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**SERMON PREPARATION AND DELIVERY IN AN
AFRICAN CONTEXT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
ZAMBIA**

**SERMON PREPARATION AND DELIVERY IN AN AFRICAN
CONTEXT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ZAMBIA**

by

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**This thesis is submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHIAE

**in the Faculty of Theology at the
UNIVERSITY OF THE ORANGE FREE STATE**

PROMOTER: PROF JS KELLERMAN (D TH)

November 1998

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted by me for the degree of Doctor of Philosophiae (Ph D) at the university of the Orange Free State is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me at another university/faculty.

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LF CHIPWATANGA

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SUMMARY

Summary of sermon preparation and delivery in an African context with special reference to Zambia can be summarised as follows:

This research has proved that there are great differences between the point of view of the African and the Westerner regarding the following topic: God, dreams, witchcraft and nature. The Westerner has one name for God but the African has many names for God. This creates a problem for the Westerner who does not understand whether or not the African is worshipping one God. There is also a difference regarding the understanding of dreams. The African believes that a dream is meaningful and a revelation from God (Number 12:6) but the Westerner believes that a dream is meaningless and occurs because of events which happened the day before the dream was dreamt. Witchcraft is regarded by the African as a reality, while the Westerner considers it to be unreal and merely telesthesia. Regarding nature, the difference is that the African considers nature to be part of his life while the Westerner looks at nature as an object to be admired and enjoyed only.

- The study has revealed that effective African communication within an African community should adopt the African pattern of communication.

Scriptural

There is no other African foundation for preaching except the Scriptural one. African preaching is based on the Scriptures and anything other than this is supplementary information and should be treated as commentaries.

Theological

The African recognises holistic theology: the salvation for the whole person, but not the theory of the "salvation of the soul" which the Westerner embraces. The African believes in holistic Christianity and not in dualistic Christianity which the Westerner believes.

Cultural

The word of God is not received in a vacuum by the people receiving it. Therefore it was a mistake for the missionary (Westerner) to force the African Christian to receive God's Word in his culture rather than in his own African culture.

This proves that the African culture should be introduced in the sermon preparation and delivery because the Word of God is received in the culture of the people hearing it.

Pastoral

Pastors' training should be contextualised in order that pastors should be well equipped for the local situations and problems of the people to whom they will minister. At present the training is more Western than African. For example, one should identify an African problem such like polygamy and then discuss it in class. Or a Western problem, like homosexuality can be discussed as the African sees it Biblically and culturally.

OPSOMMING

Die opsomming van preekvoorbereiding en voordrag in 'n Afrikaan-konteks met spesiale verwysing na Zambië kan as volg saamgevat word:

- Hierdie navorsing het bewys dat daar groot verskille tussen die wêreldbeskouinge van die Afrikaan en die Westerling heers in verband met die volgende onderwerpe: God, drome, toordery en die natuur. Waar die Westerling een naam vir God het, het die Afrikaan baie name. Die vele name veroorsaak 'n probleem vir die Westerling om te verstaan omdat dit onseker is of die Afrikaan een God aanbid, of nie. Daar is ook 'n groot verskil tussen die Westerling en die Afrikaan se beskouing van drome. Die Afrikaan glo dat 'n droom betekenisvol is en bestaan net as 'n gevolg van ondervindinge wat die vorige dag ervaar is. Toordery word deur die Afrikaan as 'n werklikheid beskou maar die Westerling beskou dit as onwerklik, en slegs as telesthesia. Hulle verskil ook in hulle beskouing van die natuur. Die Afrikaan beskou die natuur as deel van sy lewe terwyl die Westerling dit beskou as 'n voorwerp om te bewonder en te geniet.
- Die studie het ook aan die lig gebring dat effektiewe Afrikaan-kommunikasie binne 'n Afrikaan-gemeenskap behoort die Afrika-patroon van kommunikasie na te volg.

Skriftuurlik

Daar is geen ander grondslag vir die oordra van die Woord van God deur die Afrikaan as die skriftuurlike nie. Afrikaanprediking is gebaseer op die Bybel en enigeiets wat hiervan afwyk is aanvullende inligting en behoort net as kommentare behandel te word.

Teologies

Die Afrikaan erken 'n holistiese Christelikheid: die redding van die hele mens en nie net die "redding van die siel" nie, soos die Westerling glo. Die Afrikaan glo in 'n holistiese Christelikheid en nie in 'n dualistiese Christelikheid soos wat die Westerling glo nie.

Kultureel

Die Woord van God word nie in 'n lugleegte ontvang nie. Daarom het die sendeling (Westerling) fouteer toe hy die Afrikaan gedwing het om die Woord van God in sy kultuur in plaas van in die Afrikaan se eie kultuur te ontvang.

Dit bewys dat die Afrikaan-kultuur behoort in die preekvoorbereiding en voordrag ingevoeg te word omdat die Woord van God in die kultuur van die mense wat dit aanhoor, ontvang word.

Pastoraal

Die pastoor se opleiding behoort binne verband gehou te word sodat hulle vir plaaslike toestande en vir die probleme van die mense vir wie hulle gaan dien, goed toegerus is. Tans is die opleiding meer Westers as Afrikaan. 'n Afrikaan-probleem behoort byvoorbeeld geïdentifiseer te word soos veelwywery en dan in die klas bespreek te word. Of die Westerse probleem van homoseksualiteit kan bespreek word soos die Afrikaan dit sien in die lig van die Bybel en sy kultuur.

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Note: Gender in this dissertation is seen as inclusive when the masculine form is used.

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CHAPTER 1

1 TOPICALITY, RESEARCH PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.1 Introduction

Sermon preparation and delivery in the African context with special reference to Zambia reminds one of twenty African theologians from thirteen countries who went to the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17-23, 1977, Accra, Ghana. The twenty African theologians rang the bell in Accra to alert the African continent to the fact that the time had come for her to act as Africa. And since the bell was rung in Accra, the thirteen countries have rung the bell in the ears of African nations to remind them that it is time that they start to think as Africans, act as Africans and worship as Africans. The delegates to the above-mentioned conference (Appiah-Kubi, 1981:11) collectively and emphatically made their statement: *We believe that African theology must be understood in the context of African life and culture and the creative attempt of African peoples to shape a new future that is different from the colonial past and the neo-colonial present. The African situation requires a new theological methodology that is different from the approaches of the dominant theologies of the West... Our task as theologians is to create a theology that arises from and is accountable to African people.*

This declaration shows that the twenty African theologians discovered that the theology and the theological methodology they possessed were not from Africa and did not address the African needs fully. This declaration links up with the research problem of this thesis. For sermon preparation and delivery in African context can never be done without involving African life, culture and social systems. In fact, it automatically embraces African theology, culture and interpretation. It requires a style of worship which is different from that of the West. An African preacher needs to be prepared and equipped fully as an

African so that he can deliver the goods effectively to his people as Aggrey of Africa did. Smith (1930:132) confirms: *Aggrey often dwelt upon the Africans' capacity for religion and the higher elements in their indigenous faith. In this way he was doing his people a real service for it has become a fixed notion.*

Furthermore, Runia (1983:57) emphatically states: *If our preaching is to be truly biblical preaching, it has to take the listener and his situation seriously.* If this is true, the researcher wants to take the African situation more seriously so that preaching for the Africans become truly Biblical within their context. For as the situation is now, preaching is approached from a Western perspective rather than from an African one.

The term "in African context" means that the sermon should be such that it offers the Africans the opportunity of worshipping God as Africans. According to Idowu (1965), this mean that the sermon must be prepared and delivered in a way which is compatible with their African spiritual temperament of singing to the glory of God in their own way, of praying to God and hearing his Word in proverbs and idioms which are clearly intelligible to them in their African context.

It also means that the African preacher should try his best to avoid referring to foreign characters, such as Plato, Socrates or Shakespeare, when preaching to Africans, especially if he is preaching to a rural congregation, because such characters do not make any sense to them as they know nothing about them. Instead, he must use African characters who are known to the Africans. Such characters may include a politician, a musician, a boxer, a preacher or authors such as Chinua Achebe of *Things fall apart* and James Ngugi author of *The River between*. The researcher agrees with Idowu (1965) that it is time that the African preacher should boldly and legitimately draw upon the wisdom of ages which God inspired in the indigenous sages of his own nation. The oral traditions of Africa are rich in such wisdom, and so are the folklore, the proverbs, the adages, the ancient sayings and the songs in

which the philosophy of the African people is enclosed. It is important that such materials should be brought into the sermon as illustrations, as an introduction, or wherever they may fit into the sermon. The question is: How is it possible to prepare and deliver a sermon at an African level? Africa is not a town, neither is it a country, but a continent, big and wide. The answer is: It is possible to draw inspiration from her largesse and the possibility widens if the preacher bases his ideas on African commonality. Kraft (1980:161) confirms this and writes: *Human commonality seems to be such that even across cultural barriers (such as those between us and the persons whose case histories are recorded in the Bible or those between Western missionaries and their hearers) a high degree of this reverse or reciprocating identification is possible if the communicator speaks in terms of common human experience rather than in terms of generalisations.*

If it is true that a human commonality which covers the whole world can make this possible, how much more can be achieved with African commonality which only covers a part of the world. The possibility of preparing and delivering a sermon in the African context must be greater. Moreover African commonality contains both human and African commonality which makes the case for using it even stronger.

Another crucial question is: How best can one stimulate the interest of a wide African audience and yet be specific? Pieterse *et al* (1979:x) answer: *The problem of how best to stimulate the interest of a wide audience and yet be specific was resolved by the selection of the theme which probably more than any other has dominated the African literary scene as we know it - that of protest and conflict; the historical treatment suggested itself... none the less a presentative selection of writers and their works was made to fit into the framework of the several forms of protest and conflict - mainly political and cultural - singled out for treatment.* Based on this approach, the researcher selected for treatment common African themes which address the needs, values and experiences of African people.

The researcher wishes to inform the Western world that if African expressions and experiences are missing from the speech and sermon, the African voice is silenced, and this means no participation for the African. It is very easy to note this. For example, when the final draft of the South African Constitution was presented for public comment, Christof Heyns (1996:1) quickly discovered that the voice of Africa was missing from the constitution and appealed to the Interim Constitutional Committee to amend it before it was accepted as a constitution of the Republic of South Africa. Heyns (1996:1) reminded the constitution drafting committee: *Remember how, in the bad old days, we used to say our new constitution must be truly legitimate; it must reflect the soul of our nation; it must be an expression of our history and of our deepest values, because only then will it have the spontaneous support of all our people? And to do this it must surely be rooted in African soil. Yet here we are on the eve of accepting our "final" constitution, and one has the uneasy feeling that people might describe it as a Checkers no name brand, generic product.* And he (1996:2) adds: *The importance of the group in African tradition is reflected already in the title of the African charter. Because the group - or "people" is considered to be the basic unit of society, in contrast to the West where the individual plays the predominant role...*

Therefore, in this study, the term "in African context" means that the sermon must be rooted in the African life; it must be rich with African expressions and must truly reflect the African community's needs and values.

To prepare and deliver a sermon in African context, does not imply detheologising theology, nor does it mean putting aside the Biblical truth. What it does mean is that the gospel message must be prepared and presented to the African community in a simple and understandable way. This is in line with the Reformed theological tradition which has always placed emphasis on proclamation that is simple, direct, authentic and clear (cf. Leith 1973:79-82). The practical theological perspective from which this study is done, wants to be true to this tradition. Theory (Biblical) and praise must

operate together. Historically, practical theology had to take some progressive steps in order for it to become one of the theological disciplines. According to Edward Farley (in Mudge and Poling 1987:1-3), there were four steps

- 1 Practical theology's first step towards becoming a theological discipline occurred with the distinguishing of moral theology from speculation theology.
- 2 The second step was when "practical theology" as a discipline included moral theology, but was expanded to embrace matters related to church polity and pastoral activities.
- 3 The third step occurred when practical theology was distinguished from moral theology as an area pertaining to the church's fundamental activities.
- 4 The fourth step came late in the eighteenth century when German schools standardised theological studies into four disciplines of which practical theology was the fourth.

After all these developments and eliminations, practical theology today only stands for studies pertaining to church and ministry. It stands for the following ministries and disciplines: preaching, homiletics, hermeneutics, evangelism, counselling, administration, pastoral stewardship, worship and education. Thus it has to do with the church and her ministries. In fact, it should be noted that the terms "preparation and delivery" not only reverse the originally assumed order of knowing, but are related to the debate on practical theology as the introductory chapter shows. Chapters 6 and 7 also reflect on the practicability of theology in the African context. In simple terms practical theology means putting theology into practice. Thus, if it is studied in isolation from the church and Christian community, it loses its direction and purpose,

Mudge and Poling (1987:xiii) write in this regard: *Yet the professional theological community located in institutions and faculties that see themselves as part of the academic world of doctoral programmes, tenure, and all the rest - is now under attack from every side... At the "mainline" centre, there is a loss of ecclesial and cultural identity and also a slide toward intellectual decay.*

This is what happens if practical theology is denied its active role in training institutions and faculties, that is if it works in isolation from the church. Van der Ven (1993:23) echoes this sentiment: *We can only agree with Mudge and Poling (1987) when they suggest that one of the devastating evils of contemporary theology as practised within the walls of the universities is that it develops in isolation from the church and Christian community.* This gap can and must be bridged. The question is how? In the case of Africans, the researcher believes that one of the ways in which the gap can be narrowed or bridged is by contextualising and Africanising the sermon and its method of delivery.

According to Adam (1997:15) practical theology comes down to the fact that "God is a speaking God". Thus any pastor's ministry of the Word in the congregation depends on a God who speaks. Adam (1997:15) adds that in order for one to provide a strong practical theology of preaching, one has to dig wide and deep to lay firm and standard foundations. He writes: *The ministry of the Word in the Bible includes the writing and reading of Scripture, and the use of Scripture in personal exhortation and encouragement as well as in public teaching and preaching. Preaching is best understood as one part of the ministry of the Word, and it derives its theological character from the biblical basis for all aspects of the ministry of the Word.*

This description complements the hypothesis of this thesis in terms of sermon preparation and delivery in African context with special reference to Zambia. If practical theology is concerned with the church and its ministry, and the ministry of the Word in the Bible includes the writing and reading of the

Scripture, as well as the use of Scripture in personal exhortation and encouragement, then the model and approach that this study adopts are a practical theology ministry and approach which will help the preachers to encounter and experience God. And this should be an investigated.

This investigation will be a practical theological inquiry. According to Gerkin (1991:13) the purpose of this inquiry (investigation) is governed by practical concerns on the one hand and by practical considerations on the other. By designating it a practical theological inquiry, the researcher wants to indicate something of the disciplinary perspective from which he approaches the subject of this study. The researcher focuses on the pastor's work and the people he serves, as Gerkin (1991:13) correctly puts it: *At the centre of my focus is concern for the practical work of ministry to persons as individuals and as members of church communities.*

This is the issue that concerns practical theology. It asks: What is lacking in the church liturgy which, if introduced, would make the worship effective? What must be done to improve the pastoral counselling or, as in the case of this study, to improve preaching - its preparation and delivery? Do the existing church laws serve the congregation members' needs, and many others. For example, Gerkin (1991:15) writes that it is no longer enough for the pastoral care practitioner simply to appropriate the various techniques of the secular helping professions, which have sprung up during the twentieth century, as models for pastoral work with persons who have difficulty coping with the stresses and strains of living in the present society. Though these techniques are at times quite useful, they are incapable of undergirding the central purposes of a ministry that seeks to embody the meanings and values that have shaped the Christian tradition over time. The techniques are also incapable of supporting a ministry to persons caught up in a culture that is suffering from the malaise of norms and boundaries fragmentation. This undergirding must be derived from the core values and meanings rooted in the primary text of the Christian narrative tradition.

If it is true that techniques developed during the twentieth century, though useful, are incapable of supporting a ministry to persons caught up in a culture that is suffering from the malaise of norms and boundaries fragmentation, then these techniques will most probably be even more incapable of supporting a ministry to persons in the African culture. To make matters worse, these techniques were formulated by Westerners who considered only their own culture and situation at the time of formulation, and not the culture of the African with its own meanings and values. Practical theology, however, has to do with people and their lives - also Africans who are the focus of this study. That is why Gerkin (1991:64) defines it as follows: *Practical theology... is the critical and constructive reflection on the life and work of Christians in all the varied contexts in which that life takes place with intention of facilitating transformation of life in all dimensions in accordance with the Christian gospel.* He adds: *Practical theology, seen from a narrative hermeneutical perspective, involves a process of interpretive fusion of horizons of meaning embodied in the Christian narrative with other horizons that inform and shape perceptions in the various arenas of activity in which Christians participate.*

This definition constitutes the possible link with the researcher's hypothesis in this thesis, in the sense that the researcher, in his study, intends to make critical evaluations and reflect constructively on the life and work of the African Christians in Africa as established by the Westerners.

However, in determining the nature and functioning of the practical ministry, the principles which form the basis of this inquiry must be determined. If this is not done, the study will merely amount to a sociological study. Practical theology has to do with theology. Therefore, in engaging in a practical theology inquiry, theological considerations (Gerkin 1991:64) must be taken into account. As it is the ministry of the church as the body of Christ that is at stake, it speaks for itself that the Biblical principles that constitute the church, must be at the foundation of the practical theology inquiry. The praxis of the

ministry must be evaluated against the mirror of the Word of God. This is the Christian tradition to which Gerkin (1991:12, 13, 14) refers when he points out that Biblical norms are at the foundation of the Christian tradition. A narrative hermeneutical perspective (Gerkin 1991:64) therefore means looking at the story of the church and the praxis of her ministry through the lens of the Bible. In the case of the preparation and delivery of a sermon in the African context, the horizons of what the Bible teaches regarding preaching the Word of God must fuse with the horizon of the African listener and his/her needs in a modern Africa. This corresponds with what has already been said above.

1.2 Topicality and statement of the research problem

The title of the thesis is: *Sermon preparation and delivery in an African context with special reference to Zambia*. It has been discovered that, as a result of the influence of the missionary movement, preaching in Africa has been fundamentally determined by the Western homiletic tradition. This again is based on the ancient Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition (Cupitt 1991:42). As far as the researcher knows, no one has yet written on sermon preparation and delivery in an African context with special reference to Zambia. The Pan-African conference of Third World Theologians (Appiah-Kubi 1981:11) stated that African theology must be understood in the context of African life and culture, but it did not write any African sermon neither did it deliver it in the African context. Runia (1983) also mentions that true Biblical preaching must take the listener's situation seriously, and yet he himself has not written any sermon in the African context. This may have impoverished the proclamation of God's Word in Africa, since the Africans have their own particular situation, communication system, culture and social structures which are different from those of the West. The question is: if the African rhetorical and communicational social patterns are respected, would this not make preaching more effective? This whole problem must be investigated.

1.3 The purpose of this study

The purpose of this thesis is of a threefold nature:

- 1.3.1 To develop a contextual model for preaching and sermon preparation and delivery which could improve the effective proclamation of God's Word in Africa.
- 1.3.2 To contribute to the undeveloped field of scholarly reflection on contextual preaching in Africa.
- 1.3.3 To remove the wrong conception planted by Westerners which states that African culture is "heathen" and should not be regarded as valuable in preaching. The study will identify these ideas and prove them Biblically and culturally wrong.

1.4 Basic hypothesis

The basic hypothesis of this study is that there are data from Scripture, theological science, communication science and social sciences that should be investigated, with the expected result that a new understanding of sermon preparation and delivery in the African context will emerge.

1.5 Study method

This thesis will primarily comprise a study of Scripture, homiletical literature, theological and anthropological literature as well as an empirical study and an analysis and interpretation of a few articles and journals.

1.6 Procedure and scheduling

The study is composed of eight chapters plus a summary.

Chapter 1 covers the motivation for and purpose of this study, the topicality and definitions of the important terms used in the study, the method of study as well as the basic hypothesis.

Chapter 2 will investigate the different worldviews of Africans and Westerners. Selected themes will be picked for investigation.

Chapter 3 will discuss the African worship.

Chapter 4 will focus on communication in general and in particular on African communication as practised at various levels.

In Chapter 5 attention will be paid to what preaching is, what it is not, the purpose of preaching and the theological foundation of preaching.

Chapter 6 will be devoted to a discussion of sermon preparation in the African context. The preacher's preparation as well as that of the sermon will be discussed.

Chapter 7 will deal with the questionnaire for pastors and senior pastor trainees.

In Chapter 8 an account will be given of sermon delivery.

The final chapter is followed by a summary of the thesis.

1.7 Preliminary definitions of basic terms used in this thesis

The basic terms used in this thesis are not arranged alphabetically but as family units. Thus words which are very closely related or deal with one theme are grouped together. The purpose is to show the difference in their meanings. The following are the basic terms used in this study.

