preacher must not forget that any person's language is very important to him because it is the means by which people are able to communicate. Due to this reason, language is a communication link between two or more people. Therefore it has an immense effect in preaching. Nel (1996:32) says that: "In die gesprek het taal 'n kommunikatiewe funksie. Hiermee word bedoel dat die evangelie in die preek deur taal aan die hoorder geskenk word."

Now that we have explained the importance of man's language in preaching, this means anybody's language should be respected. It is very important for each and every preacher to learn the language of all people he is going to deal with. This does not mean that he must only learn it, but he should know it. Chipwatanga (1998:101) writes: "If a preacher wishes to understand the people he is ministering to, he must learn their language words, proverbs and idioms and use them correctly."

Another reason that compels a preacher to learn the language used by his congregation is that language is intertwined with the environment where that specific congregation dwells. Due to this environmental inclination of the language, people of the same language but of different environments may differ in the use of this fact when he says that." Anyone who speaks of the devil can also speak of God! (*Amos 3:8;5:2*). Proof of that is the peculiar fact that in the translation of the Bible into an African dialect, the word chosen for 'God' was the word which the earliest missionaries had used to translate 'devil'. "It means that those people may differ in their accent and the use of terminology (Nel 1996:37).

The language and the environment of the people affects the way they reason and their way of thinking directly or indirectly. The following examples can be illustrated to clarify this above mentioned statement. The way in which English is used and pronounced in America may not be identical to the way in which it is used in Britain, or in South Africa. This also implies for instance with Southern Sotho in either Lesotho or Botshabelo (*Nel 1996:40*).

Due to these reasons, a preacher is bound to consider the language used by his congregation as well as their environment. This will also cause his preaching to be very relevant and acceptable.

5.3 Socio-economic situation:

The people to which the preacher preaches are not the same or are not equal in terms of wealth and riches. In other words, people are not the same, some are poor and some are rich. Some are living only from hand to mouth. Others have the means

to live comfortably. The economic background of the congregation is very important for the preacher so as to obtain relevancy in his preaching.

The preacher must also know how the socio-economic situation of his congregation can affect his sermon. He must illustrate in his preaching what the Word of God says about the prevailing situation. Kellerman (1997:13) puts it in this way: "A preacher must be sensitive to those things in order for him to have empathy for them and apply the Word of God in an effective manner to their lives."

The educational background of the congregation must also be taken into consideration. It must be clear whether they are literate or illiterate. It must be clear as to what effect does the educational conditions have on their socio-economic conditions. A true preacher shall research these conditions before embarking upon preaching.

The economical life of the people is a most important issue in their daily lives. They will always be economically affected. This is dominated by the kind of work they are doing as well as the available resources. This affects their language in a great deal. It can also be illustrated by a diversity of work done like farming, working in factories, etc. A herd boy is used to his animals, pastures, fountains, hills and mountains. In most cases, his daily language will always involve these mentioned aspects. These are his economical inspirations. It will affect his way of thinking, his style of living and his utilisation of words. David is a good example in this regard as fonder of fauna and flora. In Ps(23:2) David says that: "He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiete pools of fresh water." In Ps (121:1) he says that: "I look to the mountains; where is my help come from?"

Nowadays there is a declination of socio-economic situation, and this declination is still perpetual even today. This type of economical situation affects the lives of the people. This means that even the congregation under which the preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa is labouring, it is also affected.

Our country South Africa today, is overwhelmed by the scarcity of job opportunities. A great number of Africans today are jobless. The number of a jobless people increese day in and day out, because of the ceasing of job resources. Due to this fact there is a declination of quality of life in this country. The affected congregation is the very same congregation under which todays Dutch Reformed Church in Africa's preacher is to labour. Those people are suffering from hunger (*Pearson 1954:43*). The preacher should study their situation properly, in order that he should bring the correct and relevant message to them.

5.4 Religious and spiritual situation:

This is a very important issue in the religion of people. Perry (1973:77) says that: "Specifically, we must ask ourselves what kinds of background information does the audience possess, which is directly or indirectly related to this....."

It is very difficult for a preacher to preach to the people who are Biblically illiterate. This condition can easily affect the preaching of a preacher negatively. This will forbid a preacher to deliver his utmost relevant preaching. It is under this circumstances necessary that the background information is of importance (*Pearson 1954:41*).

A preacher should amalgamate with his congregation. He must adapt himself to their living situation as to be aware of what is required from them. Adams (1982:45) puts it correctly when he says that: "This does not mean that now a preacher should live their lives, but should associate with them.

A preacher should know that people don't have the same religion. Some believe in the Holy Trinity, where as some believe in other religions like traditional religion, Islamic religion, Buddhism etc. Preaching should therefore be relevant and contextual, focusing on a true religion, i.e. Christian religion.

In diversity of religions amongst the Africans, the most famous religion is the African traditional religion. The members of this religion count a great number. They believe in the ancestors or forefathers. He believes that the dead are his ancestors and they have all super beings. With power invested upon them, they can do every thing they like to do on him/her. They also believe that at times they can be the source of good fortunes or misfortune. At times they believe that the very same ancestors can safeguard their lives or cause their death. To support what we have said, Verster (1998:12) says that: "They can kill a person. They can bring misfortune. They should be kept in good humour otherwise they can become very cross to people on earth" (*cf. Meiring 1996:14*).

This means that the traditional religion is not God centric but man centred. The dead who are their ancestors is the body that plays a great deal in their religion (*Mbiti 1969:92*). This state of affair becomes more explicit when we see that a person of this religion believes in medicine man, sangomas, inyangas and some certain spirits (*Verster 1998:12 and Mbiti 1969:170*). According to this religion, it is the sangomas who bring peace and reconciliation amongst the people. A sangoma is a mediator between their God and themselves.

Further than this, the believer of this religion believe in the medicine man and the diviner. According to this religion, these people represent the pastors, and doctors in the community and they provide a security in connection with the evil spirits... (*cf. Meiring 1996:12*). Again it is the very same people who are providing rain as well as controlling it.

Another thing that is regarded as most important by the believers of this religion is time. According to their religion, they are not interested in eschatology. The most important time to them is the present. (*Meiring 1996:12 and Verster 1998:14*). According to their religion, the most important period for them is the period in which they are living. The past spirit is regarded as the most important over the future spirits because it has guidance on them as to how they should conduct themselves in the future. Therefore, they don't worry themselves about the future because they shall face the future when it comes.

Another important aspect is that today's preacher of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should ask himself whether the believers of traditional religion know the real God or not. As they speak they talk about God the Father and the ancestors they know that God exists. They regard God as the Supreme being. They regard God as a far distant God who can only be reached by a mediator and as far as they are concerned, that mediator between themselves and God is their ancestors. In spite of all these they believe that in terms of agony and stressful situations, the mighty God can be approached for a solution or a redemption. They believe that the very same God is the creator and saviour who is the Supreme being (*Oosthuizen 1991:267*).

Besides the African traditional religion, there are other kinds of religions like Islam and Buddhism. These types of religions do not carry any power amongst local Africans. Nowadays, it is just a very small number of Africans in South Africa that is associating with these types of religions. The most important religion amongst the Africans is the African traditional religion. Today's preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa are obliged to study and know deeply the contents of this type of religion so as to be able to bring forth the Word of God in a proper way amongst the people of those different religions.

5.5 Cultural situation:

In his book Meiring (1996:1) says that: "The cultural life of many communities is determined by religious ideas and practices of a religious nature." People live in a diversity of culture which play a very important role in their daily lives. Culture plays a very important role in the religion of individual people, society or congregation.

It has also an impact or influence on the preacher himself since the Bible itself is written by people of certain cultures (*Kellerman 1997:13;14*). The preacher should therefore adapt and translate the Biblical conditions of the times to the present situation.