God

In the African context God can and will never have only one name, because in the African culture a name has a meaning. It may mean power, victory, problems, honour, death, and so on (Smith 1950 & Van der Merwe 1957). Among the Nyanja/Chewa-speaking people of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, God is known as "Mlegi" meaning Creator; "Mulungu" meaning Mighty God and "Wamphamvuzonse" meaning Almighty God. According to Van der Merwe (1957) the Shona people of Zimbabwe have many names for God.

Transcendence of God

This means that God is far away from the people. While an African understands that God is far away from him/her, he also knows that God is near him in prayer and in times of crisis.

Immanence of God

This means that God is near his people. According to John Mbiti (1970), the African understanding of God's farness must be combined with God's nearness. To understand the mind of an African is not to separate the farness and nearness of God. For him when things are going well, God is near, and when things are going badly, God is far.

Preacher

The word preacher is used so often in this thesis because in the African context preaching is not only done by ordained pastors, ministers, and priests as is mostly the case in the West. Therefore, in this study, the word "preacher" is used for a lay preacher, an elder, an evangelist as well as for the ordained minister of the Word.

Voice

In this study the voice of the preacher means more than sound. According to Adams (1971:130) the difference between sound and voice is that "sound is unarticulated air in vibration, whereas voice is articulated air in vibration". Thus unarticulated air is the air that has not been shaped by the vocal apparatuses into speech; articulated air has been.

Delivery

This refers to the way in which the content of the sermon is presented. Pieterse (1987:79) writes that in preaching, "delivery involves the body language of the preacher - the vocal variety, inflection, pitch, volume, gestures, movement, facial expression, and so on. He adds that in homiletics "delivery" is known as verbalisation.

Extemporaneous preaching

The word "extemporaneous" literally means "from the time", or originated for the occasion. In Webster's Dictionary, it is defined as: made or done without previous study or preparation.

Jones (1952:187) writes: *Extemporaneous applies to addresses of which the thought has been prepared but the language and incidental treatment are left to the suggestion of the moment.* This is what is called preaching without notes, or noteless preaching.

Broadus (1979:269) describes extemporaneous preaching as preaching after limited preparation.

Family

Shorter (1973:156) says that the family is not a single, fixed concept the whole world over. The English word is derived from the Latin word for "household" (familia), and the principles according to which relatives group themselves into households vary from one culture to another. Shorter is right. Family is best understood culturally.

Nuclear family

This is a Western understanding of what a family is. It is a family consisting of a father, mother and their children.

Extended family

This includes the father, the mother and their children as well as their relatives. This is the African understanding of what a family is.

Polygamy

This is a family of one husband with many wives and children. God tolerated this kind of marriage as we can see in the Old Testament.

Monogamy

The word "monos" is a Greek word and means single or one. This means that this is a marriage of one husband and one wife, the way God intended a marriage to be (Genesis 2:18-25).

Monotheism

This is a belief that there is only one God. It is a doctrine of one God.

Pantheism

This is a belief that God is not a person, but that all laws, forces and manifestations are God. Webster's Dictionary defines it as follows: The doctrine that God is not a personality, but that all laws, forces, manifestations ... are God.

Polytheism

Poly means "much" or "many". In this context, it means many gods. It is the belief in or worship of many gods.

Christianity

Christians are followers of Jesus Christ. Hence Christianity means a community of believers living the life of Christ. Forsyth (1960:25) defines it as follows: Christianity is not the religion of a book, though it is a book religion. Nor is it the religion of a church, though it is a church religion. But it is a religion of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of grace. These are the facts that constitute the church.

Dualistic Christianity

Dual is a Greek word, which means two. This is the doctrine which teaches that Christianity must be treated separately from the secular world. It teaches that a Christian has two parts: a holy (sacred) part and a profane (secular or material) part. The two must not be mixed, it teaches. According to Van der Walt (1994) and Cupitt (1991), this is the type of Christianity most of the Western world follows because of the Greek influence they have adopted.

Holistic Christianity

This means integrated, total Christianity, the Christianity which addresses all personal life areas, spiritual and social needs. It reaches a person as a whole, addressing all his faculties. This is in line with the Biblical message which teaches that religion has to do with life as a whole, and that is what Christianity is all about. It seems that the African world buys this type of Christianity.

Revelation

According to Van Kooten (1972) revelation is the exercise by which God made Himself known to the people. Inspiration, on the other hand, refers to the working of the Holy Spirit upon the writers of the Bible.

General revelation

This is a doctrine that teaches that God reveals Himself through nature, for example the sea, sky, mountains to mention but a few things. But the question is: Does the general revelation disclose a knowledge which is reaching towards the God of the Christian faith? Bultmann (1987:319) answers: *Yes and NO. No, since it is precisely the purpose of the natural man which is broken by faith. But just because in faith what was once the aim is now feared, and what was once fled from is now sought, the Yes holds. When man speaks of God, he reveals a certain understanding of himself as delivered over to the enigma (a problem), to over mastering power. Combined with this is an understanding of himself as providing for himself, making himself secure, recognising that power and wanting to possess it. And he adds: For such a man, God's revelation is given; just such a man can understand it. As he was pursued by desire and fear, so he was pursued by God. He thought of God and of himself together.*

Special revelation

This revelation becomes special because God has revealed Himself in a special way. He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures (Genesis 1:1, Exod 20:2) and finally through his only Son (Heb 1:2-3; John 14:9-10).

Ordeal

Webster's Dictionary describes it as an ancient method of trial in which the accused was exposed to physical dangers, from which he was supposed to be divinely protected if he was innocent. Lucy Mair (1969:142) says something similar. She says that it was the test which was commonly called the poison ordeal, the drinking of medicines which an innocent person was supposed to vomit up. If he did not vomit, it was regarded as clear evidence that he was a victim. Mair's description comes very near to what the Chewas of Zambia used to do to clean their villages by forcing people to drink "mwabivi".

Witch

A witch (Mair, 1969:222) is defined as a person who has made a compact with the devil and who attends the witches' Sabbath in order to worship him, to profane Christian ritual, to feast on the bodies of children and indulge in obscene orgies. As servants of the devil, witches are believed to be capable of producing all the many types of misfortune that can be assigned to no other cause, but these are now significant as evidence of association with the Devil rather than as offences in themselves.

However, Mc Veig and Malcolm (1974:64,166) divide witchcrafts into three groups:

1 Divination (leech craft)

The diviner is a magician, a healer. There is a difference between a doctor (Ba Ila-munganga) and a diviner. The diviner's task is to make known mysteries which are hidden to the common people. He is essentially a revealer. Things that are hidden from ordinary view, he can discover and make known. Hence he is called upon to find things that are lost, to detect thieves, to trace straying cattle, and so on.

2 Sorcery

The sorcerer is a healer. His task is to do good to the people. People come to him for healing having been referred to him by a diviner, or on their own. But he can also give bad medicine to an individual as a revenge if asked to do so by the relatives.

3 Witchcraft

Witchcraft practises bad medicine. Some people do not differentiate between sorcery and witchcraft because in both cases a spell is cast by means of medicine.

African

In this study it means all Africans born in an African home, who grew up in an African family and reside in Africa. It also includes those Africans who have been displaced because of politics, wars, famine and the slave trade, because, although they are not in Africa, they do things differently from other tribes and nations, because they are Africans. A good example are African Americans who for many years were called black Americans, but of late they have discovered that they are not black Americans but Africans (Maimela and König 1998).

Western

In this study, "Western" refers to Western and European countries. This means that Westerners as well as Europeans are referred to as Western people in this study.

Nyanja/Chewa

In this study this term includes the language of the Zambian Chewa, Nsenga, Ngoni and Tumbuka people, Malawians and Mozambicans, because all these people can hear, speak and sing the language.

Homosexuality

Wilson (1971:58) defines homosexuality as follows: *Homosexuality is a term applicable only to those individuals who more or less chronically feel an urgent sexual desire toward, and a sexual responsiveness to, members of their own sex, and who seek gratification of this desire predominantly with members of their own sex.* And Masters (1992:387) defines it in the same way: *The homosexual is a person with sexual preference for partners of his or her own sex.* The word "homosexual" comes from the Greek root "homo" meaning "same".

Heterosexuality

This is a Greek word. Its root is "hetero" meaning "different", not the same. In this study it denotes sexual relations between opposite sexes. It is the opposite of homosexuality.

Lesbian

This is homosexuality attributed to Sappho and her followers in Lesbos. It refers to homosexuality between women. It denotes a homosexual woman (Christopher 1987).

Culture

Thomas (1987:29) defines culture as a system of symbols and meanings. Thus, according to him, *culture is concerned with a body of definitions, premises, statements, postulates, presumptions, propositions and perceptions about the nature of the universe and man's place.*

It is something one learns from the society in which he lives, but it is not biologically inherited. Anthropologists (Hoebel, 1972,6) see culture as *the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance.* Since culture is not biologically inheritable, the missionaries were supposed to learn the African culture in order to behave, worship and communicate like Africans.

Acculturation

According to Mitchell (1990) acculturation is the purposeful effort to accomplish a change of cultural biases and expectations.

Worldview

Worldview refers to the way people see the world around them and interpret the things they see in it to make sense to themselves. Van der Walt (1994:39) defines it as follows: *A worldview is an integrated, interpretive set of*

confessional perspectives on reality which underlies, shapes, motivates and gives direction and meaning to human activity.

Dream

In the African context dreams and visions are spoken of as actual events, encounters that happen to men and women and make a difference to their lives. Geoffrey A Dudley (1961:11) calls a dream the unconscious mind.

The Western Christian (Kelsey 1991:191-2) pays no attention to dreams, because of his materialistic and logical scientism that has almost completely replaced the original thinking and philosophy of Christianity. He regards dreams as the leftovers of the previous day; meaningless events.

The Bible defines the dream as being a revelation from God, a vision given by God to man (Numbers 12:6 NIV; REB Jerusalem Bible).

We find many good examples in which a dream experience is referred to as a vision of the night, as in 1 Samuel 3:15; Job 20:8 and Daniel 2:19 (NIV).

Jung (1963:351) defines dreams as follows: *The dream is a little hidden door in the innermost and most secret recesses of the psyche, opening into that cosmic night which was psyche long before there was any ego consciousness...*

CHAPTER 2

2 AFRICANS AND WESTERNERS HAVE DIFFERENT WORLDVIEWS

By way of introduction let us first understand what the nature and functions of the worldview are. According to Van der Walt (1994:40-42; 53-55), a worldview is *cosmoscope, all-encompassing* - which means that it includes the whole of human life, not just certain areas of human life activities, but of human life in its entirety. It always includes a specific concept of a god (true God or idolised god), and some conception concerning normativity. The totality perspective of a worldview therefore, includes three major concepts: a concept of God or idolised god, a view of creation and a perspective on the guidelines for human action in the world he lives in. This is the nature of the worldview in a brief form.

In this way, a worldview functions as a provider of interpretative keys to an understanding of reality and of man himself. It integrates and structures human experiences. Hence, it gives meaning to human existence.

As a normative framework, the worldview enables men and women to make choices based on principle and to act according to specific norms. By doing this, they secure the unity of their community. Thus it is very important in the formation of a personal identity and integrity. No wonder certain groups of people do things in a different way than others. It is because of their worldview which guides them in that way.

Other functions of the worldview are: to release deep emotions in people and also to offer great stability. It does this by supplying a sense of security, satisfaction, inner peace and joy. Moreover, it is usually embodied in symbols which have a motivating, inspiring and cohesive force for a specific community or group of people. With this understanding in our minds, let us

now discuss the worldview of African and Western peoples under various topics.

2.1 Worldview of God

2.1.1. One God

There is only one true God. This is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God - who created heaven and earth, and man in His own image - is the true God. The question is: Did Africans ever have knowledge of God, or the truth of God, or worship God before missionaries came to Africa? Did they have knowledge of this God, the Creator? From the works of many writers, researchers, theologians and anthropologists there is enough evidence that Africans had knowledge of God, the Creator, before having contact with missionaries, but not concerning the whole Truth of God. Malcolm J Mc Veigh (1974:17) clarifies the African view of God in these words: *Edwin Smith is convinced that there is truth in the African concept and that this truth owes its origin to the action of God who revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ. The God of the Judeo - Christian tradition is the same God who has been at work on the African scene, preparing for the coming of His Son.*

The researcher agrees with Smith when he says that this truth in the African concept owes its origin to God who revealed himself fully in Jesus Christ. This truth of God the Father, Creator, Almighty, had been with Africans years before missionaries took the Gospel of Christ to Africa. You find this idea of God among Africans in the way they classify things. For example, when they talk or worship ancestors, God is known to them, or addressed as the Great Ancestor. This Great Ancestor is above all ancestors, is a Creator of all ancestors. And when they are worshipping ancestors, in their minds they are actually worshipping the Great Ancestor (God) through ancestors. This is the understanding and interpretation of a traditional African who had never heard the Gospel of Christ before missionaries came. When they speak of Spirits:

God is addressed as One Great Spirit, which means there is no other spirit equal to this one Great Spirit. All other spirits are under Him. As Evans-Pritchard (1956:1-3) writes: *The Nuer word we translate 'God' is kwoth, Spirit. Nuer also speak of him more definitely as 'kwoth nhia', or 'kwoth a nhial', Spirit of the Sky or Spirit who is in the sky. There are other and lesser spirits which they classify as "kuth nhial", spirits of the sky or of above, and 'kuth piny', Spirits of the earth or of the below.*

This is a good example with which they can try to understand the minds of Africans. In the case of the Nuer people God the Spirit has His own class. The other lesser spirits have their own classes too - the spirits of the sky and spirits of the earth. We can call these angels and human spirits respectively.

Ray (1976:50) says: *Recent studies suggest that African religions are better understood as involving elements of each of these schemes (monotheism - the belief in one God, Polytheism - the belief in many gods, Pantheism - the belief that God is not person but everything) at different theological levels and in different contexts of experience.*

Evans-Pritchard (1956:316) summarizes the Nuer religion of the Nuer people of the Southern Anglo-Egyptian Sudan with these words: *A theistic religion need not be either monotheistic or polytheistic. It may be both. It is a question of level, or situation, of thought rather than of exclusive types of thought. One level Nuer religion may be regarded as monotheistic, at another level as polytheistic, and it can also be regarded at other levels as totemistic or fetishistic. These conceptions of spiritual activity are not incompatible. They are rather different ways of thinking of the numinous (divine) at different levels of experience.*

Africans would buy this statement of Evans-Pritchard because it is in agreement with their understanding of God. Africans speak of God the Creator as One God. But when they praise God, they give Him many praising

names as if they are believing in many gods (polytheism) and yet it is the very one God (monotheism), with many names. In African minds it is correct to say that conceptions of spiritual activity are in harmony, but there are rather different ways of thinking of God at different levels of experience. This will become more clear when we discuss the names of God.

Peel (1968:29) has discovered a similar pattern in Yoruba religion. He says: *Yoruba paganism is very discrete religion, with many varied theological elements (a Supreme Being, subordinate deities, ancestors, sacred kings, all sorts of local spirits and an elaborate system of divination), and the whole system looks different from different social standpoints.*

We need to remember that our aim here is not to prove whether Africans had full knowledge of God, or whole truth of God, but to prove if they had an idea, or knowledge of Him as Supreme Being or Creator. Therefore, in connection with all these quotations above, we can clearly note that in each quotation there is an element of One God, Supreme Being, the High God, or the Great One. This then illustrates that traditional Africans knew and worshipped One God through various mediators. As Ray (1976:51) has correctly put it: One way of resolving this problem is to adopt a perspective which makes the Supreme God the underlying core of the religious system. From this point of view it is possible to unify African religions around the concept of monotheism. And he continues to say that this interpretation was first proposed by Father Schmidt, who wished to prove that monotheism was the earliest form of religion. In his view, Schmidt in Ray (1976:51) says that the polytheistic gods were nothing but functional 'differentiations' which split off from the original supreme God. This interpretation was adopted by Evans-Pitchard (1956:48-52) who regarded Nuer divinities as 'hypostases' of modes and attributes of a single God (kwoth). This view has also been adopted by contemporary African theologians, as Idowu and Mbiti in Ray (1976:51-52) are quoted: *Professor Idowu believes that Yoruba religion is best regarded as a 'Diffused Monotheism' while Dr Mbiti finds that African divinities often stand*

for this (the Supreme Being's) activities or manifestations ... as personifications.

It is, however, a question whether we can compare or identify the Supreme Being (God) concept of the African (or any other people) with God the Father of Jesus Christ. It remains a deep theological question.

But from all this evidence, one would confidently conclude that Africans with the general revelation they had, knew the true God, and were religious peoples before missionaries came. But some European and Western peoples didn't and do not believe this. Hence Mc Veigh (1974:24) challenges them: that "the Africans were and are a deeply religious people"... And he goes on to say that Christianity did not identify God for the Africans. The Africans had already identified Him. What Christianity did, was to clarify the African view of God, and this was done by making known to Africa God's own self revalation in Jesus Christ. The researcher agrees with Mc Veigh that the African had an idea of the true God; he had identified Him, but what he lacked was clarity concerning this God. This is like the story of the people of Athens (Acts 17:22-24).

Indeed Sawyer (1970:3-4) confirms this statement with these words: *One can not but be impressed by the fact that among all the tribes which have been studied, there is always some reference to God as the centre of the Supreme Authority which controls the world. He goes on to say that all the various tribes possess a name for God, for example Ngewo, among the Mende of Sierra Leone; Olorun, among the Yoruba of Nigeria; Leza, among the Tonga of Central Africa; Mawu, among the Ewe of Ghana and Tongoland; Nyame, among the Akan of Ghana; Nzambi, among the people of the lower Congo.*

And van der Merwe (1957:5,13) speaks of God being *Mwari, among Shona of Zimbabwe; Mulungu, among the Nyanja/Chewa-speaking peoples of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique.*

Furthermore Mitchell (1977:23-24) says that every African people has a belief in a Supreme Being which is central to its religion. The Ibo of Nigeria call him Chukwu; the Ila and Bemba of Zambia call him Leza; the Nuer of Sudan call him Kwoth... Although this Supreme Being is known by many names, the qualities attributed to him by the various peoples are quite similar. He sums up that the common elements in the following qualities of God, taken from a number of different African religions, are:

God is All-powerful

God is the Creator

God is the Giver of rain and sunshine

God is the Owner of all things

God is the One who has one power

God is the God of the world

God is the One who began the forest

God is One who does what no other can do

God is the One who bends down even Kings.

In spite of all these factors and knowledge of God achieved by Africans, some early missionaries, who were looking for a church building as a sign for Christianity, and by not finding such structures, made the erroneous conclusion that Africans were not religious (Smith (1946:101) admits that this was a wrong conclusion missionaries made Smith (1946:101). *"Many early missionaries were sadly disappointed by this want of external evidence of religion; too often they jumped to the conclusion that Africans had no religion to speak of, that there was no prepared soil for the seed of the Gospel... The Gospel has a prodigious task before it in Africa. It finds nothing in the heathen systems into which to engraft itself... To subvert and supplant (uproot) is its mission.*

This attitude of the missionaries was bad and destructive. It was destructive because it destroyed both African good values together with bad ones. And to

say Africans were not religious, shows how much more missionaries had to learn about African culture, language and thinking in order to understand them better. It also shows lack of appreciation.

However, to a few Westerners who took trouble to learn and to understand Africans well, like Smith, there was no doubt that Africans were and are religious people. As Smith (1946:101) cements: *And yet, as you get to know the Africans, you find religion everywhere; not as an organized cult separable from the rest of their life, but as part and parcel of it, all pervasive, motivating, controlling, guiding, strengthening.*

If African religions offered all these services to their peoples, how can one heartily accept that Africans were not religious? We note here that Westerners wanted to show their superiority over Africans. They wanted to plant their culture together with the Gospel of Christ in African minds. They succeeded in imposing their culture upon Africans because Africans were hungry for the Gospel of Christ; and when they received the Western culture together with the Gospel, they thought it was all the Gospel of Christ. Yes, that time we were children, we received the Gospel as children, we lived with it as children, and we thought like children. But now we are grown ups, we think like mature Christians. Therefore, we need to re-examine our Christianity closely and carefully. We need to find out if there are any Western cultural elements in it which do not help us, so that we can eliminate them, because they are not the Gospel of Christ. More-over, their culture does not fit the African pattern of worship. For these reasons, it is necessary to have a pattern which will suit Africans in their way of worship. One of the ways of doing this, is by preparing and delivering sermons in African context. We shall discuss this later when discussing the preparation of a sermon.

2.1.2 Names of God

It has now been proved that all the African tribes studied at least have a name for God. Under this point we want to show the readers that according to

African culture and way of thinking, God cannot have only one name. This is just not possible because of different reasons:

One needs to remember that most of the African names have meanings. Thus sometimes a name is given to praise, to show power or authority; others give names to keep family history, to express happiness or sorrow. When for example, you find a child in the family among Nyanja/Chewa-speaking people, named "Misozi" or "Mala", it means that in that family one of the close members died soon before or after that child was born. Then, for the sake of remembering his/her death, they name that child "Misozi" or "Mala". "Misozi" - means mourning, weeping or tears. So it reminds the family members that around that period (month or year) when the child was born, they were mourning for their dear one. "Marah" means sorrowful one, which means this family was sorrowful when this child was born because they had lost one of their close members. This is in agreement with the Old Testament in which we read that Naomi refused to be called Naomi but preferred Marah because she had lost her husband and two sons in a foreign country (Ruth 1:1-22). Still more, some give names to keep the event alive, as in the case of the family of Rev Yobe Yesaya Kalilani Banda of Zambia, who has a child named Zambia. When the researcher interviewed him and asked why that child was given that name, the Rev Banda told the researcher that he was born on the 24th October 1964, the same date when the Country Zambia received her independence. In this way Rev Banda's family keeps the event of Zambia's independence alive by naming their child Zambia. The name may mean that Zambians are free from Colonists, while the Banda family was freed from the worries of an expecting mother. In short, we could say African names are given to people with different purposes e.g. to maintain family history, or to express happiness or sorrow, and sometimes to keep the event alive. In other words, the name becomes a symbol.

For these reasons, many Africans have more than one name. And since God is understood and received in the culture of the particular group or

community, then, this applies to God as well. Sawyerr (1970:5) reminds us that "we must also add here that among several (African) tribes there is more than one name for God: The Mende call God, "Ngewo" - which means the Chief, the One Chief, the Great Chief, but they also call Him "Leve" meaning High God; Akan call Him "Nyame", "Nyankopon" and "O do man", and the Yoruba (Sawyerr 1970:55-6), call Him "Olodumare" (Creator, Maker, Giver of life, "Olorun" (the Great Ancestor, Sovereign Ruler who is in heaven); "Olorun-Baba" (God is Father). The Nyanja/Chewa-speaking people of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique call Him "Mulungu" (Creator), "Mphamba" (Almighty God), "Nyamalenga" or "Mlengi" (God is the Creator), (Van der Merwe 1957:13-14). In the same book Van der Merwe (1957:5-9) points out that the Shona people of Zimbabwe call Him "Mwari" (Supreme Being, above and indifferent to all earthly powers);

"Nyandenga" (The Great one of the Sky);

"Wo kumusoro" (It describes the Supreme Being as the God of the Sky, the controller of the forces of nature in heaven and on earth).

"Chipindikure" (God is the one, who can turn things upside-down and "Marure" means God the Creator. There are many African tribes with more than one name for God, but we cannot list them all. These few mentioned above, sufficiently illustrate that God is known to Africans as one with many names.

This puzzles Westerners. For this reason they ask: Do Africans worship one God? If so, why do they have many names for God? Some even jump to the conclusion that Africans have a polytheist religion (belief in or worship of many gods). Such a conclusion is wrong; it is a misunderstanding the African minds. It is therefore, important to clear up the misunderstanding between Westerners and Africans. Thus answering these questions will help the Westerners to read the minds of the Africans correctly. The answer to these questions is three-fold:

- 1 Africans are used to giving or receiving many names, without changing their own identity. So when they call God by many names, they have no idea of having many gods as the Westerners think. For an African, he has one God in mind to whom all these names are linked.

- 2 Africans give praising names to God. Since God has done a lot of good things for which He deserves to be praised, we cannot wonder why Africans address Him with many names; it is because of the same reason. An African calls God by His action. The Nyanja/Chewa speaking people, for example, call God: "Mlengi" because He creates; "Chiuta" because He gives rains; "Ambuye" because He is LORD or the Owner of all things including human beings; and they also call Him "Mphulumutsi" because He saves (Saviour).

- 3 We must also not forget that God of the Bible is also addressed with three names because of the way He has revealed Himself to us. We speak of God the Father as the Creator of all things; we address God the Son as Saviour because He died for our sins; He saved us from our sins (Matt 1:21); and we speak of God the Holy Spirit as a Comfortor, Advocate, Counsellor because He guides us (John 16:7-13). But this does not mean that we are worshipping three gods, NO! In the same way, Africans have many names for God but are addressing only one Living God.

Mitchell (1977:23) concludes that although this Supreme Being is known by many names, the qualities attributed to him by the various peoples are quite similar. Thus there are many names that speak of but one God. The Jews also have more than one name for God - Yaweh, Elohim, Adonai.

Therefore between African religion and Christianity there is no difference because both worship one God. Many names for God given by the Africans must not mislead the Westerner to think that Africans are worshipping many

gods because these names all refer to one Living God, who is known to them through his actions. So the only difference is that Christianity has one name for God while African religion and Jewish religion have more than one name.

What has this to do with preaching? African names for God are important for any preacher who preaches to African peoples for communication purposes. He will communicate the Gospel of Christ to them effectively by using the terminology which is being practiced by them. Since names have meaning according to African context, it would be appropriate to use a suitable name to clarify what the preacher is talking about. For example, if he is preaching on Creation, he would use names for God like - "Mulungu", "Nyamalenga", "Mlengi" for the Nyanja/ Chewa-speaking people. But to use the name "Mphulumutsi" may not be appropriate, as "Mphulumutsi" does not create but saves people. Therefore it is necessary for African preachers to know various names for God known and practiced by that community or group of people he serves so that he can use the right name for God for the right action God tends to do or did. Let us now move to the point of how Africans approach God.

2.1.3 African approach to God

There are two words which need to be well understood under this topic. These words are "transcendence" and "immanence" of God. Transcendence of God means remoteness of God from people; and immanence of God means the nearness of God to his people. To understand the African minds and interpretation of these words, one must understand the African cultural and social systems. Many Western writers, lacking knowledge, have constantly dwelled on the note that for African peoples, "God is too remote" and "excluded from human affairs". Mbiti (1970:12) says: *This assertion is false.*

And he goes on to say that the transcendence of God is a difficult attribute to grasp, and one which must be balanced with God's immanence. According to Mbiti, the two attributes though paradoxically are complementary: God is "far" (transcendent), and men cannot reach him; but God is also "near" (immanent), and he comes close to men. This could be taken as a general distinction, he concludes. The researcher disagrees with many Western writers who say that for African people, God is too remote and excluded from human affairs, because the African believes God is always with him through the mediator.

We should regard the African approach to God on the basis of the responsibility for the day to day factors of life. It is in this context that we can read African minds toward God. Sawyerr (1970:6) remarks that God is thought to be far removed from the affairs of people: And yet, men do always appeal to Him in times of crisis. Mbiti (1970:11) says the same: *The Gikuyu (of Kenya) turn to God in times of great crises such as epidemic, droughts, calamities and wars.*

Furthermore, Sawyerr (1970:7-8) has correctly put it that in connection with this, we have to bear in mind that, in African communities, there is an obvious practice of rule by the chiefs or kings; and that these chiefs are not easily approachable. But they are reached only through intermediaries. Thus for all practical purposes the chief is distant from ordinary people. He is addressed through the intermediary and in turn, he addresses his petitioners only through his intermediary. Something significant which Western people must understand is this: even when the chief is present, a petitioner would request the intermediary to pass his/her appeal to the chief by using words like these: "Please tell the chief..." This may sound strange to the ears of the foreigners, but it is the truth. And one does not speak loudly in the presence of the chief, rather he speaks softly as a person who prays to God secretly (Matt 6:6).

Another side of the coin is that the chief is like a saviour to those who are endangered of being killed by people. Sawyerr (1970:7) writes: *The chief is, however, the one person to whom any of his subjects may run in times of danger and under whose protection they may find a safe sanctuary.*

This is true. The researcher agrees with Sawyer that the African approaches the chief in two ways.

This means that the chief who is not approachable by his subjects in a normal situation, becomes approachable in times of a crises. This is the same method traditional Africans use to approach God. They approach God as well as chiefs in two ways - indirectly through mediators and directly to them in time of a crises. If we can understand this, we are beginning to read the minds of Africans.

However, for modern men and women to understand better, we have to modernize this idea for them. And Sawyerr (1970:8) has modernized it for us with these words: *Anyone in a position of leadership realises how wearying it is to have to answer personally to all the calls on one's time and attention*

As in the case of Moses (Exodus 18:13-27). He goes on to say: *Today we resort to personal secretaries who serve as a butter between us and various callers and petitioners. African chiefs discovered a solution to this problem several centuries ago and introduced in the intermediaries we have described above.*

Here the personal secretary acts as a mediator between the officer and the caller. Should Africans not feel proud that they discovered a very effective method of communication before missionaries came? This is the traditional African way of thinking about approaching God, and it was not taught by Westerners. The Westerners must learn from Africans that their approach to God is hierarchical. To illustrate this point, see the chart for the African

approach to God (Smith, 1950) influenced by African cultural and social systems; together with other religions, at the end of this subheading.

What has this approach to do with preaching? It is important for the preacher to know and understand the culture of the people, the social systems, the language and the communication systems of that group of people he serves, so that he can correctly, effectively, respectfully present the Gospel of Christ to them without creating any hindrances. In Zambia, it is told that one of the earliest missionaries in the Eastern Province was stopped by the chief, because he had just gone straight to the people to preach without first getting permission from the chief or visiting the chief Mpezeni. This illustrates how important it is to know the social and cultural system of communication of the people the preacher is dealing with. Another reason is to understand how much these social and cultural systems have influenced the thinking of the communion with God. Once we understand this, we shall be in a better position to communicate the Gospel to them with less or without obstacles. There are some people who ask: Why should we learn traditional religions? What value can they offer to preaching? Such people can find an answer from what we have discussed above. Evans-Pritchard (1965:1) has added that, "we need to know that some of the most important political, social, and moral philosophers from Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau to Herbert Spence have considered the facts of primitive life to have great significance for the understanding of social life in general". So as a preacher, you need to understand your listeners, and to do that you must know their social life and their social system; traditional religion embraces these.

We have discovered that the African approach to God is mainly influenced by their cultural and social systems. Their mode of approach to God is hierarchical. And this approach is also adopted by other religions like the Jewish religion and even the Christian religion. The difference which there is between Christian religion and other religions is that in Christian religion there is only one Mediator, while in other religions they have many mediators

between God and themselves. Why is there this significant difference between Christianity and other religions? The answer is that Christianity has received the true revelation that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator and this message must be proclaimed to the traditional African with his expectancy of a Mediator to come. All three religions mentioned, however vow on God. And God is given the highest position in their structures. Therefore the message to these religions with many mediators is: the time has come for them too to embrace one Mediator appointed by God - Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5). This approach would be very effective to an African, for it means taking him from where he is and with the knowledge he has, to the new place and feeding him with new knowledge - the Word of God.

**THE CHART FOR COMMUNICATION IN THE AFRICAN SOCIETIES AND
APPROACH TO GOD IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER RELIGIONS**

1	2	3	4
African Social Systems 	Traditional African religion before missionaries	Jewish religion	Christian religion
• Paramount Chief/king 	GOD 	GOD 	GOD
• Chiefs 	Ancestral spirits (1 Sam 28:11-19) 	High Priest (Heb 15:1-4) 	Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5-6) (1 Heb 5:1-4) (John 14:6)
• Headmen 	Diviner 	Priests (Numbers 15:28-29) 	
 	Prophets 	Prophets (seer) (1 Sam 9:9) 	Holy Spirit with Christians (1 Cor 3:16)
• Ordinary People 	People 	Ordinary Israelites 	

Smith (1950:67, 68, 111) says that, *No doubt these conceptions of chieftainship have influenced the thinking of the people about God and the ancestral spirits.*

KEY

- 1 ___ It is a command from high authority. That is why the line is solid to show that it is a command to be accepted by subjects without question.

- 2 _____ It is a request coming from subjects to high authority. The line is dotted to show that it is a request, not command. It can be accepted or rejected by high authority.
- 3 Scriptures: Biblical references are given to justify the position and duties.
- 4 Vertical line must be accepted for this purpose only, for theologically we believe that God the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit are the same.

This chart shows that in each group there is a hierarchy.

The communication approach is a hierarchical one.

The low positions are more approachable than the high ones.

Similarities:

- 1 Paramount Chief can only be approached through intermediaries. In group 2 and 3, God is approachable through many mediators; but in group 4, God is approached only through One Mediator (JC) 1 Tim 2:5; Joh 14:6).
- 2 In all four groups, the high authorities control the low authorities. In group four we hear Jesus Christ being sent by God the Father to do work on earth (John 17:3-4; 3:16-17).

Chiefs carry orders from Paramount Chief for their people to the headmen. Then, the headmen carry these very orders to the ordinary people in their villages. In the same way, prophets carried God's message to the Israelites and Jesus Christ brought the message of salvation from God the Father to the people. This communication is, however, a two way communication. God

commanded his people through the prophets and Israel made requests to God through the prophets. But these days He commands us through the Holy Spirit who lives in us as believers.

This means that God today speaks to the people through his written Word and Spoken Word. Thus when one reads the Word of God, God speaks to him as the Holy Spirit witnesses through the Word. Also God speaks to people through the preacher as he preaches the Word to them.

Preaching purposes:

- 1 One must not condemn Africans that they are not religious, but teach them that the mediators they have between God and themselves, are pointing to Jesus Christ the only and True Mediator. Since Jesus has already come, the traditional African must now get rid of all the other mediators.
- 2 Although God is approachable through Jesus Christ (John 14:6), He is also approached directly by each Christian every day, hour, minute or second through prayer. God is everywhere.
- 3 It should be known to Africans that although Paramount Chief is reached through his (mediators) intermediaries, he is also directly approachable by his ordinary people in time of crisis.

2.1.4 Concept of Christianity

The African concept of Christianity differs from the concept of some Westerners about Christianity. It differs from the Western concept because Africans believe in a holistic Christianity while the Western practice a dualist i.e. Christianity. By holistic Christianity, we mean that Christianity must address all areas of human life activities - personal life, family life, business,

politics, spiritual, health and so on, not just practicing Christianity in the Church on Sunday, and behave like a secular person the rest of the week.

Although Calvin offered a theological foundation for the understanding of the origin and nature of the state, of man's social and economic activities and for the nature and purpose of the educational process-holistic Christianity, some Westerners are still practicing dualistic Christianity and some missionaries have planted this dualistic Christianity among Africans. Dualistic Christianity which some Westerners practice, has two elements: sacred and secular elements; or holy part and material part of human life. They separate the two elements and teach that Christianity must be treated separately from all other human material things. They say: "do not mix Christianity with business". This is a saying which is very common among Westerners and among some Africans who have been westernized. And Van der Walt (1994:20) says: *It was exactly this kind of pietist, world-negating Christianity that missionaries mostly brought to Africa.*

According to Ruch (1976:103) *African philosophy is a lived philosophy, rather than a reflected one. It does not separate life from thought, reality from concepts, subject from object. It does not separate the sacred from the profane, religion from every day life. By and large it is a more harmonious and coherent life than that of Western man who will speculate one way and live another; who will be a Christian on Sunday and a pagan in his business life on week-days.*

Yes, sometimes Africans hear Westerners talking about not bringing Christianity into business or friendship into business; because business is business. And some missionaries in Zambia used to teach the African Christian that his riches are in heaven, which means that even if he is poor here on earth, he must not be worried because he will be rich in heaven. Such teaching would be rejected by John Calvin who believed in holistic Christianity. For Calvin (1989) teaches that a Christian begins enjoying God's

blessing here on earth, and God is involved in all his life activities. The concept which the African practiced before missionaries came, was holistic.

Thus when the African goes hunting, he prays; if he builds a new village he prays; when planting seeds he prays and if he needs a child he prays because he believes that God is involved in his whole life.

The problem is that when the Westerner came to Africa with the Gospel of Christ, which of course was influenced by their culture, they planted it on African soil together with their culture which does not fit the African pattern. They did this knowingly or unknowingly as if it was all the Gospel of Christ. Then the problem arose: the Africans were confused. They did not know what had to be dropped, whether they had to drop holistic Christianity and adopt the dualistic Christianity of the Westerners, or stick to their holistic Christianity and reject the dualistic entirely, or to embrace both. Not knowing that it was not all the Gospel of Christ, Africans decided to drop holistic Christianity and adopt the dualistic Christianity of the Western people. For they believed that it was all the Gospel of Christ. As Van der Walt (1994:14) has observed: *The problem was that neither the missionaries nor the recipients of their message were aware, or at least aware enough of the difference between Gospel and its cultural 'clothes'. The result was that the missionaries viewed the cultural form in which they presented the Gospel as a real part of the Gospel. And the Africans thought that they should accept western cultural forms to enable them to be genuine Christians!*

This is one of the dilemmas which African preachers need to note. The Western cultural forms are well illustrated by giving Africans new names during baptism as in the case of the Nigerians. Idow (1965:4) remarks: *They were introduced to Christianity and taught Christian truths; but Christianity as they learnt it was heavily tinged with Western culture. At their baptism they were given European or Biblical names; in their dress and manners, their*

models were their European benefactors. The ways of the Europeans naturally appealed to them.

We have observed here that Westerners brought Christianity to the Africans to suit their own interests, not Africans' interests. We can ask ourselves: How did Jesus act when he took the Gospel to the people? Whose interest was the most important, His or those of the people? The Bible is full of witness that when Jesus took the Gospel to the people, His focus was on peoples' interests and not His. Since Jesus Christ is our teacher, master, example and Lord, we need to do the same as He did. Therefore, we need to take the Gospel to Africans for the sake of African interests. And to do this, we need to prepare and deliver sermons in African context. We shall discuss this in detail when we discuss preparation.

Moreover, Ray (1976:193) has even extended the Western cultural forms on Africans. He says that the establishment of Christianity in Africa before the nineteenth century, went hand in hand with the process of acculturation to the colonistic order. He goes on to say: *Christian missionaries may have believed they were merely converting Africans to the Gospel of Christ, but in fact they were converting them to the whole range of Western values - including literacy, medicine, clerical and industrial education, town life, wage-earning and social mobility - as well as installing in them a distaste for traditional African values.*

The last part of this quotation is very important for our consideration. Many Africans today have turned against their own traditional values and adopted the Western values. If the African talks of keeping African traditional values, some fellow Africans think he is not educated; when he talks of African theology, they say he wants to water down the biblical truth or to heathenize the truth; when he wants to behave like an African, they tell him he is left behind. All this is happening due to distaste for traditional African values installed in them by Western people at the beginning.

The Africans must not blame them, but what they need now is to change the pattern or to correct the situation because they are now mature enough to see and to understand that what they first received is not all Gospel of Christ, but something mixed with Western culture. Since no culture in the world is perfect, and no culture in the world is superior to other cultures, to lead one into Christianity, as the truth is only found in Scriptures, an African may have the right to eliminate any western cultural form which does not communicate the Gospel of Christ to the African community to address their situation and their needs.

We are aware that the Gospel is never received in the vacuum of people's culture. The culture in which the Gospel must be received, is that of the recipients and not of the preacher, especially if he is a foreigner to that culture. But the Westerners did the opposite to the Africans. As we have already seen, they wanted their interests to be met. Hence the need for preparing and delivering a sermon according to an African context is of crucial importance so that the Gospel should be received in an African cultural pattern and no more in foreign cultural forms which do not fit their pattern.

African understanding of Christianity is agreeable with the biblical message of Christianity. Van der Walt (1994:19) writes: *The Biblical message is that the whole of life is religion. The religious direction of the heart of man (positive in obedience to God, or negative in disobedience away from God...) determines his whole life, everything that he does or says.*

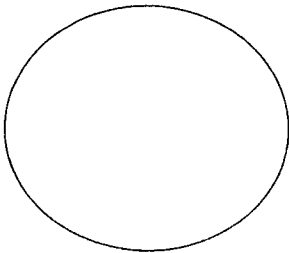
This means that the whole life is religion, service to God, or idolatry in case of an unbeliever in God. The Gospel is not only something spiritual for Sundays only, but it is the full Gospel touching the fields of labour, commerce, political and social relations and all that man does. This is the biblical interpretation of Christianity. For Africans this biblical concept of Christianity can easily be adopted, but for the Westerners it would be difficult because they believe in a

dualistic Christianity. According to the Western concept only the top part of man is sacred and the lower part is profane. That is why their preaching mostly feeds the minds and have less if not no concern for the heart of the listeners. African preachers need to feed their listeners in totality: minds, heart and soul, because their purpose is to address the whole person. The Gospel of Jesus Christ has power to change and renew the whole life as we read in 2 Cor 5:17: *If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.*

Diagrammatically here are the concepts of Christianity of the three categories mentioned above.

**TRADITIONAL
AFRICAN CONCEPT**

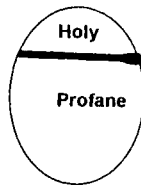
1



Holistic Religion

**WESTERN
CONCEPT**

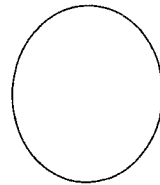
2



Dualistic Christianity

**BIBLICAL
CONCEPT**

3



Holistic Christianity

The Liberating Message 1994, pp 19, 20, 21.