It is quite important that a preacher should know how culture affects the rationale of people. In some cultures, the age group plays an important role in preaching. There are some restrictions in some utterances emanating from preaching (*Gen.39:7*), also (*11 Sam.11:27*).

Therefore it is very important that a preacher should study the cultural background of his congregation so as to bring forth relevant preaching, avoiding any use of statements that can be culturally regarded as vulgar to that specific congregation.

The gender, norms and values of the society from which the congregation comes, must also be taken into consideration when a preacher is preparing his sermon. The underlying idea being taking cultural situation as a tool to make preaching effective.

Culture plays a most important role in influencing the manner in which each and every clan or group of people speaks. In this regard the selection of terminology plays a very important role. Some groups of people prefer to make use of euphonism when speaking, whereas another group may like to call a spade a spade.

This state of affair is going to influence the preacher and his preaching day in and day out. This means that a preacher should always acclimatise or associate himself with the culture of his congregation.

The cultural activities of an individual clan or group of people have their own terminology (cf *Verster 1998:11 ; Meiring 1996:13 and Oosthuizen 1977:265*). These cultural activities also nurture the spiritual life of that particular group of people. That will also affect terminology of a preacher and his use of words.

5.6 Conclusion:

In conclusion we must state clearly that all the above mentioned methods and or ways of analysing the congregation, must be taken into account. Preaching shall not hit its mark if trouble is not taken to properly analyse the congregation.

On the other hand, a preacher must not forget that these will differ from congregation to congregation because of different backgrounds and prevailing problems, opportunities as well as influences. So it is very important for a preacher to know how to analyse and adapt his sermon to each congregation in particular.

We have mentioned different kinds of religions, but it is essential to point out that the powerful and growing religion amongst the blacks is the African traditional religion (*Meiring 1996:24*). Amongst the followers of this religion there are still some believers who are regarding themselves as Christians but are also following African traditional religion. This behaviour is explicitly indicated even amongst the Christians of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. This is a crucial point that the preachers of today in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should get grip of. It is a great challenge to them because of the message they have to bring to these traditionally inclined believers.

It is very important for the christian preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to observe whether amongst the traditional religion there is anything good that can be converted to christianity. If there be any thing that they can inherit or convert, so they should do so (*Mosala 1983:31*). They should apply the true Word of God if they want to put right those misbeliefs. The intensive knowledge and the broad understanding of the Word of God shall be of great assistance to them (preachers).

By so doing, they shall have a true knowledge of God. Meiring (1996:23) states that: "The Bible's answer is however that true knowledge of God is found in Jesus Christ" (*Verster 1998:15*).

This means that the service that is rendered by the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa's preachers inside and outside the congregations is not limited. There is still much to do in this regard. They still have a mammoth task to perform, to bring a relevant message to the people of God. Their preaching should be contextual amongst the people in which they are delivering message to. The preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa are compelled by virtue of their religion and belief to inform those who don't believe in the true religion that there is no multy facets spirits but only the Holy Spirit. We can have a rebirth because of the Holy Spirit. Today's preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should spread the name of Jesus Christ. They should tell the congregation that Jesus Christ is the answer to our problems, difficulties and hardships because He is our redeemer. They must proclaim through their preaching that a person should come to Jesus Christ, and accept him, live for him (*Verster 1998:16*).

The most important underlying factor about this matter is that the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should not regard this as easy as all that, and that they should not depend on their human capabilities, but on the power and the will of God. It is very demanding to study the life conditions of the congregations, their economical situations, their norms and values as well as their religious and spiritual situation. This is aggravated by the conditions that amongst others, a lot of people are homeless, some are jobless, the economic situation has deteriorated, people are starving of hunger. There is no stability amongst the regimes.

Therefore, God's intervention and nurturing is essential. Again, it is only through the mercy of God that the preachers can bring forth the relevant message of God to the congregations. The preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should always remember that the constitution of the South African government today, permits different kinds of religions. The media, i.e. radios, televisions, news papers and others, promote different kinds of religions. Due to this, it is all clear that we need prayers and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER 6

THE SELECTION OF THE PREACHING PASSAGE.

6.1 Introduction

Before the preacher can preach, he must first of all carefully select a text from which his preaching will be based. The selection of a text is very essential (*Kellerman* 1993:3). It is not an easy task for the preacher to select a text. In his book *Evans* (1964:21) says that: "The importance of the right choice of the text upon which the sermon is based not be underestimated." (*Kellerman* 1997:1). Now that it is not easy to select a text, it is of paramount importance that a preacher should pray for the will of God. (*Stott* 1982:220).

The problem that preachers are having when selecting a text is that they are inclined to be influenced by circumstances around them or pertaining them. *Kellerman* (1997:3) says that: "The common problem is that preachers have their preferences when choosing the texts they are to preach on. One can call it their hobby texts." At times they select according to their daily living (*Lenski* 1968:18). This causes the message of God not to reach the congregations as it should be. Such congregations are not well nourished with the Word of God.

According to *Evans* (1964:21) "The choice of the right text is often a difficult task for the preacher." A super preacher is the one who will always study the Bible. In studying the Bible, he is well equipped by the passages he can make use of when preaching. There are various ways of selecting a text, but we shall mention only four major factors.

As we have mentioned earlier on, about the selection of a text, there are various ways of selecting a text from which a preacher will preach on or base his preaching. Amongst these various ways and methods mentioned, some are made by the preacher himself, depending on his will and selection. There is no restriction towards the selection of a text by a preacher. In this regard *Lenski* (1968:18) says that: "Texts so chosen are often called 'Free texts'. He goes further by saying that "The word 'free' implies that the texts are not prescribed by church authorities or by a fixed ecclesiastical custom." This type of choice is also found in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

Amongst other methods of texts selection applied, there are some methods of text selection following circumstances to be involved in preaching like during a funeral services, matrimonial services or gatherings, graduation ceremonies and many others. Notwithstanding the mentioned procedures and methods of selecting a passage, a preacher considers the liturgical or the church year when selecting his text. (*Craddock* 1985:101) This procedure is also applicable even in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. It is of paramount importance that our preachers in the

Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should take this in cognisance when selecting a text to preach on.

6.2.1 Liturgical or church year:

Churches differ, and the churches programs and or plans differ. It is for a long time that churches compile their preaching according to the church year. This means that there is a logic in the manner in which the Word of God is brought to the people.

In some churches this way of selecting a text, is even contained in the year program of the church. Evans (1964:21) puts it in this way: "Roman Catholic, and Lutheran, and Episcopalian preachers have a great advantage over preachers of other denominations in that their texts have already been chosen for them by the church. Because of the Pericopes, and Gospel and Epistle lessons for the year as found in prayer books of these churches, they are saved the trouble of searching for texts."

There are various festivals solemnised in the church. But there are only three that are the most important. The first festival is Christmas. During this festival the birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated. Preaching during this period should be relevant to this event. This period runs from October to December. Kellerman (1997:4) says that: "..... and covers the period of expectation of the birth of Christ and is called Advent" (cf. Stott 1982:214).

The second important feast is Easter, during which we feast the victory of Jesus Christ, in that he raised from the dead. This is the second period which starts from December and covers the months of January to May, during which the church celebrates the wonderful deeds of God through Jesus Christ. (Stott 1982:215).

Amongst these unnumbered feasts solemnised in the churches amongst the Africans, the feast of passover is highly regarded as the greatest of all. This feast, the passover, seem to be highly appreciated and recognised by most of believers. There are of course various reasons for this feast to be regarded as such. Amongst other causitives reasons or facts it is that it is celebrated during the period when everybody is at liberty to go home or is on holiday. This means that at times this is supported by the government as indicated on the calenders as public holiday to give everybody a freedom of mobility.

One of the reason that make this feast to be regarded so important by the christians is that, even amongst the Dutch Reformed Church in African congregations, it provides an opportunity to the Christians to meet others from various places of work, different places of domicile. During this time all services regarding passover in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa start on Friday and continue until Sunday. This means that for the whole weekend services regarding the agonies of Jesus Christ are conducted.