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| • Holistic religion | Dualist Christianity | Holistic Christianity |
| • Religion (Christianity) must control the whole personal life and what he does does or says. | Christianity must control only the top part. | Christianity must control everything |
| • (2 Cor 5:17) | (None) | (1 Peter 1:15-16) |

As we have seen in the diagrammes, it is a Western concept of Christianity which was planted on African soil. Such a Christianity is incomplete because of the following reasons: *It is a Christianity which is locked up six days a week, meeting only for two hours on Sundays and perhaps once during the week. It is Christianity which is active in a Church building. The rest of the week is empty.* (Mbiti 1969:233).

And he goes on to say: *Africans who traditionally don't know religious vacuum, feel that they don't get enough religion from this type of Christianity; since it does not fill up their whole life and their understanding of the universe. Furthermore, African Christians often feel complete foreigners in mission Churches.*

This speaks for itself how many Western cultural forms have been planted into African soil, and how uncomfortable they make Africans feel.

What does this concept of Christianity contribute to the ministry of preaching? This is important to the preacher. The preacher must know his listeners better - what are their strengths and weaknesses, havings and lackings so that he can help them well. In this case, we have discovered that Africans are not satisfied with Western and European cultural forms which are imposed upon them. They do not fit their African way of doing things. Hence they are always foreigners in this western Christianity. Unless something is done, Africans will remain foreigners to this type of Christianity. Therefore, it becomes the responsibility of an African preacher to find a suitable pattern of worshipping God which will satisfy their listeners - in this case, Africans and be to the honour of God. One of the solutions as stated previously, is preparing sermons with the African context in mind. Thus having Africans in mind, what they are undergoing in the continent, in the country, in the community; and to deliver it in an African pattern, but not in a Western pattern which enslaves them.

2.2 Worldview of occults

2.2.1 Introduction

Scripture: (Acts 8:9-13; 19:17-20)

The magical powers or sorcery practices were and are being carried out by peoples all over the world. In the book of Acts 8:9-13 we read: *Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low gave him their attention and exclaimed. 'This man is the divine power known as the Great Power'. They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw (NIV).*

Historical records show that witches and sorcerers were practising their magic in Europe. Lucy Mair (1969:16) confirms that *It may be too late now to recreate from historical records a detailed picture of a community in Europe where the belief in witchcraft was an active force: to trace out the relationship between accused witches and their accusers..*

This is evidence that witchcraft existed in Europe and that the community is knowledgeable about witchcraft.

The universal image of the witch is that witches have two major themes: the greed motif and the sexual motif combined. And there is a basic outfit of witch activities ascribed to all, or nearly all witches. As Mair (1969:37) says: *The Novaho Indians hold, in common with many African peoples and with Roman and medieval Europe, that witches can turn themselves into animals (werewolves) and that they gather together to feast on corpses.*

We need to take note that this is a universal image of the witch known by Indians, Europeans and Africans. This is an important point to observe because when it comes to knowing what the concept of witchcraft for Africans and westerners is, it will help us greatly. However, there is also a local witch image or images which can be known only to a certain community. For example the people of lower Zaire have this image. Wyalt Mac Gaffey (1986:163) says: *Witches leave their bodies behind as a mere shell when they go about at night, assuming the bodies of fierce animals, mosquitoes, or apparently harmless people, so that they will not be recognized. Husband used to be advised that one anxious to find out if his wife is a witch should light a fire under the bed while she sleeps; if she does not wake up, her soul is absent and up to no good.*

This is a local image, but we can still see the animal image being reflected in this also, showing its universality.

One may ask: Who is a witch, or what is witchcraft, or what do witches look like? To answer these questions, we are not going to give a detailed definition because most of this has already been explained in detail in chapter one under the subject "terms" used in this study. However, to move into our present discussion, it is necessary to give Mitchell's short definition (1977:67): *The witch is an individual who is believed to have an inherent power to harm other people.*

He continues to say: *Witches perform their evil deeds at night. Many Africans believe that witches use 'familiars', or animals which may at times take the form of human beings.*

It is believed that true sorcerers and witches are always malicious. They cause sickness and death in their victims for no valid reasons; they are believed to act out of pure unjustified malice. In short this is the definition of witchcraft. Having heard the biblical and historical definition of witchcraft, let

us now move into the concept of witchcraft. What do Westerners and Africans understand about witchcraft?

2.2.2 Western Concept of Witchcraft

The Western person does not really believe that witchcraft exists in the world. According to the Western understanding of witchcraft, they say it is a supposed communication between minds; something which is suggested and then, it is accomplished psychologically. Mc Veigh (1974:20) wrote: *The essence of witchcraft is its action at a distance, and this is explained by the modern scientific concepts of telepathy, telesthesia and telergy. By means of telepathy, the mind communication sets up auto-suggestion which in turn accomplishes psycho-logically the desired evil deed.*

But Africans do not explain the phenomenon in their terms. For them the medicine used has the property to manipulate "ubwanga" or "wanga", or "makhwala", or "umuti" in order to produce the desired effect. Smith (1950): concludes: *The intuitions of the savage are the reasoned convictions of modern science.*

This shows that Smith believes that witchcraft is a reality. This idea is rejected by Westerners. The researcher agrees with Smith that witchcraft is a reality and is practiced by many Africans and even some Westerners. He is, however, not afraid of it because Christ has set him free. Because in all these things he is more than a conqueror through Jesus who loved him (Romans 8:37-8).

We Africans reject the Western explanation of witchcraft which bases its explanation on psychological action only without adding the magical power or the use of magical medicine.

Furthermore, Smith (1920:98) says that: *I la - people also believe in telepathy, and telesthesia and telergy.*

The telepathy is perhaps accepted by most people these days, and we have only to go a step further and accept that one mind can affect another over a distance and we have all that is necessary to support belief in witchcraft. If not that far, Smith continues to be apologetic that to simply acknowledge as a fact that there is telepathic communication of mind with mind, we grant what is necessary: For if I can convey to another mind suggestion of sickness and death that is quite sufficient evidence that it is a reality. The suggestion from without will set up auto-suggestion, and the man will persuade himself that he is going to die, and he will die. In all this, Smith is trying to prove to his fellow Westerners that witchcraft is a reality. Mc Veigh (1974:19) says: *Smith believes that witchcraft is a reality.*

Even worse is the summary of witchcraft made by Monica Wilson. Wilson in Mair (1969:33) summarizes witchcraft like this: *I see witch beliefs as the standardized night-mares of a group*, and she suggested that further research should throw light on the reasons for different kinds of nightmares. The analogy of the nightmare describes the kind of terror that is not everpresent, but becomes conscious when people are anxious or distressed. Africans reject Wilson's explanation, it is far from the true picture of witchcraft. Witchcraft is real and we are now going to prove this under the African concept.

2.2.3 African Concept of Witchcraft

Africans believe that witchcraft is a reality. They don't agree with the Western peoples who think it does not exist. There are many reasons to prove this but the few major ones have been selected for this purpose. Mitchell (1977:70) observes that: *In traditional Africa no one questions the fact that witches really exist. Children learn about witches at early age. They hear their parents refer*

to them indirectly; they see the fear in peoples' faces when certain people are mentioned; and they see people suffering from sickness and, at times, die for no discernible cause other than witchcraft.

This is empirical proof. From generation to generation it has been taught that witchcraft is a reality and its activities are seen working among people through generations.

Mitchell (1977:71) learned that in a situation of uncertainty, social psychologists have shown that people are strongly influenced by the beliefs of others. The Westerner himself probably knows how hard it is to go against the opinion of his crowd. Mitchell says that after having lived in Nigeria for some months among people who believed in evil powers, he, himself could feel the power of those widespread beliefs working against his belief that a combination of chance and natural forces cause sickness and death. This was only months and not years, but he was convinced that not only chance causes sickness and death but also natural forces. Therefore Westerners deny the existence of witchcraft because they are talking from a distance. If they were living in the situation where witches and sorcerers are practicing their magical powers, they would admit that they do exist, just as Mitchell did in a few months time. We can conclude that some Westerners deny the existence of witchcraft because they are talking about it from a distance. What happened to Mitchell is a situational experience that proves witchcraft a reality. To concretize this, here are some stories gathered from three different countries.

- 1 Reverend Enerst E Tembo of Malawi tells a story to a preaching class at Justo Mwale theological College in 1973 of a man who went to South Africa to work in the mines on a "Wayenela ticket". This man left his wife in Malawi without her being pregnant. While working in South Africa, his wife became pregnant. The husband's relatives accused her for not being faithful, so they wanted to divorce her in the absence of

her husband. The wife told the relatives that she was impregnated by her husband and that she had known no other man. The relatives became angry with her "How is it possible that a man who is very far away in South Africa can impregnate you?" The wife told them: "my husband comes at night to sleep with me". Then, they told her to report to them when he came. One night he came, and she went to report it to them. On entering the house they met each other at the door and he immediately sat on his tortoise which he was using as his airplane, and flew to Johannesburg in South Africa. There's a proverb which says: "send a thief to catch a thief". So what happened when he went for the second time? The relatives brought a sorcerer, a magic person along. This sorcerer performed his magic and sprinkled something over the tortoise which was left at the rubbish pit, before they went into the house. The wife told him that relatives had come to see him. The husband performed his magic to fly but the airplane did not fly. So he was caught to be the one who had impregnated his wife. The relatives had no more words to accuse the wife because they themselves had proved that what she had said was true. The man did not go back to South Africa but remained in Malawi with his wife.

Can we call this a nightmare as Monica Wilson describes it, or can we call it "telepathy" as scientists do? Absolutely not.

- 2 The second story was told by mr Sitafu Phiri of Samuel village, Chief Mbang'ombe of Katete District, Zambia. He tells the story: In the early 40s Roman Catholic priests from Vulamukoko Station used to go and conduct sacraments to Mkwapatila Village. The priest used to go on Friday and stayed there until Sunday. Mkwapatila was the biggest village and it was dominated by Roman Catholic members. There is this old saying: "Not all days are good". So it happened that one night, things did not go well with the white priest. During the night witches came and took him to the field while dressed in his priestly robe. He

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laboured in the field all that night and they brought him back to his bed without him knowing. When he got up in the morning he was feeling very tired without knowing what had happened to him. But when he got out of the bed, he was surprised to find that he was in a robe and it was red with mud. The missionary priest was shocked, disturbed and became furious. He then cancelled the whole programme. Church members were told that no priest would come to them any more and the village was cursed. This village is now in ruins.

Can we wholeheartedly say the priest had a nightmare that night? The researcher doubts it. Why then was he feeling tired, and where did he get the mud from if that was not reality? The researcher is positive that the opposite is the answer. The witches used spells to manipulate him.

- 3 The third story comes from the country of South Africa. In this story the wizard has become the master of the hippopotamus in order to ride upon it during the night. It is taken from the book, *The Life of a South African tribe* written by Junod. Junod (1927:73) narrates the story: "A phisa called Shitjobeke from Matloto was called and shown where the hippopotamus used to emerge from the river. He went during the night and saw its master on its back. He told him: 'So it is your hippopotamus which ravages the gardens. Hold it firm! I am going to kill it'. The wizard answered: 'I beseech you, Khosa, do not kill it. I will not come any more to spoil the mealies!' The hunter let him go and went away. Next evening the animal came out again, its master on its back. The hunter possessed a drug by which he could kindle the lights on the back of the hippopotamus. He saw the wizard and said: 'My friend, now hold it fast. I am firing! If you do not hold it I will kill you'. He fired and the master went away. The hunter remained on the spot fearing that the wizard might come back and resuscitate it. Next day he told the chiefs to come and cut it open... They cut off the tail and gave it to him: the hunter uses this as a medicine; he will mix it with other

drugs and this will help him against wizards; they will no longer be able to come to him during the night and make him dream of hippopotami; it will also give him the power of killing other hippopotami..." All these are true stories. They are recorded or orally known by the community around these areas. And here is another interesting story quoted again in Junod (1927:72).

Junod (1927:72) narrates the story: "The wizards put a bit into the mouth of the hippopotamus and climb upon it.. you cannot get the animal unless you first get its master. The 'phisa' knows the wizard because he possesses drugs more powerful than those of the wizard. At Shihahlu there was a hippopotamus which ventured to come out of the river even in daylight; it came on the road and frightened the women passing there who had gone to buy food on account of the famine. They threw away their baskets in fear. The beast used also to go and plunder the fields. The chiefs called a very clever hunter and showed him where the hippopotamus used to come out of the river. This man, who was from the Sihhahlu, swallowed his medicine and put on a great many amulets (timfisa) made of varan skin; he also took his tail, the tail of a young hippopotamus, went during the night to that spot and saw the beast; there was fire on its back; this fire belongs to the wizard...The hunter returned home. On another day he went again and heard a noise in the water. The hippopotamus came out of the river and the hunter saw rings around its ears and bracelets around its legs. He shot it and it died. Then he went to tell the chiefs. They came, and sure enough they found four bracelets on each leg and six on each ear. I saw them myself. It had put on all its ornaments; but it was very thin because it was made to work hard for its master... During the night cries of mourning were heard on the Lombye rivulet. It was the masters of the hippopotamus who were mourning over it, and the next morning we found pieces of the blue cotton print which is used by mourners hanging on the reeds where the hippopotamus had been cut open. These people had put them there to mourn their hippopotamus. As regards the hunter, he was given a reward of £6."

From all these stories we have enough evidence to concretize the reality of witchcraft. Like in the case of the last story, it was a collective effort of chiefs to call a hunter, to show how serious the situation had been. £6 was a lot of money during that time for people to part with. However, this is to demonstrate the importance and the dangerous work the hunter accomplished. In totality it illustrates the reality or power of witchcraft.

Furthermore, the great American scholar Lea, in his *History of the Inquisition*, quoted by Mair (1969:223), tells a story, that could equally well have come from contemporary Africa, of a man whose cattle were dying, and he suspected a woman who was a reputed sorceress. The accused woman said to his wife: "Your husband has done ill in saying that I killed his cattle, and he will find it so before long". And the next night this woman (wife) fell grievously ill, but she recovered when her husband went and threatened the witch. In this case, the sorceress bewitched the wife, but because the husband threatened her, she changed her evil intentions. Africans do act in the same way sometimes, but in most cases it is the task of the witch-finders.

Is there any importance for us as preachers to study witchcraft? Is witchcraft promoted by studying it? Can studying it destroy our Christian faith, or does it make any sense to study it? All these questions are important to ask the preachers as they think about the subject. We are not going to answer each question listed above, but a summary form of answer will do justice to the questions raised.

The witch is an individual who is believed to have power to harm other people and is addicted to doing so. This person is a sinner. He or she is going to perish if he does not repent. And what does Jesus say to such a person? He says: *For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners* (Mat 9:13).

Therefore, if a witch is a sinner and Jesus Christ came for him/her, then a preacher has an obligation to preach to witches. In Acts (19:17-20) we hear

that those who were practicing witchcraft after hearing of and believing in Christ, publicly confessed and burnt their evil tools of sorcery practices.

As far as Christians are concerned, the researcher needs to encourage them. The researcher has to teach them that witches have powers on earth, but God has more power on earth and in heaven; witches have authority over our bodies only and not over our souls, but God has authority over both body and soul. Therefore, we must trust in God who has power over both body and soul; life and death. Jesus says: *Fear the One who destroys both body and soul* (Luke 12:4-5). Therefore, we must not fear witches, but God who has power over body and soul.

Above all, the love of God motivates preachers to do so. As it is written in John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that he gave his Son that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have ever lasting life.*

Conclusion:

The idea and practice of the peoples who today take the existence of witchcraft for granted are all over the world. Witchcraft is not believed in by only the unlearned peoples as Westerners believe. It affects all human beings, learned as well as unlearned peoples; both high and low peoples are convinced (Acts 8:9-10). It is written that Simon who practiced sorcery in the city was feared by both high and low peoples. He boasted that he was someone great and all the people, both high and low gave him attention and exclaimed, This man is the divine power known as the great power. It affects even ministers of the Word. Mac Farlane in (Mair 1969:192) quotes from a pamphlet of the day the story of an Essex clergyman whose wife was dying and thought she knew the neighbour who had bewitched her. At first he refused to believe her for her want of faith and admonished her to trust God only, but finally he openly confronted the supposed witch and threatened, if

his wife did not get better at once, not only to beat her up but have her hanged.

The ideas and practices of witchcraft of people today exist all over the world, though some Western people deny the existence thereof. This is because they have changed its title while its ideas and practices are still with them. In America, for example, witchcraft has been replaced with Satanic worshippers or Satanic Churches. These people do all the evil things witches do. When the researcher was in America for five years the researcher reads another book which teaches about the Satanic Church. In that book it is written that Satanists conduct their sacraments on a naked woman used as a table; and wine is the blood of a human being. Pictures of these actions are shown in the book. It is a notorious book to read.

In Europe witchcraft has been, and still is a crime. Mair (1969:192) confirms this: *Yet another difference lies in the fact that from Sixteenth Century onwards, witchcraft in England was a crime defined by law, and tried in courts of law with formalised procedures.*

Therefore, for the European and Western people to say witchcraft does not exist, when its ideas and practices are still with them, it is not being realistic. To accept that they are calling it by another name, we may understand it.

2.3 Different worldviews on dreams

2.3.1 Introduction

Scripture: (Matt 1:18-25; Genesis 37:5-11; Num 12:5-6)

By way of introduction let us have one dream from the Bible to open the discussion. Let us take Joseph's dream as recorded in Matt 1:20-25. *But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife,*

because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins....' When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife... she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

We observe that three major things happened in this dream. One, Joseph reversed his decision and married Mary because of the dream he dreamt. Secondly, he believed that the dream was a true message from God. Therefore, he had to obey it without fail. The third point is that the son's name was known before the child was born because of the dream. And it is the right name for the Son according to God's plan.

What is the dream then?

The dream is a direct revelation from God. It comes to you through visions or dreams. It is one of the ways in which God communicates with his people. Kelsey (1991:32) writes that throughout the Old Testament we find the belief that Yahweh is concerned with human beings and makes direct contact with them in order to give them direction and guidance. He emphasizes that dream and vision experiences were mediums of this communication. And he goes on to say: *Through this means, God brought people special knowledge of the world around them, and also knowledge of the divine reality and will.*

He (1991:31) also believes that *The Old Testament presents a clear and consistent theory about the value of dreams and visions as a medium of revelation.*

We, however, need to understand that there are two different attitudes about dreams.

2.3.2 The two different attitudes about dreams

Kelsey (1991:19-20) states:

Some people say dreaming is an essential meaningless experience, not worth the time of the day. This attitude was first suggested 2 200 years ago by Aristotle in three little papers on dreaming.

It was supported by Cicero a few centuries later, but it had few other exponents in the ancient world. Then, after centuries of unpopularity, it was revived to become the accepted point of view. It was however, accepted without ever being subjected to scientific inquiry, reason being that it was considered so obvious and certain that there was no need to spend time and effort verifying it. Scientifically it was wrong to verify a new view without testing it, though it appeared obvious. Moreover, Kelsey (1991:20) says: *There is nothing in the present careful research on dreaming that particularly supports this point of view. Instead, studies frequently give both analytical and empirical support to the other point of view, which finds dreams highly significant and meaningful.*

This takes us to the second attitude regarding dreams.

2.3.3 Dream unlocks the human personality secrets

Other people say, dreaming is a key to unlocking the secrets of human personality and even to finding meaning beyond the personal.

This is the view which is fully supported by both analytical and empirical studies. But surprisingly enough, Westerners side with the first point of view which has no satisfying researcher's records. As Kelsey (1991:19) concludes that, *The most common attitude in our Western culture is the first one.* - the attitude which denies dreams being meaningful. They are of no worth.

But the second view which they deny, the view that dreams are meaningful, is held in practically all other cultures. Indeed, Kelsey (1991:20) confirms that wherever people have not been touched and influenced by their Western worldview with its belief that human beings are limited to sense experience and reason, the dream has been viewed as important. This shows that Western people have brainwashed some Africans and other nations with their worldview.

2.3.4 The Western view on dreams

Most of the Western people do not believe in dreams. They teach that dreams are not real, they are leftovers upon the soul of the previous day's activities. They base their teaching on Aristotles' view of dreams. Kelsey (1991:70) writes: *According to Aristotle, people are in contact only with the world of sense experience, which they come to understand through their reason. Since there is no experienceable nonphysical world from which dreams may emerge, they can not be seen as anything but residual impressions left upon the soul by the previous day's activities.* .

This is the view which the Westerner have adopted and are practicing.

Aristotle mislead the Westerners because he broke with the time-honored tradition about dreams, which had almost universal acceptance until his time, and so gives us a totally different point of view from which the more ancient view can be observed and assessed. This point of view took over until it became almost unquestionable authority for Western culture in modern times as well as for the entire Moslem world. No wonder that many people are taken in by his view, because his thinking is so modern and his arguments are very convincing, if not examined biblically. This is the subject we need to consider very carefully by going back to the Scriptures and learning from them. Africans believe in both contact with the world of sense experience and

of spiritual experience. This makes the difference between Africans and Westerners.

When we read Aristotle's ideas further, we, however, find out that he contradicts himself. Kelsey (1991:71) remarks: *On the contrary, Aristotle believed that the soul was more sensitive during sleep and was, therefore, able to pick up sensations from outside that it would not ordinarily be able to perceive. This quality enabled it to appear prophetic or clairvoyant (clearly seen) at times. He continues: Likewise, he believed that during sleep the soul was more aware of bodily sensations of which one was unconscious during working hours, and so dreams might contain hints about the body's functioning that normal conscious thinking could not provide... He also reasoned that some dreams may bring about their own fulfillment by suggesting a course of action to the dreamer which he or she later pursues, and thus the prophetic result comes about naturally. Other dreams of the future, he concluded, are probably coincidental.*

This teaches us that although Aristotle had modern ideas about dreams, he believed that something good, reasonable, real and sensible could come out of dreams. He appears to be not totally negative about the significance of dreams.

2.3.5 The African view on dreams

Africans believe in dreams. They believe that God spoke to people and is still speaking to people through dreams. Of course Africans are aware that not all dreams are from God, as we shall soon see in the different categories of dreams. Africans are also aware that not all dreams have specific messages. Those with specific messages are either repeated or give no peace in his/her mind until the meaning is revealed to the dreamer and the correct interpretation is given to him or her. Generally speaking, this critical attitude to dreams is not typical of conditions in the Churches in Africa. Sundkler has

given an example of the theological School in Liberia where students were convinced of the authority of dreams. As Sundkler (1960:26) says: *We felt in discussion with them on this particular issue that they considered Westerners (including westernized African pastors) are unable to understand the workings of the African minds.*

Yes! Some Westerners have adopted their reasoning into some Africans' minds. As a result some Africans have been brainwashed because they take Western reasoning as biblical truth. For example, some African Christians do not want African, but Western names. Some African politicians want to do politics as if they are in the Western world and they fail.

The story of A Muganda Ordinand in Sundkler (1960:26) serves as an example. *A Muganda Ordinand had felt a longing to enter the priesthood since he was ten years of age. When he became a teacher he had a dream, seeing himself in a surplice. 'For many years I was sure that this dream was God's way of calling me. But when I was saved in the Balokole revival (Mission Church), I understood that this call was not the true one'. Being 'saved' was the true call.*

This is a Western interpretation because they do not believe in dreams. For African understanding, this interpretation is incomplete if not a wrong interpretation, because it violates some Scriptures like Jer 1:4: *The word of the Lord came to me, saying 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.*

And in Ephesians we read that we are just fulfilling what God has already planned for our lives. So to say in black and white that what Muganda dreamt was not a true call from God, may jeopardize God's call for him and violate God's plan as well. This is well illustrated by the testimony of the African principal of the East African Theological Seminary. Sundkler (1960:25) says:

African principal of a leading East African Theological Seminary insisted that most of his candidates had been called through dreams, and the late Bishop Akinyele of Ibadan, Nigeria, told us that the majority of the men who offered themselves for the ministry had seen themselves in a white surplice and therefore wished to be ordained.

And he goes on to say: *One misses an important aspect of what is understood as constituting a vocation to the ministry in Africa if the dream is overlooked as a channel of God's call.*

It can thus be accepted that it is true that God used and still uses dreams to communicate with his people. This is in agreement with the Old Testament and New Testament in which some dreams were channels of God's communication to his people - Joseph, Laban, Pharaoh, Pontious' wife to mention a few.

The importance of dreams in the crisis of conversion is well established from the experience of missions in Africa. Allier in Sundkler (1948:267) has demonstrated this in a convincing way, drawing mainly on material from mission work among the Sotho. The material of dreams from mission churches would probably have been even more extensive than it is now, Allier argues, if it had not been for the fact that some missionaries have felt humiliated and even scandalized because of the stress laid upon the Africans by dreams. Allier says that missionaries are almost shocked that such an important spiritual revolution as conversion would appear to be due in many cases to some absurd (insensible) dream rather than the conscious decision of the will. He quotes Coillard as having observed that Christian converts, when asked by a heathen: *What can we do to become like you?* would reply: *To be converted, one must see visions.*

Such a reply shocks some missionaries, e.g. Westerners. But if we examine this biblically, we must ask whether their shock is real. Definitely not, because

in the Bible we find some people who were converted by seeing visions or through visions, for example, Paul's conversion on the way to Damascus (Acts 9:1-9), and also Isaiah's conversion and commission in (Isa 6:1-9), to mention a few. In both of these visions, we see the victims being terrified because their evil deeds were exposed by the vision. And in both cases we observe radical changes of their lives. It is therefore, not justifiable to say that to connect vision with conversion is insensible. Remember that vision is one of the possible definitions of the dream - see chapter one. One must, however, also understand that not all visions are from God just as dreams are not all from God. But the fact is that all visions used by God to communicate His message to someone are inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Sundkler (1948:267-8) testifies that he has been struck by the fact that in the dreams he collected from among Christians in mission churches in Zululand and in Hayaland (Tanzania) largely these same symbols appear. He says that: *The importance attached to dreams, both among Zulu Christians and Haya Christians, is great.*

He goes on to say: *A deacon in the Haya area showed me an impressive dream-diary where he had entered short records of his dreams from 1930 to 1944. The general character of these were Joseph-dreams, referring to the important role he wanted to play in the Church.*

This demonstrates how much Africans value dreams. Africans believe that dreams can open or close, or predict their future life.

The traditional Zulu people differentiate dreams in three categories, namely:

- 1 The dreams sent by the ancestors
- 2 The dreams sent by the wizards
- 3 The ordinary spontaneous dreams.

For one who wants to understand the Zionist Christian dreamlife, this pattern of dream activity in heathen Zulu people is the best background of it. You can see that there are no dreams from God. The reason is that traditional Africans believe God speaks through the ancestors. If African Christians were to make a list of dreams, perhaps they would have to add the fourth one - dreams from God. The Zionists differentiate between God's dreams and flesh dreams. They spend time on God's dreams and even give interpretations, but the flesh dreams they ignore.

2.3.6 The scientific view on dreams

Scientists have discovered that dreams can be used as tools for healing mental disorders, tools for counselling and giving directions. Kelsey (1991:26) testifies: *For the last three decades Kelsey has been closely associated with a group of clinical psychologists and psychiatrists. A religiously oriented psychological clinic was established at the church where he was rector. And he says: I have seen many people able to return to useful functioning and many others able to deal with their paralyzing religious doubts through a basically Jungian therapeutic practice, which involves an understanding of their dreams.*

On the same page (1991:26) he writes: *I observed that consideration of dreams was one factor in helping emotionally disturbed people become well.*

Kelsey (1991:170) moreover writes that Sigmund Freud, who was a physician before anything else, whose interest was in making sick people well, was once disappointed when he failed to heal a mental disturbance after applying the scientific method he learnt at Charcot University in Paris. This forced him to search instead for some other means of making an impact upon the personalities of his patients that would enable them to come to terms with what caused them to be disturbed, and to get well. He then finally found this tool in dream analysis. What he found important was that understanding the

elements of dreams enabled people to see what was going on within themselves, of that of which they were not aware to understand themselves so that they could recover from neurosis. The power of the dream can be seen here, surpassing even scientific method.

An interesting point is that Jung, German by nationality and psychiatrist by profession, experienced that what he had dreamt many years ago became fulfilled in his later life. As Jung himself (1963:184) says: *Today I can say that I have never lost touch with my initial experience. All my works, all my creative activity, has come from those initial fantasies and dreams which began in 1912, almost fifty (50) years ago. Everything that I accomplished in later life was already contained in them, although at first only in the form of emotions and images*

This teaches us that dreams can even predict someone's future activities in his life. The researcher agrees with Jung that what he had dreamt some years ago became fulfilled later. This happened to him as well. In 1970 he dreamt someone dressed in white stood at the side of his bed and told him that he would be a pastor. Since that time he could not find any other job better than becoming a pastor. And he does not regret that he is now a pastor because this gives him peace with God.

Dreams are medically significant. Kelsey (1991:169) writes: *There had been medical professionals who valued dreams in almost every age from Hippocrates down. People like Daniel Tuke, Wilhelm Wundt, Bernheim, and many others whose names are hardly remembered had been seeking to explain the dream because they saw that it was significant from a medical point of view.*

The fact that scientific proof concerning the importance of dreams is needed, is enough evidence that dreams are significant.

2.3.7 Contemporary Church view on dreams

Kelsey (1991:17) writes that finding a Christian today who pays religious attention to dreams is unusual. He goes on to say that in Western Christian society today there is no group, practically no voice at all, that would encourage people to understand their dreams as a source of religious insight into life. Instead, most twentieth-century Christians simply assume that the idea of finding religious meaning or reality in dreams is a proven fallacy that went out with the Dark Ages, and they see no need to think about it again.

Indeed the Church of today has taken the Western view of dreams which teaches that dreams are useless, unworthy, meaningless, left-overs upon the soul of the previous day's activities. Since the Christian Church has been brainwashed by the Western ideology, she is silent about dreams. She does not preach about them, she does not interpret dreams for Christians and her institutions have abandoned the teaching of dreams. So the Christians are now going outside the church looking for interpretation of their dreams, because the Church does not render these services. And yet the church accuses them for consulting diviners and other heathen organizations. Some members have even been excommunicated from the churches because of the dream issues or felt not accepted by the Church members, like the story of Lazarus in Sundkler (1948:269-270). Lazarus was originally a member of Methodist Mission Church. One day he dreamed seeing a big city with a road passing through its middle. When he came near, three men dressed in white clothes appeared to him and said: *It is not permitted to enter here without repenting.*

He heard a fine choir singing, and they were all in lovely white robes. Then, the man dressed in white said: *I will send you to evangelist Mokhaye, you must ask him why he has turned the day of the Lord into a working day. If they do not repent and honour the Sabbath, the Lord will send cold winds and hail and storm, to destroy all that they have planted.*

He awoke. The following Sunday when he went to the mission church to worship, he remembered the dream, and began crying. When people asked him why he was crying, he told them the story of the dream. Instead of listening and encouraging him, the members laughed and teased him. Hence, he left the Methodist Church and began praying for himself in the bush, until one day a Zionist was shown in a dream to go and pray with Lazarus in the bush. When this Zionist went there, he found him and took him to a Zionist Church where he now belongs. He is very happy and enjoys the fellowship. This is one story, but there are many others.

Kelsey admits that the lack of Christian interpretation of dreams presented him with a very real problem in life. Kelsey (1991:7) says: *Nearly in the midway into life I had come into a dark wood, into a blind alley. I found my way out of that stalemate (fixed location) through an understanding of dreams. I worked with a Jungian analyst, a Jew who had escaped from a Nazi concentration camp. He believed that the Holy One still spoke to both sleeping and waking human beings in dreams in the silence of the day and in the night. With his help I discovered that my dreams were wiser than my well-tuned rational mind and that they gave me warnings when I was in danger.*

This manifests the importance and power of the dreams, that they are more powerful than a well-tuned rational mind. It was only after Kelsey had been convinced from the practical and scientific point of view that dreams had meaning and purpose in lives, that he turned back to his Christian heritage.

Surprisingly, the church of today is silent about dreams. She does not interpret them, neither speaks of them nor thinks of them. Finding a Christian today who pays attention to dreams is very unusual. It is even unusual to find a Christian who knows what is meant by this. Kelsey (1991:17) remarks that modern theologian students do not seem to recognize the existence of a religious point of view on the subject and for good reason, are subsequently either caught unawares or with a negative attitude by questions about the

religious meaning of dreams. He continues to say that in the field of science, scientists may be well informed about the important new research on dreaming. They may even be among the few who pay attention to their own dreams.

These days one can know that God is speaking to him through a dream if that dream is repeated, or the dream becomes fulfilled later, as in the case of prophets in the Old Testament. The prophet became true if his prophesy became fulfilled. So it is with dreams.

When God finally spoke to people through His Son (Heb 1:1-2), He did not close this channel of speaking to people through dreams just as He does not stop speaking to us through His living Word. So God still speaks to people through dreams.

Kelsey (1991:148) quotes Pererius: *As it occurs to me now (Pererius pointed out), one can determine whether a dream has been sent by God in two ways. First, certainly, the excellence of the thing signified in the dream: if things, of which certain knowledge can only reach man by the will and grant of God, become known to a man through dream, they are of such kinds as are called "future contingencies"... enclosed within the soul's deepest recesses, completely conceal themselves from all intellectual perception of mortals; and finally they are the principal mysteries of our faith, made manifest to no one except by the instruction of God. A dream, therefore, which contains this sort of knowledge and revelation may be considered divine.*

Second, the divinely inspired dream is powerfully conveyed by a certain interior illumination and stirring of souls whereby God thus enlightens the mind, influences the will and convinces man of the trustworthiness and validity of this dream in order that he may clearly recognize that God is its author...

This is how one can prove that this dream comes from God. *But in Western Christian society today there is no group, practically no voice at all, that would encourage these people to understand their dreams as a source of religious insight into life.*

This statement, of not having interest in dreams among western Christians, is true even in Africa, especially in Mission Churches, and all those Africans who have been westernized. The question is: Should we continue remaining quiet about dreams just because the Westerners say so? Or should we remain faithful to the Word of God which takes dreams to be one of God's channels of communication to his people? This is to be thought about. Chinese Christians for example are still valuing dreams. As Kelsey (1991:9) confirms: *Chinese Christians are still in touch with their unconscious roots and have not been totally brain-washed by Western materialism.*

The Chinese Christians had an insight that what Westerners took to them was not all the Gospel of Christ. That is why they had to reject some Western cultural elements. But Africans took everything from Westerners as if it were all pure Gospel of Christ

This mentality has come to stay because we see even today, that whatever comes from the West is grabbed by Africans as if it is all pure and perfect, for example, American music, talking about sex and showing sexual films publically. Africans are not made inferior by God, but superior. The Westerners, however, have made Africans think that they are inferior, and they still think they are: It is shameful. Listen to what Aggrey in Smith (1930:137) says to his fellow Africans: *My people of Africa, we were created in the image of God, but men have made us think that we are chickens, and we still think we are; but we are eagles. Stretch forth your wings and fly! Don't be content with the food of chickens!*

This tells us that being created in the image of God, Africans have been given a big brain, but the Western people made them think that they have little brain, and they appear to accept that Africans should think about it that God has given the African a great brain, to think great things and to do great works for Him. He is an eagle, he can fly! Aggrey (1930:3,4) was referring to the Europeans and Americans who treated him not unequal to them because he was black.

2.3.8 Conclusion

Dreams must be taken seriously by the Church, because they play an important role in human lives. This is clearly seen in the functions of dreams:

Dreams function as warnings to the dreamer, as in the case of the wife of Pilate (Matt 27:19). While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: *Don't have anything to do with that innocent man (Jesus), for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.*

And the wisemen were also warned in a dream not to go back to Herod (Matt 2:12).

- Dreams give directions to the dreamer. In the book of Matthew (2:13-15; 2:19-21) we read that the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him to get up and take his wife and Jesus the baby, and escape to Egypt. After Herod's death, Joseph was again told what to do by an angel of the Lord through a dream. And Kelsey (1991:27) echoes: *I found that dream, properly understood, was believed to give religious insight, wisdom and direction.*
- Dreams give direction, wisdom or birth to the future of the dreamer, as it happened with Jung (1963:183) that what he had been dreaming for nearly fifty years became fulfilled in his later years.

- Dreams heal. Rober in (Freud 1953:79) writes: *A man deprived of the capacity for dreaming would in course of time become mentally deranged, because a great mass of uncompleted, unworked-out thoughts and superficial impressions would accumulate in his brain and would be bound by their bulk to smother the thoughts which should be assimilated into his memory as completed wholes.*

Then he concludes: *Dreams serve as a safety-valve for the over-burdened brain. They possess the power to heal and relieve.*

- Dreams are biblically accepted by both Old and New Testaments. The researcher believes that as Bible believers, African Christians must take some dreams seriously, especially if they are repeated because that is the sign that they come from God, or there is a message which a dreamer has to adhere to. This is so because dreams are excretions of thoughts that have been stifled at birth.

2.4 Different worldviews on nature

Scripture (Matt 2:1-2ff) Jesus' star

After Jesus had been born in Betlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi (wisemen) from the east came to Jerusalem and asked: *Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.*

The Magi saw Jesus' star and they followed it until it stopped where the Jesus-baby was lying. This shows that the star is subjected to Jesus. It is not looked upon objectively, but subjectively. So it is part and parcel of Jesus Christ because it reveals his birth. This is the view which most Africans have about nature. But the Western people have a different view of nature. Let us now investigate these differences.

2.4.1 The Western view of nature

The Western worldview of nature is that nature is divorced from the human being. It is not part of a human being. When the researcher interviewed prof MA Moleleki of the Department of African languages of the University of the Free State about the subject, this is what he had to say: *The Western worldview about nature is that "Nature is external; It is to be admired; it is divorced from human beings"*. According to professor Moleleki, it is to be looked upon objectively. But Africans have a different view of nature.

2.4.2 The African view of nature

Africans believe that nature is part of them. They look upon nature subjectively. Professor Moleleki shared with me that among Sotho people of South Africa, they talk of time in connection with animals or the sun. For example, when they are talking of a journey, they would say, we shall start "when animals go out" or "when the sun rises". For arriving, they would say: we came "when animals were coming in" or "when the sun was setting". They don't talk of hours and minutes, but animals and the sun determine their time. Sometimes they talk of time when animals go for drinking water.

As for the Nyanja/Chewa-speaking people, their time is determined by "shadow" or "sun", or "rooster" (cock). The day is determined with two shadows - short and long. The short shadow (mthunzi wa ufupi) stands for morning up to afternoon; and long shadow (mthunzi wa utali) stands for later afternoon up to evening. By the sun, the day is determined with three times - when the sun rises (pa mene dzuwa lituluka); when the sun is on your head (pa mene dzuwa lilipamutu), noon; and when the sun sets (pa mene dzuwa lilowa) evening. They also determine time when saying: we shall start our journey after the first rooster or second rooster crows. To them, such a statement determines the actual time of departure. This pattern of determining time, was also practiced by the Jews in the Old Testament (2

Sam 4:5) and by Jesus Christ in the New Testament (Mark 14:30; Luke 22:60-62; Matt 26:34).

The Lele of Kasai, Zaire associate the moon with fertility, because by it a woman reckons the nine months of her pregnancy. (Forde 1954:11) They say, *The moon brings children.*

Thus the appearance of the moon is treated with characteristic rites. As Forde (1954:11) writes: *Sexual relations are forbidden, women are not allowed to pound grain, nor to enter the forest...The hunt may be a pure formality, the death of one squirrel suffices. Then the restrictions are lifted.*

Then after the sacrifice, the normal daily activities resume. Another African view of nature is when the rainbow appears during the rain season, it means there will be no rain. The rainbow to an African symbolizes no rain at all. Where there is rain, one cannot find a rainbow unless it is a sign of stopping it.

For the Nyanja/Chewa-speaking people, the moon is connected with good and bad health of the people. They believe that if a new moon is facing upwards, it holds diseases. Hence, it predicts poor health for the people in that month. But if a new moon tilts down, it means that it holds no diseases; therefore people will have good health for that month. This is true. For these reasons, we can say Africans are physicists without scientific tools, but empirically successful.

These are the few examples to show that Africans believe that nature is part of them. These African examples, or understanding of nature, is very close to what we read in Matt 2:1-2ff about the Jesus' star. The star becomes part of Jesus because it was a sign of Jesus' birth which directed the Magi. In the same way Africans, especially Nyanja/Chewa-speaking people, can tell

whether they shall have good or bad health, when a new moon appears. And it does happen.

2.5 African problems differ from those of Westerners

Scripture: Leviticus 18:22; 20;13' 1 Cor 6:9-10; Mark 10:2-9

2.5.1 Introduction

There are many problems which might only be significant to the Westerners while not to the Africans. In the same way, there may be big problems for Africans which to Westerners may not be problems at all. Africans, for example are confronted with poverty while the Westerners' problem is materialism. Most Africans have big problems in managing public funds because of their poverty which influences them to be unfaithful, while the big problem of most Westerners is that materialism has become their god and to believe in God is the story of the past. In America you find one man or woman possessing two or three jobs because he/she wants to make more money. For the sake of our subject, we shall discuss in detail two specific problems, one of consequence to Westerners and the other of consequence to Africans.

2.5.2 Homosexuality vs Polygamy

2.5.2.1 The Westerners justify homosexuality.

Africans do not recognize homosexuality because it is an unnatural practice. But the Westerners have accepted it and have even legalized it. Here is some evidence to prove its acceptance among Westerners.

Homosexuality is legalized by Westerners but not in the case of Africans. In Zimbabwe, for example, President Mugabe 1996 refused to recognise the status of the homosexuals in his country. But what we see and hear in European and Western countries is affirmation, justification of homosexuality.

Christopher (1987:61) states: *The 1967 reform of the 1956 Sexual Offences Act legalized sexual activity in private between two consenting males over 21 (except in Scotland - where the law was reformed in 1982 - Northern Ireland, and the Armed Services)*

Despite the change in the law, however, the homosexual still often faces harassment in finding a sexual partner. This shows how unnatural this practice is.