A joyous and jubilant moment that prevails in these services is that there are number of activities taking place. The following can be cited as example of these activities in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. The inauguration of the womens league, and inauguration of youth movement as well as the graduation of the Sunday school children. New members are pledging for their spiritual support into the organisations into which they have joined. The code of conduct is read to them and given to them. All these take place in a special service, that fits the conditions and circumstances around that day. The preacher of the day who is going to lead that specific service, should be very selective or careful when selecting the text for the occasion.

What causes a great spiritual delight to all christians during this feast of passover is that the congregation itself is not passive. Immediately after the introductory preaching by the leading preacher, the whole congregation gets chance to participate. The participation can be through singing, praying, preaching and teaching of the gospel. This is not limited to the adults only. The youths are also included. In this manner the whole service is democratic.

Included in the program of this passover, there is a stage whereby the whole congregation in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa shall preach around seven Words on the cross. This service is also lead by different members of the congregation. The procedure is the same as the one mentioned before. The whole service is highlighted by singing of hymns and choruses. At times body movement is also observed. When preaching, the congregation tries to acclimatise itself with the text read, but at times not everybody will find the text relevant to their lives and situation. Even if it is like that, this is not so much taken into consideration.

Thirdly, we have Pentecost during which the church celebrates the pouring out of the Holy Spirit. This is during the third period which runs from May to September, during which the spiritual life of the christians and church is affected.

In times of Pentecost it is a habit in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa that they should opt to hold services for Worship. These services are conducted daily for ten days. This for the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa congregations is very significant in that they recall and fulfil the command of Jesus Christ to his disciples when saying: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift I told you about, the gift my Father promised" (Acts 1:4).

Even during these times the preachers of Dutch Reformed Church in Africa carefully select the passage from which they will base their preaching, especailly the texts that will concur with the period in time. Fortunately however, this is not deviation from christianity norms. The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa congregations in this regard follow what we term a lectionary, determined by its Synod. This means all preaching for the day i.e ten days will be relevant and common to all congregations of Dutch Reformed Church in Africa.

The preacher should therefore select a contextual text. Kellerman (1997:4) puts it clearly by saying that: "Taking the church year into account, will help the preacher to select portions from Scripture to preach on and in this way help him in the difficult task to preach on the whole counsel of God."

6.2.2 Extrincic/External events:

There are many happenings in the lives of the people. They occur in diversity. They affect the life of a person easily. Some of them are so sorrowful and heart breaking. Some are natural. The affected people despare and are frightend.

At times in the affairs of life there is a death. And death that will come when it will come. Such occurences take place where people are living. Such alarming occurences may be catastrophic and traumatic. Amongst these we can name floods, earthquakes, amazing epidemics and senseless manslaughters. In this period of time at times even the abuse of women and children takes place. The members of the congregation hear and observe the agonies of broken homes caused by divorce as well as unrealistic abortions. All these are not acceptable in the congregations of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. When attending the service of this kind, the congregation has a number of questions that they expect the Word of God to give an answer. Stott(1982:216) says that: "Preachers need to be sensitive to the big public questions in people's minds."

During a period of melancholy and distress, the Word of God is essential. The comfort of the Word of God is a necessity. A super preacher is needed, he who shall be able to choose a text that is acclimatised to the prevailing situation (Adams 1982:21).

Some of these events are brought to the people by technology and media such as television, radio as well as news papers. People read about these events, they also see them on their televisions, and hear about them on the radios. Concerning these Craddock (1985:102) says that: "In the mean time, as one reads, watches television, works on other material, plays, converses, or is otherwise engaged, those texts and ideas function as magnets to which other related ideas and observations are drawn" (cf. Kellerman 1997:4 and Stott 1982:216).

Some events are visible, and some people in this state of affair, questions the existance and the presence of God. In his book Kellerman (1997:4) puts it in this way : "How does God fit in all these things and how must the Christian treat them in their own lives?" It is only a caring preacher who cares for his congregation who will take all these in to consideration. He will study his Bible so as to get the message that is relevant to the situation.

It is not just that all things that happen in the course of life is all that is better. Still there are some things or happenings that brings jubilation to the congregation. This means "Even amongst those dark clouds, there is a silver lining." During the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa congregations there is still a moment of celebrations, a moment of joy and happiness. On occasions like these, the preachers are always invited to bless these occasions. The true Word of God is a necessity. This means that it is very important for the preachers of Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to select a relevant text that will accord with the circumstances to make his preaching a contextual preaching.

6.2.3 Personality of the preacher:

A preacher has been called by God to spread His gospel. (Lane 1976:1). He is the messenger of God. "Mortal man, I am sending you to the people of Israel. They have rebelled and turned against me and are still rebels, just as their ancestors were. (Ezek 2:3). In Mk 1:2 we read the following words: "God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to clear the way for you.'" Therefore he must take the message of God to the people of God. He is an ambassador of God. Paul stresses this fact in the 2 Cor.5:20 when he says: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us." Therefore a preacher should live by the Word of God. He must always be in possession of the Bible, so as to obtain spiritual strength (Stott 1982:219). The core resource of preaching is the Bible only. Without the use of the Bible in preaching, the preacher is no more God centric. The truth that the preacher informs the people about is from the Bible. Put in another way, Evans (1964:13) says that:" The personality of the preacher has very much to do with the effectiveness of his message."

The preacher should have a deep knowledge of the Bible.(Lane 1976:7). This will help him to choose relevant themes to the situation. He will always have a text that will fit to the situations that may exist. If the preacher studies the Bible, the impact of the message of God starts from him, then to the congregation. Without this approach, preaching will be very difficult. Concerning this truth, Evans (1964:26) says that: "Therefore, the Scriptures should be read constantly. It (the Bible) contains the truth we have to teach, the laws which we have to illustrate in their relation to the lives of our people, the divine promises by which we are to console them when in trouble and to strengthen their faith in the love and power of God."

A preacher as the one who has been called by God, is bound to live in the Word of God because this Word of God is a word of life. according to Phil.2:16 (Stott 1982:219). This Word of God leads men to new life. It also leads men to a clean life according to Jas.1:18 and according to Ps.119:9, it leads men to a strong life.

According to the above mentioned facts or points, it is clear that the Word of God, is the word of life even for the preacher. Therefore the Word of God as the word of life, is very important to the preacher for his spiritual reading (Stott 1982:220).

It is repeatedly stated in Scripture that the Word of God is the spiritual food. 1 Pet.2:2 says: "Be like new-born babies always thirsty for the pure spiritual milk, so that by drinking it you may grow up and be saved." For the preacher to be spiritual mature, he must be fed in the Word of God. This is very important for the preacher's spiritual development (Lane 1976:7).

For the preacher to reach this he must continuously read the Word of God. According to (Rev.1:3), "Happy is the one who reads this book, and happy are those who listen to the words of this prophetic message....." When the preacher reads the Word of God he feels the strength of the Holy Spirit. As such he feels the omnipotence of God within himself, especially when he reads it during his periods of depression and frustrations. This word will strengthen him spiritually. Thus to read the Word of God is the true path way for the preacher to grow spiritually.

Another important factor is that a preacher should learn the Word of God. This means that he must have its inside and understanding. Kellerman (1997:85) says that: "A preacher should be someone who regularly studies the Word of God for his own spiritual growth. "For the preacher to be capacitated in his preaching he must study the Word of God. By so doing he shall grow spiritually.

A preacher should have a deep meditation on the Word of God (Stott 1982:220). By so doing he shall understand the truth about the secrets of God, in that he must make use of them in his daily life as well as in his congregation. The meditation on the Word of God empowers a preacher spiritually, as well as guiding him in times of difficulties, loneliness and solidarity. All these mean that to ponder deeply in the Word of God leads to spiritual growth of the preacher.

The preacher's life should be one long love affair with the Bible. His knowledge of the Bible should grow until it (Bible) becomes more precious to him even than his life itself. The preacher who is not continuing to learn the Word of God, is busy limiting himself unnecessary (Sweazey 1976:308).

Lastly, a preacher should apply the Word of God to in his life. In the gospel of John 13:17 we read that: "Now that you know this truth, how happy you will be if you put it into practice! The Word of God should be a tool for repentance to the preacher. It must guide his life. It must safeguard him against all evil atrocities and turmoils. These should also apply to other people.

Apart from that, a preacher should always be a praying person and not a conditional prayer (Stott 1982:222). In his secret prayer he should create an opportunity to pray for his own problems, fears and frustrations. It is through prayer that peace, happiness, forgiveness and love can be obtained. Over and above it is where a preacher can amalgamate with his God. His traumatic and fearful life can be healed by the power of prayer.

This means that a prayer to the preacher ensures a perfect trust. In his book Sweazey 1976:30 says that: "The times of prayer he has with the church officers, prayer groups, and the young people on their retreats are precious to him." It opens all avenues for the Holy Spirit to convert a preacher to live like Jesus Christ, so that he can reach the life of his fellow believers.

A preacher can grow spiritually through prayer. He becomes spiritually matured if he always put prayer into practice. Thus a prayer is an important way of development for the preacher's spirituality. Lastly, a preachers prayer is a communication that a preacher should make use of to convey messages from God to the congregation.

Inter alia other job related issues to be performed by the preacher is to do house visitation. To visit individual homes in order to meet the poor, to give spiritual counselling, and to comfort those who feels despair, is the responsibility of the preacher. If this visitation is accordingly done, then it is an indication that a preacher is God driven. A preacher should lead by example. By visiting different families he encourages his congregation to do alike, to strengthen each other, to comfort each other and to pray together.

Another important point for the preacher, is to worshipping God (Lane 1967:11). Worship God is to adore Him by amongst other things showing profound religious devotion as well as respect to him. The believers should attend services for worship, so as to express their religious adoration. Turnbull (1967:370) puts it in this way: "Worship has a content. The worshiper 'tells' God with gratitude who he is and what he has done." By these activities they will get chance to repent. Through this worship they feel the presence of God. They feel the solidarity with Him. Their eyes are becoming open. In 1 Cor.14:17 Paul speaks about worship when he says that: "Even if your prayer of thanks to God is quite good, the other person is not helped at all."

In worshipping God the believers indicate a glorification to him as well as to encourage believers in their faith (Stott 1982:222). It is all clear that a preacher should be a person who worship God through his life. Notwithstanding all problems that he may get so as to grow spiritually through the intimate relationship with God.

Worship is therefore of utmost importance in the life of a preacher. Turnbull (1967:369) puts it in this way: "As God is spirit, they worship him in spirit and truth. They worship him through their bodies when they kneel or sing, but it is possible for this to be a mere external act. True worship is from the heart, consciously done 'to the Lord.'"

God is Spirit, therefore a preacher should worship God driven by the Holy Spirit. And all those who worship God should do so being filled with the Spirit of God. In

John 4:32, we read the following truth: "But the time is coming and is already here, when by the power of God's Spirit people will worship the Father as he really is, offering him the true worship that he wants. God is Spirit, and only by the power of his Spirit can people worship him as he really is."

Further than that, a preacher should be a person who submits himself under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He must also seek the strength of the Holy Spirit. He must be someone who lets the Holy Spirit dwell in him. He must also let the Holy Spirit function in and through him. Concerning this Piper (1992:37) says that: "The sovereign work of the Spirit of God must be the power in which all is achieved."

This means that the power of the Spirit is very important for the preacher's spiritual life, healthiness and enthusiasm. Van Rensburg (1998:27) puts it clearly when he says that: "The enthusiasm we are interested in, is for God's sake. It is driven by the Holy Spirit and guided by a love for people." It is clear that a preacher should be empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to be able to proclaim the gospel to the people in the prevailing situations in an effective way so that he will be able to convert a contemporary person and solving his problems with the living Word of God. It is true when Comblin (1989:115) says that: "The Holy Spirit covers real power on certain persons: the power of convincing, leading, governing; He confers real authority preceding any juridical authority."

A preacher who is labouring in today's sinful world, must be spiritually matured. It is very important therefore to submit under the guidance of the Holy Spirit for his spiritual growth.

Further more, it must be clear that it is not only the congregation that is going to be affected by its environmental background but also a preacher himself is affected. The way in which the preacher grew up in a specific environment, is going to influence his way of preaching. This can also be extended to the different family background that is environment. If the preacher is from a poor family background, he will understand the poor, and if he is from the rich family background, he will understand the rich.

This will lead to a clear understanding of the global congregation he is serving. It will also assist him in the selection of the passage he is going to preach on. But even if he is being adaptable to the environment of his place of origin or place of preaching, he must still be guided by the Holy Spirit.

It must also be clear that a preacher should not overlook his political background. This background shall easily affect his preaching. The political background of each preacher as said before shall also affect the congregation he is preaching to as well as his selection of texts he is going to preach on.

In spite of all these the preacher should not have a political inclination in his preaching. His political background should not derail him from Biblical perspectives. He must always remember that he is preaching solely for the coming of the Kingdom of God. His knowledge of politics as well as his political background should only enable him to understand his congregation better.

The political background of the preacher should make him to be flexible in his preaching. The way of preaching in the old South Africa may not be the same as in the new South Africa. Only a preacher who has a clear political background of his congregation will reach his congregation with his sermon.

The preacher should easily adapt himself to contextual preaching even if the political background of his congregation is against the message he is bringing.

Another important fact concerning the preacher is his educational background. The educational background of the preacher is also very important for his work or calling, and this can be looked at in two perspectives i.e.

- i. Positive perspective and
- ii. Negative perspective.

Positive perspective: Originally the Bible was written in the Hebrew and Greek languages. For the preacher to know these languages it is advantageous to him. He may understand some Biblical terms as well as theological terms and therefore he can understand the original meaning of the text he is reading or selecting.

In his preparation of a sermon he shall be able to reach the highest educated congregation. An educated preacher also makes his preaching very effective by using or consulting various resources. By so doing, he will be able to go deeper in the Bible so that he may or can feed his congregation properly with the riches of the Word of God.

A preacher with a theological background will have an advantage over the one who does not have it, since that his preaching will be more methodologically. He will be able to fulfill those requirements needed in the preparation of a sermon.

Negative perspective: On contrary towards what has been said, if a preacher is not well read it can have a bad impact on his preaching. He may not understand the Biblical terms as he should. His reference to different resources will be limited. This means that his preaching will not be stimulating. This may also deteriorate the spiritual growth of the congregation he is serving.

On the other hand, he may also find it difficult to adopt to different languages used by the congregation as well as the theological terms. He may also find it difficult to follow the right or the correct steps in preaching.

Even if the two categories of educational background of the preacher occur these educational backgrounds should be guided by the Holy Spirit. A preacher should not depend too much on his educational background but he should know that preaching is from God, it is the living Word of God. Therefore it comes from God. As such a preacher should depend on the Holy Spirit and should pray for God's strength before he preaches.

6.2.4 Pastoral leadership:

A preacher should do house visits with a great faith (Stott 1982:216). It is within this process where he will start knowing his congregation (Lane 1979:7). It is in these visits where the preacher will get acquainted with the personal problems of his congregation, the difficulties around the families, short comings and fears that may be experienced. "So I came to Tel Abib beside the River Chebar, where the exiles were living, and for seven days I stayed there, overcome by what I had seen and heard"(Ezek 3:15).

In other words, the preacher should or must know his congregation exactly. In this regard house visits are very essential. In these visits, it is where preaching starts because the heart of the house visitation should or must be reading and the exposition of the Scripture (Van Rensburg 1998:8).