Wilson (1971:123) says that, *One of the most interesting countries to consider with regard to legislation on homosexuality is the Netherlands. At present Holland has only one set of laws governing both homo and heterosexual activity. These are that any person who commits an act of indecency with a child under sixteen is liable to be imprisoned for up to six years. The same penalty applies to persons who abuse the defencelessness of their victims to commit sexual acts. Persons who use violence or threats to induce victims to submit to acts of indecency may receive up to eight years imprisonment.*

This means that men are allowed to have sexual intercourse with their fellow men of equal age or above sixteen years if both agree to have sexual activity. In the same way women are allowed to have sexual activity with fellow women as long as they agree. This is according to the Dutch Penal Code (1911).

In Denmark, (Wilson 1971:125) the law states: *Acts with persons under eighteen incur a maximum penalty of four years' imprisonment, but if the persons are of the same age they are acquitted.*

This means homosexuality is accepted as long as you follow the law. In the same book, Wilson (1971:124-125) concludes that three Scandinavian Countries: Sweden, Norway and Denmark all justify homosexual acts.

The Westerners are monogamists in heterosexuality but they are polygamists in homosexuality. Christopher (1987:65) confirms this. He says: *Several studies have shown that many homosexual men have large numbers of sexual partners, many more perhaps than would be expected in the heterosexual population.*

This means that Westerners have two big problems in one to solve. The problems of homosexuality and polygamy.

Christopher (1987:61) writes: *The latest study from the Institute for Sex Research (founded by Kinsley) shows that a fairly strong heterosexual element was found in about a third of the homosexual men studied (Bell and Weinberg 1978). This heterosexual element could be expressed in heterosexual dreams, fantasies, or actual arousal in a heterosexual situation.*

This demonstrates that homosexuality is the choice of a person. It is not always a sexual disorder as other Westerners say.

So if one makes a wrong choice which affects the society, should the society and the Church remain quiet without criticizing it, or should the society encourage the wrong choice of the few individuals to continue? The researcher is of the opinion that the society must correct the wrong so that the rest of the society may be protected from doing the wrong thing. Remember the church and society are like a watchman of God to guide individuals to do what is right. Surprisingly enough, the Westerner encourages the wrong choice to continue.

In Masters (1992:389) it is written that in 1989, *San Francisco passed an ordinance giving recognition to domestic partnership of homosexuals; State Bar Association of California urges recognition of gay marriages.*

Moreover, homosexuals are given social, political and national positions in society. For instance, in America homosexuals are even recognized to hold political leadership positions. It is written in (Master 1992:389) that in 1983, *Representative Gerry Studds (D - Massachusetts) announces his homosexuality amid a sex scandal, becoming the first US Congress member to make his homosexuality public; he was later re-elected.*

For this man to be re-elected, while the public knew he was a homosexual man, is clear evidence that Americans recognize homosexuality at high levels.

Helman (1994) says that, *it has also been suggested that societies more tolerant of homosexuality are those with population pressure, that is, too many people for their resources, and where an increase in population from heterosexual sex is therefore less desirable.*

This does not affect Africans because most of the African societies have no population pressure, and have open vast lands and they desire heterosexual sex more than homosexual sex.

Furthermore, West (1967:21,22) says that, *Homosexuality is as old as humanity and occurs as much in advanced civilizations as it does in primitive cultures.*

And he adds: *In classical Greece homosexuality achieved social recognition as an acceptable and expected form of love between normal males.*

This means that the Greek people would show their homosexuality publically without being ashamed of it. This means they have made an unnatural act to become a natural act before God. What a rebellious thing in the eyes of God! (Lev 20:13).

With all these facts mentioned above, it therefore, becomes clear evidence that Westerners have accepted, justified, legalized homosexuality among their societies. Certainly this is a big problem for the Westerners but not for the Africans.

The question, however is: Does homosexuality not socially harm the society? Does it promote mutual relationship? The answer is **NO!** Homosexuality harms the society in various ways. Wilson (1971:56,60,61) has this to say:

- It promotes blackmail amongst the society. As Lord Jowitt (in Wilson 1971:56) puts it: *When I became Attorney-General (25 years ago), I became oppressed by the discovery that the number of persons being subjected to blackmail was far larger than I had ever realized. It is the fact - I do not know why it is the fact, but it is a fact that at least 95% of the cases of blackmail which came to my knowledge arose out of homosexuality.*
- It promotes abnormality amongst society. Thus a grown person, male or female, seeks sexual gratification with a pre-adolescent child. This is what we call homosexuality relating to paedophilia, a sexual perversion.

It is a unnatural, degrading act for a society to practice it. It is said that after press reports concerning homosexuality law reform, one writer wrote to dr Duncan Chappell, Department of Criminology, Sydney University, to criticize the move. Wilson (1971:61) is quoted on his remarks: *You blokes talk about homosexuals well they should all be put on an island and they can go for their life. Any Church who supports this unnatural filthy degrading act should get out. Woman was made for Man. God would not approve of this vice, ... What a rotten thing to answer if your children should ask what does it mean. I have even been asked by my wife what it means. This thing should never be put in*

the press... Why waste time making it legal. No wonder the moral in Briton has gone down when they pass a bill to make it legal.

These facts are given to prove how detrimental homosexuality is to society even though it is legalized in these communities. We have discovered that at least 95% of blackmail cases among society is likely caused by homosexual acts. Moreover it is an unnatural and degrading act. This leads us to another question.

Why is the Church in Africa so concerned about homosexuality? How does this involve preaching? What is the purpose of making Africans aware of homosexuality? These are good questions to ask. The Church is concerned about homosexuality because of its abnormality, unnaturalness and detriment. Christopher (1987:62) writes: *Once something is labelled unnatural it becomes either a sin to be punished or an illness to be treated.*

So we need to treat this biblically, But not culturally unless the two agree on that point.

Until recently the prevailing twentieth-century view was that homosexuals were psychologically disturbed or immature and needed treatment. This is not true of all because some make their own choice to be homosexuals. The Church is concerned because homosexuality is a threat to sex-role stereotypes; to normal and ordained sex by God. It is sin before God (Lev 20:13).

This involves preaching because we have to defend the biblical truth. In the Bible we are taught: *If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own head (Leviticus 20:13).*

In Genesis 1:27-28 we read: *God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number'.*

This quotation tells us that God is commanding human beings to be productive, but the Westerners say: do not be productive. God tells Man, your wife is a Woman, but the Westerners say to Man: Your wife is your fellow Man. This is what they do by accepting homosexuality or legalizing it. The African as a preacher has to defend this biblical truth. And he can defend it by preaching it, singing it and writing about it.

The purpose of informing Africans about homosexuality is to let them know that not all which comes from the West is good. Therefore we have to test everything biblically before we practice it. We need to inform the African politicians, preachers, educators and parents of the consequences of legalizing homosexuality for African people - as reasons already stated above. Since homosexuality is not the main theme of this research, attention can now be given to the African problem.

2.5.2.2 Africans embrace polygamy

Polygamy is the state of marriage in which there is one husband and two or more wives. This should be referred to as "polygamy" and where one wife has two or more husbands it is called "poyandry". Africans have enjoyed the polygamic life for years because it is traditionally accepted. Mbiti (1969:42ff) writes: *Getting married to two or more wives is a custom found all over Africa, though in some societies it is less common than others. The custom fits well into social structure of traditional life, and into thinking of the people, serving many useful purposes...*

This is because of the attitude or thinking that, "the more we are, the bigger I am".

Children in African are the glory of the marriage, and the more there are of them the greater the glory. There is a saying among Africans: *Children are the living wealth of man.*

Thus the more children you have the more wealth and future security you have. Therefore, because of this thinking, many Africans have and prefer to have more children. And to do this, polygamy becomes the answer, especially if the first wife is barren. In such a situation, the wife influences the husband to marry another wife so that they can have children. This African attitude agrees with Jewish practice as in the case of Sarai who gave Abram, her husband, a wife (Genesis 16:1-4); Rachel who badly wanted children gave Jacob, her husband, Bilhah to bear children for her (Genesis 30:1-6). And when Leah stopped having children, she took her maidservant Zilpah and gave her to her husband as a wife (Gen 30:9). In all these stories, we see the importance of having children in families. The wealth Africans value most second to God is children.

A good example is the late Peta Teanet. He was a South African musician who was just thirty when he was shot dead. He was married to eight wives and left thirteen children. Betty his third wife (Drum 5 September 1996:133) says: *Our husband's foremost wish was to have thirty children.*

And she was disappointed that her husband's dream was not fulfilled.

Children to Africans, are the living wealth. Polygamy is enjoyed and practised mostly by Chiefs and well to do Africans because it is expensive these days.

There are also social values in polygamic families such as nursing each other among wives when one is sick, making work lighter. Among Shona and Tumbuka people in Zambia, for example wives work together on their farms instead of employing workers. They also are respected and feared by other small families. Mbiti (1969:142) writes, *It is instilled in the minds of African*

peoples that a big family earns its head great respect in the eyes of the community.

This is true. The bigger the family is, the more recognition it expects from the society.

Although polygamy has these values, it still has a lot of disadvantages. Indeed there are problems connected with polygamy and it would be wrong to pretend that everything runs smoothly in polygamous families. Problems like these occur:

- quarrels and fights among the wives and among the children;
- husbands neglecting some old wives and devoting too much attention to the latest choice;
- wives poisoning each other, or unknowingly poisoning the husband in order to be the most beloved;
- telling lies and so on.

Here the researcher wish to disagree with Mbiti (1969:142) who says: *polygamy helps to prevent or reduce unfaithfulness and prostitution, especially on the part of the husband.*

If by unfaithfulness he means not telling lies, the researcher disagree with him because most polygamists are fond of lying. Some wives get children from other men, but they still call them the children of their husbands.

Polygamy moreover, does not help children to have a disciplined life. As a result we find cases of the brother marrying his sister, or worse a brother raping a sister as in the case of Amnon who raped his sister Tamar (2 Sam

13:1-22). Polygamy can also cause even an adult son to have sex with his father's young wife because he feels she is not very close to him. This happened to Absalom who had sex with his father's concubine (2 Sam 16:20-22) and Reuben too.

Are Africans allowed to continue with polygamy? Are Westerners in a better position to tell the Africans to stop practicing polygamy? The answer is NO.

Africans are advised to stop polygamy because this was and is not God's plan as from the beginning. In (Genesis 1:27-28) it is written, *God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number..."*

This is the marriage God established and ordained from the beginning for human beings: the monogamous marriage. Marriage of one man and one wife. Other than this, is out of God's plan. Hence it comes from man's greediness, man's prestige, or from the tradition of our forefathers.

Africans should think again: whatever the motive to become a polygamist, whether it was to have children, or prestige, or to fulfill the demands of society, it was wrong. God tolerated it because it was based on general revelation and not on special revelation which is more detailed. In the same way God tolerated the Jews in the Old Testament because it was the beginning of Christianity. As Quenstedt in (Helander 1958:45) advocates: *God tolerated polygamy but did not recommend it.*

So it was not God's plan, but he tolerated it. But now both Jews and Africans who God tolerated, are one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). Therefore, we must both go back to the roots of the Bible.

Westerners can not tell Africans to stop polygamy because they also are at fault. They have broken the biblical principles of "Not Divorcing and Remarriage", (Mat 19:9). During the five years the researcher was in America, he saw marriages breaking up on the grounds that the wife wanted to keep her professional career. So she refused to go with her husband who was transferred by the company or government to another town where she could not continue with her work.

In Canada, where the researcher went for World Alliance of Reformed Churches Conference in 1983, one pastor from Canada testified that it was very difficult to maintain marriages these days because couples were even willing to divorce if they did not agree on how many children they wanted (1 or 2).

What we observe, is that all these reasons do not meet biblical qualifications for a divorce. How can Westerners then advise Africans on this. A plank is in their eyes. It is not possible unless they first remove the plank from their own eyes. Listen what Jesus says: *Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye; when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? (Mat 7:3-4).*

So Jesus is here teaching us to clean up our own house before we can help others to clean up theirs. In this case both Western and African churches need to go back to the roots of the Bible for purification because our authority and norms do not lie in the society but in the Bible.

How does polygamy affect the Church? Why has it become the African Church problem? These questions shall be treated briefly and in summary form. Polygamy affects the Church in Africa because within a polygamic family we find one or two members who are Christians. It may be that the first

wife and a child are Christians, or children of an other wife are Christians. To care for their spiritual life in this situation sometimes becomes problematic.

The problems the Church is facing in Africa as far as polygamy is concerned, are these:

Should the Church close the door to the women who entered into a polygamic family before they were Christianized or should the Church differentiate between those who were married before they were Christianized and those after being Christianized? This is a big problem for many mission churches in Africa.

Another major problem is the polygamist himself. When a polygamist has received Jesus Christ in his heart and comes to join the Church of Christ, we say "NO!" First go and divorce all other wives and remain with the first one; then come and join. Without fulfilling this condition the poor fellow can not be accepted in the Church. This is a big problem to the preacher whose purpose is to preach the Gospel of Christ so that people should repent and have full life in Jesus Christ. But now when they repent, the Church closes doors to them. Worse still is that this principle is made by the Westerners (missionaries) who do not understand the Africans well.

Superintendent F Scriba of the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission, the largest Mission in Natal, South Africa (in Helander 1958:61), says: *We do not refuse church membership (and baptism) to women who are married in polygamy, as they are not able to free themselves, being minors like children before the law in this respect. Other missions are stricter in these cases. He adds: Polygamists (heathens) may visit the Churches and enter the baptism class but before being baptized and admitted to church membership he has to leave his wives but one. He may still take care of them especially those in need or the old ones, but he declares them to be his mothers and not his wives.*

This puts the polygamist at continuous temptation throughout his life. The Lutheran Church, however has solved one problem by accepting these women married to polygamists into Church membership. As F Scriba in (Helander 1958:61) says: *We do not refuse Church membership (and Baptism) to women who are married in polygamy, as they are not able to free themselves, being minors like children before the law in this respect.*

Other missions, however are stricter in these cases, for example, the Reformed Church in Zambia, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe to mention a few.

Brink of the Dutch Reformed Church, in (Helander 1958:67) writes in reply to the question of polygamists being allowed in the Church or not. Brink says: regarding difficulties in convincing heathen and reasons given:

- a *God created one husband, one wife.*
- b *Generally accepted custom among the Jews.*
- c *Christ's testimony.*

He also mentions that in exceptional circumstances the Church authorities allowed a polygamist to become a Church member (but never a church council member or leader) without forcing him to leave his extra wives. Since the Church is not to practice favouritism, we better find a solution for all.

The Bishop of Zululand (Anglican) mentions in his letter that "monogamy is the recognised practice of the Church members... but it is not easy to prove the necessity for monogamy by reference to the New Testament. We appeal rather to the long tradition of the Church - and teach our people the nature of love and family life" (in Helander 1958:67).

From the comments of these different Church leaders, we can admit that polygamy is the problem for the Church in Africa. We really need the Holy

Spirit to guide us to come up with an answer, which can meet with God's acceptance and at the same time save mankind. As for now, there's an uncertainty amongst Church members because different missions have a variety of practices dealing with polygamy.

And Helander (1958:68) condemns his fellow missionaries for how they dealt with the case of polygamy. He remarks on the principle which states: *No heathen polygamist can be admitted into Church-membership unless he has been separated from all his former wives except the first one before he can be baptised. No exception is to be made.*

Helander remarks: *We missionaries do not feel happy about this application of principle of the Church and regard it as immoral and stupid, contrary to the Spirit of Christ. Europe has no right to set up rules and regulations, or a code of principles for Africa with its own problems, principles based on theories although on biblical ground, yet, not applicable to African conception, and more harm is done than good.*

This is the purpose for conscientizing Africans to stand-up and take-up the leading role in solving their own problems. Let not the foreigners decide for us and make laws, principles, rules and regulations for the Church in Africa because they do not know our situation as we know it ourselves. Halender is right. African problems are different from Western and European problems. Homosexuality, divorce and remarriage are the problems of Western people and not those of Africans. Africans' problem in this case is polygamy and unwillingness to divorce. As Helander (1958:14) writes, *Many missions have permitted divorce - a thing formerly almost unknown to the Africans - and re-marriage, just as the custom is in Europe or America. The Africans have with reason asked: is this 'successive polygamy' more Christian than the old polygamic institution? Why is the Church so strongly against polygamy which the Bible seems to permit, but allows divorce and remarriage which Christ*

clearly forbids? Are these not European rather than Christian ideas? This apparent inconsistency has immensely weakened the position of the Church.

This is why we say Westerners are no better than Africans in this Christian path because they are also at fault before God. It also proves that most of their social problems are different from those of the Africans. Since preaching focuses on the local people's needs, in this case, preaching to the African shall differ from that of the Westerner because the two have different problems and needs. Therefore preparing and delivering the sermon to Africans in the African context shall be appropriate. The Word of God will have to be related and applied to the African context and perspective.

CHAPTER 3

3 THE AFRICAN WAY OF WORSHIP

Scripture: John 4:20-24; Psalm 100:2-3

Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 100:2-3; NIV).

3.1. Introduction

Most of the African Churches, whether knowingly or unknowingly, have taken this quotation from (Psalm 100:2-3) as the model for their way of worshipping the Lord their God, because whenever and wherever Africans meet to worship God, they worship Him with gladness, excitement and great enthusiasm. They always come before God with joyful songs. Singing their songs of praise, confession and thanksgiving before God. Singing from the bottom of their hearts to God and forgetting all the problems around them, focusing on God. And they usually demonstrate their expression of deep devotion to God with their gentle body movements and a smile while singing and dancing for God. As David (2 Sam 6:14-16; 20-22) danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the entire house of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets, so many Africans do not feel ashamed to dance before God when it comes to worshipping him. By doing this, the Africans are practising what the apostle John wrote: Let the Lord increase and us decrease (John 3:30; Mat 3:11).

3.2 Liturgy

Most of the African Mission Churches are still using the unchanged liturgies formulated by and imposed on them by their missionaries. Very few have so far made dramatic changes to their liturgies in order to come closer to

meeting the needs of the local listeners. Some have just made minor changes, while the majority have never even tried to make any changes in order to meet the needs of the local people for fear of being excommunicated from the Mission Board or what some call the Mother Church. For example, Idowu (1965:14) writes: *The Anglican' Church appears still unable to decide whether she belongs in Nigeria or is an outpost of Canterbury. One should have thought that the little 'Anglican' is a misnomer (wrong name) for a church in 1964 Nigeria; and there is no doubt at all that this very title constitutes a veritable apron-string. The Roman Catholic authorities do not disguise their claim that their church in Nigeria must either remain an outreach of the Vatican or it can not be a church at all. And the Baptists still have to discover whether they have any soul at all which can live and will not suffer extinction if it comes out of the incubator afforded by the Mission Board of the American Southern Baptist convention.*

Still others, are afraid of losing their salaries if they do not obey the Mission Board, because their salaries still come from overseas. But for some their adherence to the old order is due to a lack of self-confidence as Idowu (1965:48) writes: *Experiment should begin now on the liturgy. One failing of even the Churches which resulted from the reactionary movements is that they have not yet been able to give any thought in a constructive way to the production of an indigenous liturgy, and this should not be surprising when one considers the intellectual calibre of their leaders.*

This attitude shows that such people have no self-confidence and they are not concerned about their local listeners. They are not ready to change the liturgy formulated by and imposed on them by early missionaries and therefore they are not solving any problems at all, because such a liturgy does not meet the needs of the local people as it should. It was formulated by foreigners who had very little or no knowledge of the needs of local people, and contains many of foreign elements, hence it is totally foreign to the local people and does not address their needs. Van der Walt (1994:15) confirms

this when he says: *The ways of worshipping, were also totally foreign to the indigenous people: the music and songs - also sung in London, Paris, Rome as well as the sermons and prayers. Add this to the translation of the Bible in the Vernacular languages. In all these ways of communication the world view plays a very prominent role. The same applies to the content or doctrine communicated. What was transmitted about God, creation, sin, salvation, etc was done in Western thought patterns.*

This is a good indication that the liturgy, formulated by missionaries and imposed on the Africans, is no longer workable for meeting African needs. It should therefore undergo major changes in order to suit the local situation and fulfil its purpose. In considering possible changes of liturgy, Africans must also start thinking of preparing and delivering the sermon in an African context in order to meet the needs of the indigenous people - so that worship will never again remain foreign to them as was the case in the past. This entails communicating the gospel of Christ in the African context and patterns familiar to the African people.