The most important effect in the house visitation by the preacher especially on the African people, is not preaching as such, but it is the presence of the pastor or the preacher. The congregation will appreciate his sympathy, empathy, appreciation and his condolence above his preaching perse. Inter alia he must have a positive input in their problems or potential problems. In this regard, his way of approach is very important.

Through his discussions they expect a solution for their difficulties even spirituality. His approach is expected to be a problem solving approach. Such an approach builds a relationship of trust and loyalty that will enable the pastor to establish the spiritual need of his congregational members.

The pastor or the preacher should always take his congregation into account. He must know them by name as well as their families. He must know their successes and their failures, their progress and their down falls.

He will be able to know the expectations and determinations of his congregation. All these can be contextualised in preaching. The house visit will enable the preacher to know his congregation, and through the study of the Bible, he will be empowered with the relevant texts. The contextuality of his preaching will then be very relevant.

In this kind of preaching, we will then realise that the preacher is not ego-centric, but God-driven. The preachers can take the advice of Evans (1964:26) if they want to be good preachers when he says that: "Let the messenger of God study his Bible; it is the great quarry of the preacher. The Bible is not merely a textbook; it is a book of texts. Therefore, the Scriptures should be read constantly."

6.3 Conclusion:

According to the above mentioned explanations, we realise that a selection of a text or passage is not an easy task, then the preacher should always pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The man who is continually living under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit will scarcely ever be at a loss for something to preach about.

When looking at all these we amicably come to a conclusion that it is very imperative that our preachers in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa, when selecting a text for preaching, they should adapt themselves with the liturgical or a church year. This will assist them in a great deal to bring to the congregations the messages that are relevant to the various religious festivals organised by the church. This means that all messages brought to the congregations will be contextual.

This brings us to the conclusion that the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should remain theological students who will perpetually study the Bible. "Studies broaden the mental horizon of a person." They shall always be eager to deliver the Word of God without any fear or hesitation. (Kellerman 1997:5). Again the preachers of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa should remain broadly read to have information at their finger tips as cascaded by the media like news papers, radio, television and many others so as to remain updated and well informed about those religious matters, political matters and matters in life in general.

It must always be beared in mind that preaching and pastoral activities cannot be separated. They must not only be envolved in the matters of congregations but also be committed. They must do house visits, visit the sick and comfort them. That is the only way through which our preachers can know the where abouts of their congregations. They will be able to symphathise and to emphathise with them. This will indicate a true love as laid down by Jesus Christ. In Mt. 22:39 we read the commandment of Jesus Christ where he says that: "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." For this reason they will be able to bring the Word of God that is relevant to their conditions of life and this will be contextual (Lane 1967:8).

CHAPTER 7

7. ANALYZING THE VIEWS OF CHURCH MEMBERS AND MINISTERS:

7.1 Introduction:

In this chapter we shall endeavour to unpick or explain different views that the preachers are having about the meaning of preaching. These views are from different preachers of different denominations, as well as the different doctrines.

Further than this, these views have been researched broader to include different members of different denominations. E.g. Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic Church, The Full Gospel Church, Dutch Reformed Church and Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. They also gave their own understanding about preaching, as well as their interpretation.

7.2.1 Views of church members:

The following interpretations of what preaching is, have been found from these members by questioning them according to set questions. According to the members of the church council, preaching is the interpretation of the Word of God by the preacher. Preaching is also the unpicking of the Word of God by the preacher. This is to say the preacher interprets the Word of God to the congregation as contained in preaching.

This means that preaching is the manner through which a preacher conveys or transmits the Word of God to the congregation. In the very same process, teaching takes place. In Math (28:19-20), we read that: "Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." We therefore find a command from Jesus Christ as He commands His disciples to carry the Word of God to all peoples everywhere.

Further than this, according to the Womens league, preaching is the message from the Word of God to all peoples everywhere through preaching. It is not just an empty message, but it is an educative message.

Another interpretation is that preaching is the spreading of the Word of God by a preacher. A preacher can be compared to the mother, she prepares food and supplies her family with joy and trust that the family will benefit from it. This is the same as regard to the preacher. He must be prepared.

According to youth movement, preaching is the revelation of the Word of God as good news to the congregation by the preacher. When we read Luke 2:10-11, we find the following truth: "But the angel of the Lord said to them, "Dont be afraid! I

am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born Christ the Lord! We also find the same truth from the following chapters: Luk. 24:6,9 Mark.16:10,13 and also in Mat.28:7.

Preaching is also interpreted as the distribution of the Word of God between the preacher and the congregation. This means that after the preacher has accepted the Word of God and it has worked in him, he transmits it to the children of God, that is the congregation. In Rom.1:12 Paul says that: "What I mean is that both you and I will be helped at the same time, you by my faith and mine by yours."

According to ordinary members of the church preaching is a communication between God and the congregations. First this communication emanates between God and the preacher, and then to the congregation and or listeners through the preacher. Here we have a clear example from the following book of John.4:28". Then the woman left her water jar, went back to the town, and said to the people there, come and see the man who told me everything I have ever done. Could he be the Messiah?"

7.2.2 Views of ministers of religion:

Ministers of religion interpreted preaching as the conveyance of the Word of God to all peoples by the preacher. The preacher is guided by God who is his Lord to take His message to the people. The way in which the preacher takes this message to the people, is termed preaching.

In collaboration with the aforesaid interpretation, preaching is the spreading of the Word of God. This means that the congregation that came to the church or service, came with the intention to listen to the Word of God as delivered by the preacher through preaching.

They further say that preaching is to proclaim the Word of God by the preacher to the congregation. We find or get a clear example of this in Acts.6:2."So the twelve apostles called the whole group of believers together and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the preaching of the God's word in order to handle finances".

Again, preaching is the way through which God reveals himself to His people. We find relevant example of this fact from Exod.3:14. "God said, I am who I am. This is what you must say to them: The one who is called I AM has sent me to you."

Another factor concerning preaching according to the ministers is that preaching is prophecy of God to his people through a preacher. Compare Joh.3:2,4. "One night he went to Jesus and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him".

This means that preaching is the way in which God communicates with His people through a preacher, to reveal the eschatological events.

This clarifies that preaching is the channel through which the preacher unpicks the Word of God. The preacher unpicks the true Word of God by preaching. In other words, the mystery of God is unpicked to the people of God by a preacher through preaching. These plans of God can be a command to His people. God can command His people and the message from that command shall reach the people through preaching.

Preaching is the revelation of the unrevealed realities of God, by a preacher. The apostle Paul emphasised this truth to the Corinthians when he says: (1Cor.15:51): Listen to this secret truth: we shall not all die, but when the last trumpet sounds, we shall be changed in an instant,.....” These unrevealed realities are the truth of the Word of God that is transferred to the congregation through preaching. This means that preaching is communication between God and His people through a preacher.

Emphatically, preaching is the teaching of the Word of God. God uses a preacher to teach His people in many ways. Jesus Christ gives us a clear example of this where he said that: (Jh.18:20)”.I have always spoken publicly to everyone; all my teaching was done in the synagogues and in the Temple, where all the people come together”. (Compare also Joh.3:2, Acts.4:18, Mat.7:2, 28:15,19).

In other words preaching is the disclosure of the divine truths of God to the congregation. Other way round, preaching is to give a witness to the Word of God. Preaching is the way through which a preacher testifies God to the congregation. In Acts.1:8 we read about this witness as follows: “:.....and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”. Without hesitation we can testify without any fear or doubt that Jesus is the Son of God and our redeemer.

Lastly, preaching is the mirror on which a sinner can do introspection to be aware of his sins. These are the view points of preachers from the different congregations.

In my imperical research, I also went further by asking the following questions to the above mentioned groups:

a) Why Preaching?

To answer the above mentioned question, the pastors in their response state that they are to preach because it is a command of God. “To preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it:(whether the time is right or not), to convince, reproach and encouraged, as you teach with all patience” (2 Tim. 4:2). In other words it is God himself who instructed that his Word be cascaded. All people should be

informed about this good news of God through Christ. If it was not through the command of God and his good will, there would be no one to proclaim this Word. This means that it is God himself who is making use of this people for the proclamation of His Word. "He said, Go to Nineveh, that great city, and speak out against it; I am aware how wicked its people are" (Jnh. 1:2).

Every body who received this command of God, fulfilled it accordingly. A clear example of this is well sited in the lives of the disciples of Jesus Christ. After the disciples have been given this command of proclaiming the Word of God, they laboured immediately without any fear and hesitation. "So the twelve apostles called the whole group of believers together and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the preaching of God's word in order to handle finances. We ourselves, then, will give our full time to prayer and the work of preaching" (Ac 6:2,4). These disciples of Jesus Christ could not be stopped by circumstances under which they were working. They were empowered by the opposition they received. And therefore they proclaimed the gospel of God succesfully. "And every day in the Temple and in people's homes they continued to teach and preach the Good News about Jesus the Messiah" (Ac 5:42).

The members of the church councils also collaborate with the preacher in that they say it is good to preach. To them preaching is what Jesus Christ instructed that should be done. It is he, Jesus Christ, who gave his disciples this command. "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Mt 28:19). They are bound to fulfill this command. It is all clear that the one who may not fulfill it will not be caring out his responsibility. He shall also be against his redeemer, Jesus Christ.

The Womens league puts it that it is correct to proclaim the Word of God amongst his people, because most of them have not yet know God Himself. This means that there is still a great number of people who is not yet converted. For this reason, the proclamation of the Word of God to these people, is essential. It is only through this way the people can know the Word of God, through His Word in preaching. This brings us to a conclusion that preaching should be done by legitimate people, who have been called by God to do so.

The concern of Youth also has reference. They agree that the Word of God be proclaimed amongst the people since that people lost their way in spiritual life. It is obvious that they lost their destiny in life. They know not what they do. They are lost in the darkness of sin. And they need the light for life. That light is none other than the light of God. This light should be brought to all people, so that they will see the good things. "In the same way your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven" (Mat 5:16). If preaching is not done to the people, they won't observe the light of the living God. And they shall perish in their sinfull deeds. If the Word of God is brought to them, they will observe and see a new life, and they shall be saveguarded.

b) What should we preach?

In this question, "what should we preach?" The preachers say only the Word of God should be preached. This is the only word that should be preached. This means that they collaborate with the saying that says: "Sola Scriptura". To illustrate this point of view they refer to Scripture itself. "Until I come, give your time and effort to the public reading of the Scriptures and to preaching and teaching" (1 Tim.4:13).

They further clarify their point of view by refering to the words that say:" I solemnly urge you to preach the message, to insist upon proclaiming it" (2 Tim.4:2). It is only in this proclamation where the preacher is to dwell. It is what a true preacher should convey to the congregation he is sent by God. If the preacher does not bring forth the Word of God to the people, it will be clear that his preaching is not from Scripture, it is not the Word of God. Therefore, it will be best for him to abandon preaching. We also have a clear example from (Ezk.33:11) where God says to Ezekiel:" Tell them that as surely as I, the sovereign Lord, am the living God. I do not enjoy seeing sinners die. I would rather see them stop sinning and live." In other words, God says He loves people and does not want them to sin and die.

According to the members of the church councils, the only message that required to be preached to the people is also nothing but the command of God. " Now, mortal man tell the Israelites that when someone good sins, the good he has done will not save him. If an evil person stops doing evil, he won't be punished, and if a good person starts sinning, his life will not be spared"(Ezk.33:12). And this command should be brought to the people in which he (the preacher) labours, as the command of God. A preacher is a messenger, therefore not solely accountable for the message as he fulfils the command of his sender who is God (2 Cor 5:20). This means that the preacher will be relevant in his message.

These councillors go on to indicate to us the dangers and fallacies that come from most preachers who usually bring a conglomeration of earthly facts into their message and regard it as the true message from God. They sometimes include domestic politics or country politics into their preaching. This is evident in this period of democracy especially in South Africa. Nowadays the politics play a high profile in the church and the causative factor is the preachers who deviate from preaching only the Word of God and nothing other than the Word of God. This is a grievous mistake, that if not corrected the church shall never get a relevant message from God.

The womens league contributes in this way, they maintain that only the clean Word of God should be preached. This means that the Word of God should be brought to the people without any distortion. This means that no unnecessary additions nor subtractions to it (Rev 22:18). This mistake is habitually committed by some preachers in nowadays.

Most of them bring their phantasy to the congregation and say that is the Word of God. They promote or bring their own desire to the people. This means that they preach according to their own feelings and not the message emanating from the Bible. This practice, forbids the congregation from getting the true Word of God, that is relevant to their daily life. This becomes a fruitless empty speech, since it is not from the bible.

The youth movement also affirms that only the Word of God should be preached. This means that the major task of the preacher is to give the congregation the Word of God. His calling is to cascade the Word of God and nothing else.

It is with great unfortunance and despair that most of preachers do not act like that. In most cases when preaching for the congregation they relate decorated essays that are fruitless to the congregation(spiritually). These preachings seem exactly to be the stage or pulpit oration, that is not relevant to preaching of the Word of God.

Some of the preachers nowadays even if they are trying to bring the Word of God to the people, their modus operandi is doomed to failure. Sometimes their messages seem to be recitations. This becomes clearly that the message they are preaching does not affects them. It is just recited. Therefore, this does not become a reaching but a recitation, or a piece of prose.

c) Who preaches?

To circumvent the question that, who should preach, the pastors say that it is the sacred men of God. To put more emphasis on their stand point they refer to the following words: "He promised through his holy prophets long ago that he would save us from our enemies." (Lk.1:70) That is to say it is not just ordinary people who are to proclaim the Word of God, but only who are called for that purpose. Here again they depict and illustrate their point by quoting from the following words: "He must remain in heaven until the time comes for all things to be made new, as God announced through his holy prophets who lived long ago" (Ac.3:21).

The pastors further stress that it should be only men, i.e the male gender who should proclaim the Word of God. This means that they do not regard women to be important for the proclamation of the Word of God. This is derived from cultural norm that women have much domestic work to do at home. They should rear the children.

The members of the church councils see it other way round. They say it is only the minister and his council who has the authenticity of preaching. Their reason is that the minister and his council are the only true leaders of the congregation. Therefore now that they have been called to lead the congregation they are as well called to bring the Word of God to the congregation. This means these are the holy men of

God. "In the past times mankind was not told this secret, but God has revealed it now by the Spirit to his holy apostles and prophets" (Eph.3:5). They also quote the words from 2 Pt.1:21 : "For no prophetic message ever came just from the will of man, but men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God."

The womens league has a different opinion from the church council. As far as they are concerned, everybody has the right to proclaim the Word of God. This means the proclamation of the Word of God is not limited to the minister and his church council only. All members of the congregation has the right of proclamation. They see no difference between the minister, the church council and other members of the congregation. For them, everybody is called to proclaim the Word of God, and to be His follower. Therefore they also, have the right to labour for God in proclaiming His Word.

Secondly, they deny the fact that it is only men who are called for this purpose, but also the women. This collaborates with democratic way of living that takes place in the new South Africa. Gender equity is of the most importance. What is considered best is potentiality, efficiency and capabilities in executing one's task. In the new South Africa sexism is a thing of the past. This means ladies are equally regarded as good as men in proclaiming the Word of God. This is vivid and explicit in that they are already conducting Womens prayer days. They refer to Lk.(24:9-10) "Returned from the town, and told all these things to the eleven disciples and all the rest. The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; they and the other women with them told these things to the apostles."