In this regard Baeta (1968:28) says: *It must be borne in mind that the present ways of expressing Christianity in Africa were first developed at the time when the rule was for Africans to seek to become like Europeans. The result is that forms, which have now become traditional features of the Christian milieu, are plainly alien to the general environment and strike observers more or less forcibly as such.*

What is at stake here is the question of the identity of the African Christian. Is he a black Westerner? If not, what is he? Must an African cease to be African in order to become a Christian? The answer is NO! The African is an African and does not need to cease to be African in order to be a Christian, because God receives all people into his Kingdom as they are. Whether they are black, red, white or yellow, or whether they are short, tall, thin or fat. He still receives them like they are. In the past the Africans sought to become like

Westerners because they received the gospel of Christ like children, and they took both the gospel and the Western culture to be the gospel of Christ. But now, they are no longer children in Christianity, therefore they strongly challenge this assumption.

However, there are some indigenous churches that have made dramatic changes after achieving their independence from their Mission Board. They have made major changes with regard to the name of the church, its administration, its liturgy, etc, but not to its doctrine.

The Reformed Church in Zambia is a good example for illustrating this point because of its historical background of being sensitive to the local needs of its members and its continuous reformation. The Church was established by the Dutch Reformed Church Mission of the Free State on 5th July 1899 (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:41, 294-5). The Missionaries named it after their own church : the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (Ekklesia wa Mishoni wa Dutch Reformed Church, DRCM). This name did not please most of the local people because they said that they were not Dutch people themselves but Zambians (Northern Rhodesians). Therefore, the 1957 Synod renamed the Church the African Reformed Church (ARC).

This name appeared to suit the local people, but they were not completely satisfied because they wanted a name for their church that would embrace all its members. The above-mentioned name was retained for a few years until, at the Synod of 1968, it was changed from the African Reformed Church to the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ). The reason for renaming the Church was once an attempt again to find an appropriate name which would embrace all the members of the Church, for they had discovered that not all its members were Africans or even Zambians. The name African Reformed Church therefore excluded many of its members. As Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982:295-6) writes: *It was commonly felt that the old name was no longer appropriate. We had so many questions demanding the change of the name,*

because it showed discrimination between us and the Reformed Church in other countries... (Reformed Church in Zambia) shows where the Church is based and that it welcomes every member who belongs to the Reformed Church in the whole world, regardless of his colour, country, and race.

The former moderator, Phiri later wrote: *With the name African Reformed Church we were more or less encouraging apartheid.*

The name which embraced all its members was found to be the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ). This is the name of this church at present.

The Reformed Church in Zambia also made major constructive changes in other areas, for example its administration and liturgy. But as the purpose of this study is not to write the history of the Church, we shall merely take a look at its changed liturgy as it is used at present and represented in Malongosoledwe aza Mu Mpingo, The Liturgical Hand Book (1982:1-7; 39-40).

ORDER FOR ENGLISH SERVICES IN THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZAMBIA

Preamble:

When the congregation is assembled and the elders and preacher have taken their place, the intimations are read, whereupon the congregation, will stand and sing:

Look upon us, blessed Lord,
 Take our wandering thoughts and guide us;
 We have come to hear Thy word:
 With Thy teaching now provide us,
 That, from earth's distractions turning,

We Thy message may be learning. Amen.

(Hymn no 352:1)

Previously this hymn was being sung by the church when the Pastor and elders were coming out from the vestry entering into a church. The Synod discovered that this was transferring God's honour to human beings. So it was changed.

1 Votum

2 Liturgical greeting

3 Hymn of praise

4 **The Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy Name;

Thy Kingdom come;

Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;

For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever, Amen.

5a The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) (or its summary, Mark 12:29-31, etc).

5b **Confessional hymn:**

Sinful thoughts and words unloving,

Rise against us one by one,

Acts unworthy, deeds unthinking,

Good that we have left undone.

Lord, Thy mercy now entreating,

Low before Thy throne we fall,

Our misdeeds to Thee confessing,

On Thy Name we humbly call. Amen.

(Hymn 347:3).

5c Absolution examples: Romans 8:1,2: 1 John 1:9)

6 **The Creed**

- a I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
- b And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord;
- c Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary;
- d Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died, and buried, He descended into hell;
- e The third day He rose again from the dead;
- f He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
- g From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
- h I believe in the Holy Spirit;
- i I believe a holy catholic Church, the communion of saints;
- j The forgiveness of sins;
- k The resurrection of the body'
- l And the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn:

Lord strengthen Thou our faith, we pray;
 Increase it always, this our shield;
 And comfort Thou with true belief.
 Our hearts in all adversity. Amen. (Hymn 384)

For the Nyanja/Chewa service a choir is first given an opportunity to sing before the first prayer.

- 7 The first Prayer
 - Praise and adoration
 - Thanksgiving
 - Confession of sin.
 - Prayer for opening of Lord's Word
- 8 Scripture reading

- 9 Sermon
- 10 Second Prayer
 - Response to the message
 - Supplication and intercession
 - Dedication
 - (Baptism can take place at this juncture).
- 11 Receiving of offerings
- 12 Prayer of dedication for offerings
- 13 Closing hymn
- 14 Benediction

3.3 Sitting in the church

According to African culture most of the African tribes adhere to a principle that separates women from men, and girls from boys. Thus women gather separately to discuss things concerning women; while men also meet separately to discuss issues concerning men.

Since culture shapes and influences people in many areas of their lives, it has become clear that their culture has influenced many Africans to sit separately in the church while worshipping God. In almost all the African churches, the members sit separately in accordance with the above-mentioned principle. Women sit on one side of the church and men on the other side. In the case of the choir, women and men, or girls and boys are allowed to sit together because they have to sing together during the divine service. The author has visited and observed this custom in several Churches in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe and in South Africa. It is also said that in the Church of the Messiah in Ghana women and men sit separately. Bond (1979:73) writes: *Women, who are seated separately from the men, are required to wear a white head kerchief to all meetings and are sometimes asked to dress all in white.*

The author has reason to believe that in many more African Churches the same is done because of cultural influence.

However, this is contrary to the Western custom where people, influenced by their own culture which is different from the African culture, sit in the church in family groups. Thus each family sits together as a unit. If a person has been invited by a certain family, he or she has to sit with that family. But if a person has not been invited by anyone, he has to find a place for himself, or else the deacon will show him where to sit. Sometimes such a person may be embarrassed by people who will not give him a seat because they are reserving it for another family member who is still to come. In such a situation he would feel isolated, a stranger, rejected, not accepted by the community.

3.4 The time allotted to worship

For the African Christian the time allotted to the worship of God is very important. When this time comes, he regards it as a great occasion, an exciting time and a golden opportunity for him to express his gratitude to God.

Since the African Christian knows that this is the day that is set aside for God, and that he has come to worship Him, he dares not allot to God the fixed time of a one or two hour service, as Westerners tend to programme it.

The African church service is therefore usually longer than the Western church service. The African Christian is very committed and has strong feeling of perseverance when it comes to worshipping God. He or she is willing to wait humbly until everything has been completed peacefully even though the service may be longer. This is so because an African can even create time in order to achieve what he wants. He is not enslaved by time as Westerners are. He controls time, but time does not control him. This is his secret. Georgiades (1976:106) writes: *In addition we also would like to point out that time for the Bantu is not a commodity loose from man and having to*

be bought at all cost. The Westerner says time is money. For the bantu the speed and the length of time are more pliable. A man waits for the right time to come and he can even create time.

The Western view of time, **like that of the African people**, is quite a complex issue. The proverb (cliché) that states that "time is money" is only a small part of the greater picture. The average Westerner regards **time itself** as a precious commodity that should not be frittered away in idleness. It has something to do with the work ethics of the Western world. Sloth (laziness/idleness) is even listed as one of the seven deadly sins. The proverb "the devil finds work for idle hands" (Afrikaans: "Ledigheid is die duivel se oorkussing). therefore comes much nearer to expressing the true views of the Western man in the street than the saying that time is money. There is another saying that comes close to expressing the Western view and that is: "Time and idle wait for no man". But this view does have its negative side. It often leads to an inability on the part of Westerners to relax. You will often find that Western people (especially women) cannot even sit down and enjoy a television programme without feeling guilty about their "idleness". Thus a woman will often knit or do similar handwork while watching television or talking to her friends.

Nevertheless the Western people I know (specifically the white Afrikaners) have a great respect for and devotion to God. They would therefore never consider leaving the church while the preacher is still preaching for the sole reason that they believe that they are wasting time. They will definitely complain to the preacher himself should he make a habit of preaching too long, but they would not leave the worship service. But in America, the researcher had witnessed that in some congregations, people left the worship service due to length of time so that they had to go out and attend to other matters. This is because the Westerner in the West is very time conscious so much that he prefers that the worship services should be confined strictly to the one hour time limit. For an African, time of worship services is flexible.

The time for worshipping God is also regarded as a time for socialising, sharing of experiences with one another, and solving problems affecting Christians in the particular congregation. Because of this attitude, African churches draw more people into their services than those practising Western patterns of worship. As Appiah-Kubi (1981:120) puts it: *The teaching of the Indigenous Churches have attracted many adherents among the Akans, who believe that for any religion to be meaningful, it must be practical, dynamic and problem solving.*

Indeed the practising of Christian virtues is encountered in nearly every African Church. It manifests itself in the way Christians help one another in times of sickness, funerals and in time of need.

3.5 The Language

Language is the most important medium of communication. A person have very useful information, or a very important message, but if he cannot communicate it efficiently to his listeners, he has already failed, for people will not understand what he wants to say. Even if a person has the ability to communicate, but uses the wrong words, or difficult or ambiguous words, it may lead the listener misunderstanding him.

Therefore it is advisable that the preacher should use simple words aimed at easy communication. He should use short sentences and words commonly used in the locality he is serving.

Africans use many proverbs in their day to day speech. They also use many idioms, and these are rich in meaning and expression. The preacher must learn, understand and use them properly in his sermon. But many modern preachers neglect this valuable resource. For this reason a preacher may think that he is communicating the message to his people effectively and correctly while he is not doing anything of the kind. Setiloane (1976::3) writes

that the need to know how Bantu-speaking people see God has been confirmed at every ecumenical meeting of African Christians since the inaugural Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AAAC) at Kampala in 1963. He says: *The tragedy of our situation is that in spite of 300 years of contact with our portion of the continent, in spite of our boast of many Churches and approximately 60 million Christians on the continent, Christianity is still a foreign religion to us...(Why?)*

Christians freedom demands a great deal of tolerance towards, and even a sympathetic listening to, those Africans who, while accepting the Christ, find it difficult to accept also the Western concepts of Roman-Greek cultural origin which wrap Him up as He is handed over to us.

This shows that the early missionaries thought that they communicated the gospel of Christ very well to the Africans when they saw many Churches established in Africa and the number of Christians rising to about 60 millions. But in actual fact this was not true because they enslaved the African Christians by imposing the Western culture on them. Thus African Christians were freed from African culture and then enslaved by the Western culture. There was a breakdown of communication between the missionaries and African Christians. For the African, the way in which the message was conveyed implied that in order to become a Christian he had to become like a Westerner and not like Christ. This was the message that was communicated to the African Christian. Hence he attempted to become like a Westerner. As Idowu (1965:5) writes: *By a certain miscarriage of purpose, however, their effort succeeded not only in enlightening, but also in enslaving mind, in as much as it inculcated that the only way to human dignity enslaving mind, in as much as it inculcated that the only way to human dignity and fullgrown personality was to be in everything like Europeans and to despise their own culture. It was in this way that Christianity arrived in Nigeria dressed up in European garb.*

If a preacher wishes to understand the people he is ministering to, he must learn their local language - words, proverbs and idioms - and use them correctly. Unless he does this, he may misunderstand the people and interpret their words and actions incorrectly. This was the case with many early missionaries. Bultmann (1987:318) writes: *Anyone who speaks of the devil can also speak of God! 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'. Certainly those religions intend to speak, not of the devil but of God.*

This is a good example of what may happen if a preacher regards the local language lightly. It also reflects clearly the great misunderstanding between the African and the Westerner. The word which the African used for God, was translated to mean devil, by the early missionaries. What a misunderstanding! All this was the result of a lack of knowledge of the local language. No wonder some early missionaries labelled many Africans devil-worshippers. It may have been due to this misunderstanding.

The African preacher must therefore be willing to learn and come to understand the local language very well so that he does not fall into the same pitfall as the early missionaries. And to do this he needs to be consciously African. This is not an easy road to take, as he has to fight against Western cultural ideas and forms that have been imposed on Africans. As Baeta (1968:129) confirms: *Thus the attempt to be consciously African must be understood as a rejection of a previous attempt to be European as well as being a reaction against the European imposed sense of African cultural inadequacy, or of guilt for the sin of Ham inculcated by fundamentalist Bible interpretation.*

And he adds: *The African Personality has (at least in Ghana) been employed as an expression of self-confidence that admits no need to apologise to anybody for things and manners African. The Yoruba attitude was reported to*

be that those who had lost their culture might need to parade it,... However, the necessity to accept much that is obviously not of African origin evokes a reaction and there is continuing tension with Europeans who are ambivalently (simultaneous conflicting feelings towards persons) regarded with admiration and as an influence to be eliminated by Africans.

This demonstrates the roughness of this road of being consciously African for the sake of Africans. This is the case because some Westerners do not want Africans to change what they have planted in the African minds, for fear of losing their superiority, or losing their jobs. Rev Paul Hosteta of the Reformed Bible College in America, who worked for more than ten years in Africa as a missionary taught the missiology class in 1986 that some missionaries are reluctant to give the necessary training to the local church leaders for fear of losing their jobs. Verstraelen-Gilhuis (1982:288) emphasises this when he says: *The danger is always imminent that one church feels superior to the other, because of her economic power, her splendid buildings, her intellectual superiority. Especially when it concerns Churches of different races, the chance is not unthinkable that this feeling of superiority assumes an extremely questionable character.*

It should be made clear that when the African talks of using African language, this does not imply that he desires to water down the Biblical Truth. NO! What he is looking for is an effective means of communication and effective expressions which are suitable for and acceptable to Africans.

This implies preaching the old doctrine in a new way that fits the African way of worship.

West (1975:171f) writes that the Zionist-type Churches in South Africa have both a form and content that differ from those of established Western Churches. But at the same time they proclaim something new that is based on the old, or something old in a new way. Thus the Zionists are able to

appeal to those who are seeking new values. West (1975:171f) writes: *We might say of the Zionist-type Churches that they fulfilled both functions and thereby attracted two sorts of people: Their Christianity was "new" to pagan converts, who at the same time were encouraged by the familiarity of certain "traditional" aspects. On the other hand their Christianity was "old" and familiar for Christian converts from the mission Churches whilst the African elements, particularly in healing, were in a sense 'new' to them and were part of the new values being sought by those who were unhappy with the strictly Western nature of most of the mission Churches.*

This method of distilling something new from the old in order to address the local listeners' needs, but without violating the Biblical truth, is what the African preacher must be encouraged to practise if he really wishes to help his listeners.

The African preacher, especially within the Mission Churches, needs to become flexible in certain ways in order to meet his congregation members' needs, otherwise he fails to be a pastor who looks after his sheep.

3.6 Singing and Dancing

The Africans love songs. Their many songs constitute a rich heritage that belongs to all Africa. Westerners may not believe it, but it is a fact: Africans like to sing. They are always singing, whether working, playing or they are showering, whether they are happy or sad, whether in the Church or outside the Church. And in singing they express themselves: all the joys and sorrows of their hearts; their hopes, their faith and fears about the future. And in this singing they also find a certain satisfaction for their hearts.

The African believes that singing is always the vehicle that conveys certain sentiments or truths. When these sentiments are connected with the Church service, they convey the worshippers' deep heart-faith in God. Appia-Kubi

(1981:124-5) writes: *The hymns and songs of most African Independent Churches are often remarkably short and simple. The contents embrace confessions, prayers and praises with constant refrains of "Amen; "Halleluja" and "Praise God".*

He continues: *Some of these hymns have been composed by the Church members themselves; others have been taken directly from the Mission Churches. Most of these hymns are sung with drum accompaniment, hand-clapping and dancing.*

The African Independent Churches have fully accepted the use of locally made drums. But the use of drums has been frowned (rejected) upon by the Mission Churches as pagan and therefore devilish. In fact, until recently no Christian could with impunity use any musical instrument in Church except the piano and organ, neither of which is built in Africa. Those who played the guitar were considered hooligans and unbelievers by members of the Mission Churches, and even today guitars are seldom allowed in Churches of missionary origin.

This shows that some Westerners are prejudiced. And this creates questions in African minds: Why does the Westerner reject drums? Is it because they are of pagan origin or is it because they are made by Africans? If he thinks that because they are of pagan origin they must not be used, then he must also reject the use of the piano and the organ in the church because there is no proof that these instruments were originally made by Christians. And if a Westerner rejects the drums because they are of African origin, this is unfortunate, because drums are made by the African to express and serve African not Western interests. It would therefore be better if Westerners were to allow African Mission Churches to use drums in their divine service as long as African members find it fitting to worship God in this way just as Western Christians regard it fitting to worship God by means of the piano and organ.

Appiah-Kubi (1981:124-5) remarks sharply on this: *If Westerners reject drums because they are made by Africans, we say, let drums be used in worshipping because it is the worship of God which suits Africans as organs suit the Western worshippers.*

If Westerners reject drums because they believe drums are made by pagans, then, Africans feel pity of them for being ignorant, because Africans believe too that even their organs and pianos are not all made by Christians which they use of worshipping God. *But they should also remember that the bread and wine we use for Holy Communion are not all made by Christians because we just buy them from supermarkets and use them for God's glory. In fact, we even don't know who made them.*

The Westerner should also realise that, depending on the meaning of the song, the African sings with a sad facial expression, while, on the other hand, he smiles and dances if the song expresses happiness. This should not surprise Westerners as it sometimes does when they see people singing, clapping hands and dancing while worshipping God. Some Westerners regard this as a sign that Africans are crazy that they do not know how to respect God and to worship him with reverence. Such Westerners misunderstand the Africans, because the opposite is true. For the African, singing, clapping hands and dancing means that he is worshipping God with his soul, spirit and body. It is a holistic form of worship. This accords with the contents of Psalm 149:3-4 and Psalm 150:1 ff. However, the author is very pleased to hear that this African custom of singing while clapping the hands and dancing in the church is also rapidly gaining ground now in some Western Churches like Madson Square Christian Reformed Church in Northern America. This means that the Africans too have something they can offer to the Westerners.

In (Psalm 149:3-4) we read:

*Let them praise his name with dancing,
and make music to him with tambourine (drum) and harp.
For the LORD takes delight in his people (NIV).*

Singing and dancing are mentioned in the Bible and are accepted as forms of praise by the Lord, (Psalm 149:3-4) REB. In fact, David danced before the Lord when the Ark of God was brought to Jerusalem in the Temple (2 Sam 6:14-16).

Kaigh (1947:26) says that Africans dance to encourage good spirits, and they also dance to ward off evil ones. It is their sole expression of individual or communal feeling. It is the major ceremony of their religion. It is a serious affair, and a good and useful one. Yes, dancing is their music hall, their drama, and their highest ecstasy (enjoyment).

The African likes to dance. Dancing is in his blood, and for the Westerner to tell the African to stop dancing while worshipping God, implies imprisoning him before God. This would be wrong, since a Christian is free in Jesus Christ. Therefore he needs to express his freedom before God as David did before the Ark of the Lord.

It is believed that most Africans experience problems with foreign tunes. Thus whether they are using a vernacular hymn book or an English hymn book, if the song is sung to a foreign melody, African worshippers do experience problems with the melody, or they sing but not with their whole heart. Sometimes they even stop singing. Idowu (1965:33-3) testifies: *The test which shows up this false sense invariably comes when, by some rare generosity of disposition, indigenous music is permitted during worship in any one of the Churches which are under European influence. At once every face lights up; there is an unmistakable feeling as of thirsty desert travellers who reach an oasis. Anyone watching them will know immediately that Nigerian worshippers are at home, singing heart and soul.*

This demonstrates why it is necessary for the preacher to prepare and to deliver the sermon in an African context when he preaches to the Africans. The use of African songs for an African divine service would thus cause the worship to come alive, to become more exciting and more enjoyable to the worshipper. But if foreign songs and tunes, are used, the service become boring and dull to the worshippers. One should remember that, next to the interest of God, it is the interest of the worshippers matters most in preaching.

3.7 The Church Choir and Drums

These days most of the African Churches have at least one choir or more than one. The choir is given an opportunity to sing before the service begins, during the service and at the end of the service when people are leaving the Church.

The choir sings the local songs composed by its members; sometimes it sings the songs from the hymn book, or songs from foreign ones. It has a variety of songs. Most of its songs are reasonably short. Bond (1979:73) writes: *The meeting begins and ends with the singing of religious songs. Some are Ghanaian in origin, others, translations of traditional European Christian hymns.*

This reminds the Westerner that the African, even though he is provided with some beautiful foreign songs, is not satisfied, because he craves something of his own.

Some choirs prefer to sing their songs to the accompaniment of drums and lyre "visekese". This leads us to another point regarding the importance of drums among Africans.