The submission made by the youth movement is that they concur with the congregation in that it is only the minister who should preach. The whole responsibility is vested upon him alone, as he is a leader in the congregation of God.

Again they believe that a preacher should be a well read person, both academically and professionally, so as to be able to give the correct interpretation of the Scripture. This means the preacher should go through either colleges, technicons or universities to train them as preachers.

From their point of view, it is clear that the preacher who has not undergone this training, will be inefficient in proclaiming the Word of God in the manner that the Word of God should affect the inner being of the listeners.

According to them, this means this is a grievous mistake committed by a great number of congregations. Most of the members of the church council don't have the relevant guidance or correct methods of preaching. This means they do it for the sake of doing it. The consequences of their preaching causes the congregation to

attend services according to who is going to preach. And this does not nourish the congregation spiritually.

If circumstances demand that the church elders should preach, they should undergo some training on how to preach or to conduct sermons. And this can be done through workshops by the ministers. This type of workshops should be ongoing and they should be exposed to various commentaries. They must teach how to contextualise their preaching. This can also be extended to the youth movements, and women's league. In this way, the Word of God shall be effectively and correctly proclaimed.

d) When should we preach?

According to the pastors, time for preaching is during the church services. This means in every Sunday the Word of God should be proclaimed. In this time, people have gathered in the churches to be fed by the Word of God.

Further than this, preaching should be done during prayer meetings and even where Christians have gathered together. The main way and the most important one that the Word of God can be brought to them is through preaching. The prayer meetings are very effective for this purpose in that they are not conducted in churches only but also in the homes of the members of the congregations, schools, places of work as well as places of entertainments.

The members of the church councils believe that it is only in the church services where preaching should take place, for example, during the synodical and presbyterial council meetings. The Word of God is proclaimed through short sermons before each gathering can be started, even at the end this is done in one or other way. In conclusion we can say preaching in the Christian gatherings is not limited.

The women's league have a strong belief that the Word of God is very essential during the funeral services. During this moment, the bereaved are desperate and in deep melancholy. They are in need of consolation. It is only the Word of God that can ease their depression and give them a true consolation. The Word of God can be brought forth to them through preaching. And that preaching should be contextualised so as to be acclimatised to the prevailing situation.

In the places nominated for proclamation, hospitals are not excluded. They believe that patients are in need of the mercy of God for their speedy redemption and healing. Through days and nights, some of them are in alarming conditions. Some are in despair, and during this time they need to be strengthened and be cheered spiritually and psychologically. "Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him'. So they called the blind man. 'Cheer up!' they said. 'Get up, he is calling you' (Mk.10:49). The

very strong instrument to this is the Word of God. The Word of God gives them comfort and faith (Ac.3:5).

Correctional services are also places that should be taken into consideration when thinking of places where preaching should take place. We find the relevant example of this fact from the following words: "I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me" (Mt.25:43). The prisoners also need the Word of God. They have been separated from their families and they found themselves to have gone astray. What they are looking for is only to find themselves to have been freed from their bondage. They need the Word of God that will enable them to confess their sins." You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up; then God will show mercy to you" (Pr.28:13). Now that they are discouraged and despaired, they should be given the word of encouragement. "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest" (Mt.11:28).

The youth movement submit that preaching should be conducted in diversified solemnities like matrimonial ceremonies, graduation parties and jubilees. They maintain that even if all these occasions or ceremonies are not church orientated, preachers should be invited for the sake of the Word of God. The Word of God should be proclaimed according to the type of the ceremony concerned. This means the preachers should be versatile and cautious when selecting the texts they are going to preach from.

e) What is the responsibility of the preacher?

When the pastors are responding to the question that what is the responsibility of the preacher in this regard. They say that a preacher should be aware that the Word of God is not his, but it belongs to God Himself. He, as a preacher, is just a messenger. They give us the example of the following words: "While the voice was speaking, God's spirit entered me and raised me to my feet, and I heard the voice continue, "Mortal man, I am sending you to the people of Israel. They have rebelled and turned against me and are still rebels, just as their ancestors were" (Ezk.2:3;4). They also went further by citing the example of the following words." It began as the prophet Isaiah had written: "God said, 'I will send my messenger ahead of you to clear the way for you' (Mk.1:2).

He must also know that his responsibility is to watch the people of God. He must know that he is the watchman of the people of God. According to them, in Ezk.33:2, God said to Ezekiel he is the watchman of his people to tell them about trouble, like a war that would come to his people. So the watchman must warn all the people that the enemy is coming. Preachers are the same as this watchman. Preachers must tell the people of God that God is not happy with sin and that He will put people in hell if they continue in sin."If someone hears it but pay no attention and the enemy comes and kills him, then he is to blame for his own death.

His death is his own fault because he paid no attention to the warning. If he had paid attention, he could have escaped" (Ezk.33:4;5). From these verses we see that some people will listen to the warnings of preachers, but others will not listen. But if the preachers as watchmen do not warn them accordingly, it is the same as if the watchman is fast asleep. The people will die and go to hell because of their sin, but God will hold the watchman (preacher) responsible for the people's death." If, however, the watchman sees the enemy come and does not sound the alarm, the enemy will come and kill those sinners, but I will hold the watchman responsible for their death" (Ezk.33:6).

According to the pastors, Paul said the same thing to the church in Ephesus when he said:" So I solemnly declare to you this very day: if any of you should be lost, I am not responsible, for I have not held back from telling you the whole purpose of God" (Ac.20:26). In other words, Paul did not want to be responsible for people to go to hell. So he told them about their sin and hell and how Jesus came to save and love them. Now he is free from them and God cannot claim their lives from him. This is the same responsibility of preachers of today. They must know that God will claim the blood of His people from preachers if they do not warn them about their sin.

Again, pastors say that preachers are responsible for the lives of all christians. They are like shepherds that care for them. If other christians start to backslide, it is the responsibility of a preacher to help them, pray for them and encourage them. Preachers must not fight them and be hard on them. They must be their helpers and help the weak christians. They quoted the following words from the book of Ezekiel." You have not taken care of the weak ones, healed those that are sick, bandage those that are hurt, brought back those that wandered off or looked for those that are lost. Instead, you treated them cruelly. Because the sheep had no shepherd they were scattered, and wild animals killed and ate them. Now you shepherds, listen to what I, the Lord, am telling you. As surely as I am the living God you had better to listen to me. My sheep have been attacked by wild animals that killed and ate them because there was no shepherd. My shepherds did not try to find the sheep. They were taking care of themselves and not the sheep" (Ezk.34:4;7;8).

Further than that, a preacher must know that his responsibility is also to sow a seed. This means, what he does through his preaching to the congregation, is to sow the Word of God. This also means that a preacher is not a founder of preaching. He is just a mere sower (Mt.13:38;39).

The members of the church councils maintain that the responsibility of a preacher is to be like a messenger. He is a messenger or an ambassador of God. " Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends" (2 Cor.5:20). Therefore, his responsibility as a messenger is to deliver the message of

his sender. He must convey it to the right congregation at the right times. He must deliver that message without any distortion.

On the other hand, a preacher needs to realise that he is neither a herald nor an authority. This means a herald preacher does not possess the Word of God. What he has in possession is the command of God. And the command of God is that he should only proclaim the living word of the almighty God as commanded by Him. To put more emphasis on their point, they site the example of the following words of Jesus Christ when he said: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age" (Mt.28:19-20). By so doing, he will be revealing and bringing the truth that God speaks to His people through the Bible and through the preacher. This responsibility includes other factors that when he (the preacher) proclaims the Word of God, should do that with diligence and audible voice. His message should emanate from the Bible, and it should be directed to the listeners.

According to the women's league the preacher needs to realise that he is only a mere stuart and not an expert, but still a paragon of a devoted messenger. "And I have been made a servant of the church of God, who gave me this task of fully proclaiming his message" (Col.1:25). This also means that he (the preacher) is just a labourer of his master. He has a great responsibility to him, to hearken him. And to execute his task with great humbleness. "Slaves, obey your human masters with fear and trembling; and do it with a sincere heart, as though you were serving Christ" (Eph.6:5). This is the good example of a servant of God. So preachers must also do like that.

Now that the preacher is the servant of God, it is his responsibility and accountability that he must be always obedient to his master. He must hear and listen to him in all aspects. That is he must have a good labour relations. He must execute his task entrusted to him with faithfulness. He must always remember his calling. It is his responsibility that the Good News reach all the listeners. He must acquaint the listeners with the name of God so as to attain everlasting life.

The youth movement maintain that the preacher needs to realise that he is totally not the author of the Word of God. He is rather a guider thereof. To emphasise this point, the youth movement quote the following words: "The official replied, "How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?" (Ac.8:31) Also a preacher has the responsibility of being a witness of the Word of God. "But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Ac.1:8).

They also state that a preacher has a great responsibility of broadcasting the Word of God. He is called by God to be His broadcaster of his Word. The following words give us a good example: "Mortal man," he said, "I am making you a watchman for

the nation of israel. You will pass on to them the warnings I give you" (Ezk.3:17). It is therefore his responsibility to be committed in his proclamation. It is evident that if a preacher can execute his calling efficiently the people of God shall not receive the Good News of God as it was supposed.

In conclusion, the youth movement states that there is a great responsibility for the preacher between God and himself. The preacher is an ambassador of God. He is responsible of conveying the Word of God from God to His people. The only way through which he can do this is preaching. The preacher makes it possible for the people of God to know His Word. In his proclamation of the Word he is also carrying over the Word of God through prayer. He tells God about the problems and the needs of His people. He also tell Him about what they are asking for. He prays for the people of god, and all these are done through prayer during the times of preaching. It is all clear that if the preacher can neglect his calling, the people of God shall perish. And the judgement of God shall be thrust upon him. The following words are the good example of the above mentioned statement:" If I announce that an evil man is going to die but you do not warn him to change his ways so that he can save his life, he will die, still a sinner, and I will hold you responsible for his death" (Ezk.3:18).

7.3 Conclusion:

Although we analysed the views of the above mentioned different members of different denominations and those of different ministers of various denominations and doctrines, we really noticed that they agree on the fact that preaching deals with the Word of God.

They share almost the same interpretation or explanation concerning preaching. According to them, preaching is none other than the proclamation of the Word of God by the preacher to the listeners or to the congregation.

Further than this, all diversity of people consulted unanimously agree that preaching should be taken over to the people since it is the command of God. God gave a command that His Word be proclaimed to all nations. According to Acts (1 :8) Jesus said:" But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, you will be filled with power, and you will be witnesses for me in Jersalem, in all Judaea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." To them it is very important that the preacher proclaims only the Word of God and nothing more. This they should do without any distortion.

They also agree that a preacher should be done in all times in all circumstances where people have gathered. Even if they refer to many different places where the Word of God should be proclaimed, they maintain that the same message to be proclaimed, and that is the responsibility of the preacher.

We have realised that all the groups of people we have consulted concur in many aspects of preaching. Even if it is like that there are some aspects whereby they are differing. The women's league differ with all other groups in that it says that not only men should conduct preaching but also women. They say every one who has been called by God to execute His work has the responsibility and the right to do so irrespective of the gender.

The youth movement also at this stage differs with other groups in that it is solely minister who suppose to preach. Their argument is that they have been called for this purpose. As such they are the legitimate messengers of God. They are also guided by the training they received from their theological colleges. According to the youth movement, preaching is not just an easy thing to do, its *modus operandi* needs some certain skills and knowledgeable, excellences as well as commitment and determination. Therefore, preaching according to them is not for everybody.

CHAPTER 8

8. THE FINAL RESULTS OF THIS STUDY AND FINAL CONCLUSION:

8.1 Introduction:

The main purpose of this script was to determine theoretically what contextual preaching means and to apply it to the preaching in the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa. This study endeavoured to help and guide preachers to the right perspective on their preaching within the changing situation in the new South Africa.

8.2 The final results:

8.1.2 What preaching is:

We discovered what preaching in itself (Chapter 2) is: Preaching is the proclamation of the will of God. It is the service of the Word. It is the interpretation of the Word of God, as well as the announcement and the transmission of the message of God by the preacher.

8.2.2 Biblical foundation of preaching:

In the Old Testament Moses, prophets and priests brought teachings of God's ways to the Israelites, eg. Esaiiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Esra, Jonah etc. In the New Testament John the Baptist, Jesus Christ and his disciples as well as the first Christians preached the message of God.

8.2.3 What preaching is not:

Preaching is not a lecture, speech, story telling, aesthetic recitation, an essay or a dramatic announcement.

8.2.4 Purpose of preaching:

The main purpose of preaching is to proclaim the Good News about Christ and the judgement of God over sin. It is to change people's lives, to glorify God, to comfort and to admonish the congregation.

8.2.5 Final results regarding the meaning of context:

8.2.5.1 The meaning of contextuality in general:

With regard to language, context is a link between a sentence or sentences and the whole prescribed passage. The context is what goes before and what follows

after the special portion of the sacred text under consideration. It is those parts that precede or follow a passage and fix its meaning in this context.

Preaching in its origin and thereafter, takes place within the context of the community of believers. Context is the relationship between the preacher and his God and the relationship of the preaching message to the circumstances of the people of that particular place.

8.2.5.2 **The Biblical view on contextuality:**

A sermon has a context of history and tradition. It also has a pastoral context. A sermon is prepared and delivered in a liturgical context as well as a theological context.

8.2.6 **The meaning of contextual preaching:**

Contextual preaching is preaching which takes seriously both the biblical text and its context, as well as the listeners and their context. Contextual preaching, is a method of doing preaching in which both the Word of God and the people's context are taken seriously.

It is a kind of preaching that seeks to bring together the culture of the biblical world and the culture of today's reader of Scriptures.

8.2.7 **Analysing of the congregation/listeners in general:**

We (have) discovered that the preacher should analyse his congregation so that he can be able to bring the contextual preaching to his congregation. This includes amongst others the following aspects:

- Geographic and Demographic situation.
- Socio-economical situation.
- Religious and spiritual situation.
- Cultural situation.

8.2.8 **The selection of the preaching passage:**

We discovered that in the selection of a text the preacher is influenced by mainly four factors such as the following:

- The liturgical or church year.
- External events.
- Personality of the preacher.
- Pastoral leadership.

8.2.9 Analysing the views of church members and ministers:

We discovered that according to the church members and ministers, preaching is the proclamation of the message of God. Preaching should be done at all times in all circumstances where people have gathered. Every body who has been called by God and has been guided by the training from theological colleges has the right to proclaim the Word of God.

8.3 Final conclusion:

In conclusion the following advice can be given: (especially to Dutch Reformed Church in Africa's ministers)

- The preachers of the Word of God should always remember that they have been called by God to carry His message to all of His people. That message should have the Good News about salvation in Jesus Christ as central context.
- The preachers should also remember that the message they are taking to the people emanates from the Bible. Therefore they must remain Biblical students so as to be spiritually nurtured.
- At all times the preachers of the Word of God should always remember that they are not just preachers but they also have a mammoth task i.e pastoral duties. They are committed to house visits under all circumstances of life. This capacitates their inside into the living conditions of those people so as to maintain relevancy and contextuality in their preaching.
- Over and above the preachers should also take their life into cognisance. They should lead by example. They must pray all times, they must surrender themselves to God both spiritually and physically. They must persuade people to believe in God through Jesus Christ.
- The preachers should be prepared to attend the workshops on theological teaching so as to remain informed. This will broaden their theological capacity, so as to be always well acclimatised to the prevailing circumstances. When preparing their preaching, they should always consider the church year.

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