To African tribes drums are very important instruments because of their various uses within the society. Some drums are used for initiation

ceremonies, some are used to call the people to war, some for informing the public about funerals, others for greeting important people, others for special dances and still others for worshipping God. Kaigh (1947:18) writes: *War drums, beloved friends of the dramatists, undoubtedly exist, just as sirens exist in England today, both are almost equally obsolete-thank God!*

The function of war drums was similar to that of bugles (trumpets). They were used call the assembly and imbue the people with (inspire) a martial spirit. He goes on to say: *Regretfully one must deny that drums are used as a sort of shorthand transmitter, except within very narrow limits, such as sending greetings to VIPS, sounding alarms, and calling assemblies on special occasions. There are also drums which have a special significance in certain very secret dances, but more because of their rhythm than their special tone.*

This shows that to the African the drum is very important because it functions as a motivator, a siren, a caller, an instructor and or a greeter. In spite of all these services that the drum offers to the African, the Westerner, when they came with the gospel, told him to stop using the drum in worshipping God. The reason they gave for this ruling was that drums are heathen instruments. This has already been challenged under Point 3.1.6.

This attitude is unfair to the African. What the Westerner forgets is that his organs and pianos are merely replaced by drums and the lyre an (African piano) in the African context. Therefore, the Westerner must understand that for the African drumming, dancing and singing is a meaningful way of expressing themselves and serve to inspire them - whether they are worshipping, celebrating or pounding grains. This is similar to the Western spiritists who need hand-holding, dim lights and hymn singing to establish contact with the spirits. And Kaigh (1947:19) aptly remarks: *In some of the more erotic dances the frenzied rhythm of the weaning drummers is incredible. It does things to you, whether you will or not. It gets inside of you and tears you apart. Its lure (attraction) is so powerful that it takes a definite*

act of will to withstand its terrific pull. Once one has felt that tugging impulse, it becomes easy to understand the excesses of the willing co-operators. In Europe seances, the participants need hand-holding, the magic circle, dim lights and hymn singing to induce the rapport with the shy and retiring spirits.

In the case of the divine service the African is not concerned with the stimulation of sexual feelings, but with the stimulation of spiritual feelings. His argument is: if drums can arouse sexual feelings when used for that purpose, how much more will they arouse the spiritual feelings if they were to be used for worshipping God! In fact, drums are used by Africans for different purposes and they must be evaluated according to that purpose. So let drums be used in worshipping God as most Africans find that it works for them. The author is very glad to be able to report that quite a number of African Churches have already started to use drums in their divine services. And it works very well.

Indeed it is time for the Church in Africa to realise that in order to be effective in its life and mission in Africa, it must respect, preserve and dedicate to the glory of God anything that is of value in the culture and in the institutions of the country, as long as these things do not violate the Biblical principles. We need to remember that Jesus Christ said: *I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.*

Idowu (1965:7) reflects on this as follows: *The purpose of Christianity, She must constantly remember, is to fulfil, and not to destroy; to make free, and not to enslave. As the Church in Nigeria, she should bear the distinctive stamp of the country, although in essence she must preserve full allegiance to the eternal, cosmic, unchanging Christ, who is her only Lord.*

This means that the Church must identify itself with the local people it serves and the country in which it belongs. But it must still keep the Gospel of Christ unchanged. Thiel et al (1990:112) writes in much the same way when they

say, A strong and meaningful theology, of necessity, should be deeply rooted in culture. Paradoxically, it must preserve its universal traits whilst inculcating its particular qualities. It must make sure that the Church in Africa is Catholic (universal) and yet truly African.

Therefore, it must be made clear to Westerners and some Westernised Africans that when we speak of Africanising the church, or indigenising the Church, we are not speaking of changing Christ or his gospel, but merely the way in which this gospel of Christ must be communicated to Africans in order to be effective and meaningful to them.

3.8 Prayer

The prayer is a conversation between the Christian and God, or a conversation between the community of believers and God. During this conversation a Christian thanks God for what He has done for him, confesses his sins before God, asks for forgiveness of sins and for a new direction for his life style. Prayer also is praising God; adoring God and interceding for others.

In some African Churches, prayers are led by the pastor who leads the divine service, or by the assisting pastor, an elder, and even by the ordinary Christian if asked to do so by the preacher. Since each divine service contains more than three prayers, some African pastors prefer to delegate some of these prayers to other people as stated above. This is contrary to the Western pastor who prefers to do everything himself, even though other pastors may also be attending the service. The researcher saw this in some Christian Reformed congregations in North America; in Calvary Church of Non Denominational Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and also at Andrew Murray congregation of Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

The African likes the life of prayer. He likes prayers, especially prayers of petition and intercession. Smith (1950:153) confirms this when he says that *prayers of petition and intercession are inalienable (unremovable) part of Bantu religion.*

Some African Churches even pray right through the night on a regular basis or once per month. This custom is often rejected by Mission Churches, and is not practised by most of the Western Churches.

Africans' prayers are addressed to God. God emerges as the clearest and most concrete spiritual reality. Mbiti (1975:5) writes: *God is regarded and called upon as 'the Protector who looks after the country (214), to whom appeal is made for protection in time of war, adversity or other danger (Chapter 6).*

As Creator, God listens to, and hears, people appealing to him (213, 277). Indeed, praying to God assumes that he listens to people and pays attention to their communication. He is 'our Refuge' (255) in all conditions and eventualities of life.

This clearly shows that the African knows that he is praying to Him and he can communicate best with God in his own language and within the context of his own culture. Western people must understand that although Africans speak their own language, and uphold their own culture, God is still going to listen to them and hear them because He lacks nothing. He is the Omnipotent God, the Omnipresent God and the Omniscient God. So let the Western people not impose their cultural forms on the Africans, because God knows all the cultural forms in the world and hears all peoples in their own language. Prayer is very important to every Christian. The African Christian therefore takes prayer seriously because it allows him to have full communion with God. Bloom (1966:13) underlines this: *Prayer is the best way to go ahead towards the fulfilment of our calling, to become full humans, which means in*

full communion with God, and ultimately what St Peter calls partakers of the divine nature. That is why the African Christian is a person of prayer.

3.9 The Sermon

The sermon is the central focus of the divine service and one of the main vehicles by means of which the central message is transmitted.

In some Churches the sermon is conducted by the pastor, or the evangelist, or the church elder. In many Western Churches this is not acceptable, because only the pastor is entitled to preach and nobody else. In fact, in some Western Churches, the elder may only be allowed to read a sermon prepared by the pastor if the pastor himself is unable to attend or conduct the service.

The African Christian as well as the African pastor, considers the sermon to be a very useful source of information about proper and improper modes of behaviour. Thus content of the sermon may describe the proper mode of behaviour so that Christians may follow it. In the same way when the sermon content describes improper modes of behaviour the intention is to teach the Christians to abstain from such conduct. Bond (1979:74) writes: *Sermons vary in length, style and content, but both the pastor and the members of the congregation consider the sermon to be a source of information about proper and improper modes of behaviour. Although the sermon is created and delivered by the pastor, the congregation actively participates, demonstrating approval and agreement through applause and interjection, etc.*

This means that the African divine service is never limited to a fixed time as is the case in the Western church. The Western divine service only lasts for one hour. It is confined to a fixed period of time. Should the pastor fail to finish within the prescribed time, some members of the congregation will

complain. The African Christian will not readily do so. He will rather create time so that everything can be peacefully accomplished.

Sermons are prepared and delivered in various forms. It can, for example, take the form of a homily narrative, a drama. Or it may assume a typological inductive or deductive form, to mention but a few. These forms are used by different African Churches and on different occasions of worship. These forms shall to be discussed later.

Sermon contents cover a wide range of human activities. Willoughby (1970:1) says: *Bantu life is essentially religious... Religion so pervades the life of the people that it regulates their doings and governs their leisure to an extent that it is hard for Europeans to imagine. Materialistic influences from Europe are playing upon Africa at a thousand points and may break up Bantu life, but the Bantu are hardly likely to be secularised, for they will never be content without a religion that is not able to touch every phase of life and interpret the divine in terms of humanity.*

This means that the sermon content addresses all areas of human life - politics, the spiritual, social and family life, health, employment, etc. Thus it edifies, educates, equips and directs the people to a proper, meaningful life. And the African pastor is good at this. Bond (1979:74-5) confirms this in his analysis: *For a one month period, I recorded all 12 sermons given. Analysis of them reveals that the following major themes occurred:*

- a *salvation, appeared nearly in every sermon;*

- b *the exhortation to abstain from traditional religious practices (8 sermons);*

- c *personal responsibility (8 sermons)'*

- d *the Law of God above that of one's forefathers (6 sermons); not to envy the property of others, but to trust God (6 sermons); brotherly love for other Christians (5 sermons).*

And he concludes: *My observation over the period of a year confirms the predominance of these themes.*

This illustrates that the African pastor preaches the whole Counsel of God. He does not only preach the salvation of God, but also other major Biblical themes. The Pastor thus feeds his congregation members a very good balanced diet, on which they can depend during time of trials and temptations.

However, Bond (1979:79) adds that: *a major concern of many African Christian Churches is healing.*

This observation led Baeta (1962:47) to describe spiritualist Churches in Ghana as being preoccupied with the practice of faith-healing almost to the exclusion of any other interests. This approach to the biblical truth is to be discouraged because the community of believers must be equipped, edified and trained holistically.

3.10 Conclusion

The African Christian believes the divine service to be a time devoted to praising God, enjoying God and for fellowship among Christians. Indeed, it is regarded as a time of spiritual enrichment.

During the divine service the African Christian focuses on God and not on the length of time spent in doing so. His question is: Have I accomplished all that I am supposed to do in worshipping God? He does not ask: Do I have time to continue worship God?

The sermon is the climax of the divine service and one of the major vehicles for transmitting the message to the listeners.

CHAPTER 4

4 COMMUNICATION

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1-2

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom he made the universe (NIV).

4.1 Introduction

This quotation from the book of Hebrews speaks of communication between God and his people in the past and in the present. In the past God communicated with his people through the prophets at many times and in various ways. This type of communication is also found among many African communities where a third person is involved to complete the communication process. For example, if a person wants to speak to the chief, he has to speak through his intermediate. And this is done in various ways as it was done during the times of the prophets.

However, in the last days God changed the way of communicating with his people from communication through many persons (the prophets) to communication through one person, Jesus Christ, his Son. Communication therefore now involves one specific mediator (Jesus Christ) who described Himself as the only way to God the Father (John 14:6), and also depends on one specific channel (the Scriptures) which reveal Christ's mediation as prepared by God, (1 Tim 2:5-6). This shows that communication is a process and can take place between two persons, or among three persons with one acting as a mediator, or between groups with one group speaking to another group. It also teaches us that communication can take different forms at

different levels in that specific channels are used in specific situations as we shall now proceed to indicate.

4.2 Marriage

What is marriage? What is the importance of marriage? What is the guarantee of the marriage? Who are involved and responsible for the marriage? These are issues which demand our attention when we discuss marriage in the African context.

However, there are no easy answers to these questions. As the topic is discussed in detail every person will have to discover the answers for himself or herself.

In the African context, marriage is not merely a union between husband and wife as the Westerner may think. It is more than this. It is more than just the union of a husband and a wife because in the African context marriage confers social status on those who are married. As Kanyatta (1959:175) writes: *There is a fundamental idea among the Gikuyu that the larger the family is the happier it will be.*

He goes on, in Gikuya the qualification for a status to hold a high office in the tribal organisation is based on family and not on property as is the case in European society. It is held that if a man can control and manage effectively the affairs of a large family, it is an excellent testimonial of his capacity to look after the interests of the tribe whom he will also treat with fatherly love and affection as though it were all part of his own family. Thus, the saying: *Weega uumaga na mocie*, which means: 'A good leader begins in his own homestead'.

This means that if a person is not married he is not considered for tribal leadership, and if he has a small family, he may be considered for a lowly position but not for high ones.

Moreover, many Africans strongly believe that marriage implies having children, not just a union of husband and wife. And this desire to have children is found in both husband and wife. Kanyatta (1959:164) testifies to this: *The desire to have children is deep-rooted in the hearts of both man and woman, and on entering into matrimonial union they regard the procreation of children as their first and most sacred duty. A childless marriage in a Gikuyu community is practically a failure, for children bring joy not only to their parents, but to the clan as whole...The social position of a married man and woman who have children is of greater importance and dignity than that of a bachelor or spinster.*

This proves that one partner does not force the other to have children because both husband and wife desire children. Thus the story of husbands forcing their wives to have children is misleading because if the husband cannot procreate, the wife will complain to him or to the elders that she desires to have a child. A Nyanja/Chewa woman would say: *Ndifuna nyula yaleka-leka* meaning that, she needs a child.

So there is no validity to the story that men force women to have children. In fact Kanyatta (1959:185) states: *When there are no children in a matrimonial union the separation or divorce is simpler than otherwise. In the Gikuyu system of marriage the presence of children is a sure sign of keeping the two coupled together in harmony.*

This illustrates that among the Gikuyu people a child is regarded as a guarantee of the marriage.

More over, marriage in the African context is a contract between husband and wife, but above all it is a bridge between the two families - the family of the husband and that of his wife. Thus the two families are linked together by the marriage of their children. As Kanyatta (1959:163) puts it: *We may mention here that the Gikuyu system of courtship is based on mutual love and gratification of sexual instinct between two individuals. And therefore, a family is constituted by a permanent union between one man and one woman or women (if not Christian marriage)... On signing the matrimonial contract the marriage ceases to be merely a personal matter, for the contract binds not only the bride and bridegroom, but also their kinsfolk (relatives).*

This may sound strange to a Westerner, but it is a fact that in many African tribes marriage also involves relatives. In fact the involvement of the relatives in the couple's marriage is very important and their input is highly respected by the couple. If it were not the case, Africa would have had more divorces than the Western world, but now it has fewer divorces than the Western world because of this wisdom inherited from their forefathers - the wisdom which the Western world lacks or has lost. Since to the Westerner marriage only comprises a contract between husband and wife, the couple are free to keep it or to destroy it. It is entirely up to them, and does not involve the relatives as in the case of Africans. The two world cultures are therefore reflected in their marriage customs. Because the Westerner believes in an individual decision which is influenced by an individualistic system, he will divorce his wife without involving his relatives. The African, on the other hand, who is influenced by a communal system which he believes to be the best system for him, will only act on a collective decision after the relatives have fully participated on the matter.

Thomas (1987:27) writes: *It is culture which provides the base for a meaningful system of human actions; and cultural norms are oriented towards movements and patterns for actions. Images and symbolic forms such as*

verbal and nonverbal codes constitute the cultural galaxies (assemblies) of a meaningful human interaction system.

Thomas is right in maintaining that culture provides the basis for a meaningful system of human actions because culture provides the system for managing human marriage, for communication within the society, and guidelines as to what one should do in certain situation. Above all, culture gives an identity to a particular community. For instance, one can recognise an American by the fact that he holds his fork in his right hand, while the Englishman can be identified by the fact that he holds the fork in his left hand and his knife in his right hand.

4.3 Communication in the African family

As far as the traditional African family is concerned, most of the tribes practise the three-fold pattern of communication or the triangular communication system. Thus, a message passes from father through mother to the child. The child has no direct access to his/her father, but approaches him through his mother. Similarly if the father wants to talk to a child, especially a girl, he approaches the child through the wife who speaks to her in his behalf. Only in a crisis will the father speak to the child or the child to the father directly. The reason for this custom is that in this cultural context a child feels more comfortable speaking to the mother than speaking to the father. And it is also said that some fathers fear that they may lose authority if they were to talk to a child directly.

In the traditional African family sex education is not provided by the child's parents, nor are sexual matters discussed in the presence of his or her parents. The grandparents or someone chosen by the parents provides this training. In some African societies it is provided by someone appointed by that particular society to train their children. For example, among the Gikunyu people, the person appointed for initiation training, does this work of sexual

training. A man trains the boys while a woman gives instructions to the girls. This sexual instruction is given to boys and girls to prepare them for adulthood. Radcliffe-Brown (1950:28) confirms this when he says the following: *In Africa generally there is a marked condition of restraint on the behaviour of children in the presence of their parents. They must not indulge in levity or speak of matters connected with sex. There is very much less restraint on the behaviour of grandchildren in the presence of their grandparents.*

This confirms what type of issues a child can discuss with his parents and what not. In Western culture parents are responsible for their children's sexual education. This is in contrast to the African culture as already mentioned above.

Moreover, the grandparent is an important communicator in the African family. Westerners must know that the grandparent is highly respected in the African family. And if there is a problem between the parents and a child, a grandparent can intervene between parents and a child without being invited to do so. And their presence in the family becomes a blessing in most cases. Radcliffe-Brown (1950:28) puts it beautifully: *A child who feels that he is being treated with severity by his father may appeal to his father's father. The grandparents are the persons above all others who can interfere in the relations between parents and children. The possibility of this interference has important social functions.*

This echoes what an elderly Chewa woman remarked about the Chewa, Senga and Bemba people in Zambia, the presence of the grandmother minimises possible friction between mother and daughter.

Africans believe that communication in the family is based on keeping the secrets of the family. It is said that if the members of the family, especially the wife, do not keep the secrets of their family, the family can easily break down.

Because of this principle, the girl is taught from the age of puberty that she must keep the secrets of her family. Mair (1965:97) states: *A girl is brought up to believe that the dignity of the mistress of a house demands decent concealment of dissension (disagreement) within it. (Ofuga enyumbayo, obi kako bingi- "You are mistress of your house and must cover up much in it").*

The same expression or proverb is also found among the Nyanja/Chewa speaking people. In Chewa it is formulated as follows: *Kumanga nyumba yako ndi kusunga chinsinsi cha nyumba*, which can be translated as: *For one to keep her house she must keep the secrets; or, To build up her marriage is to keep its secrets.*

And Mair (1965:97) adds: *Above all, she must never quarrel with her husband in public. One of the commonest complaints against modern wives is that they are too ready to tell tales of their husbands.*

Mair is right, a wife speaking about her husband in public does not conform with the African culture, it is borrowed from the Western culture. Since it is not of African origin, it creates conflict between husband and wife. Such a woman may not be capable of keeping the secrets of her family or of building her marriage.

By the way, the Westerner must understand that an African believes in an extended family system. An extended family involves the father, mother, children and relatives living together. There are two major distinctive extended family systems - patrilineal and matrilineal family systems. The patrilineal extended family is composed of the father and the mother, their sons and the sons' wives including their children. As Radcliffe-Brown (1950:5) puts it as follows: *A patrilineal extended family is formed by a custom whereby sons remain in their father's family group, bring their wives to live with them, so that their children also belong to the group.*

The matrilineal extended family is the opposite of the patrilineal extended family in the sense that it consists of the father and the mother with their daughters and their husbands including their children. For example, the Bembas in Zambia practise a matrilineal extended family system and the Gonies again are patrilineal. In the latter case, the daughter treats all the children of other daughters as hers. Children of this clan, are not allowed to marry each other.

Radcliffe-Brown (1950:8) summarises the two family systems in the following words: *A man classifies the children of his brothers with his own children, but uses a separate term for the children of his sisters. Inversely a woman classifies with her own children with the children of her sisters but not those of her brothers. Classificatory terminologies of this kind are found in a great many African peoples.*

No wonder they are regarded as the two major family systems among the African people.

One might ask: Why should students of communication concern themselves with the literature on a family process, or why should theologian students and preachers study the literature on a family process? The primary reason is that as a communication science, a family process has both empirical and hermeneutic objectives (Bochner, 1985), therefore it is worthwhile to study the literature on the family process. Some researchers have discovered that the family of origin is generally considered to be the earliest and most powerful source of influence on one's personality as well as a primary locus of support throughout life. Furthermore it is generally believed, whether rightly or wrongly, that the interpersonal difficulties associated with family life have much to do with communication. If this is true, the preacher must take family process literature seriously because a church also functions as a family. He therefore needs to understand how family members communicate

with one another, and what social communication systems are encountered in the society he ministers to. This takes us to a next level of communication.

4.4 Communication in the African society

In the African society communication with different people with different status within the society assumes different forms. A few selected levels of communication in the African society will be discussed next.

4.4.1 Communication between a headman and his people

The headman is the leader of the village, and the village is made up of various families. Thus communication in the village is broader than that within a single family. For example, if there is a dispute between two families in the village, the case is dealt with in the following way: First the heads of the two families involved agree to bring their families together to resolve the matter amicably without involving the headman, but of course with someone neutral sitting with them as observer and advisor. If the two families fail to settle the case, the issue is taken to the headman of the village to resolve it. Before the headman and his elders both the complainant and the defender are given a chance to explain what their problem is. After hearing from both, the headman acts as a judge or a counsellor. If one party is not satisfied with the judgement of the headman, he is allowed to appeal to the chief.

4.4.2 Communication between the chief and his people

In this case the complainant and the defender are introduced to the chief by the headman or a representative of the headman from whose village the two parties hail. After the headman has finished the introduction, both the complainant and defender are asked to explain the whole matter before the chief. However, according to African custom, before any of the parties opens

his or her mouth he/she must first give a gift to the chief. Failure to do so results in no discussion and no hearing.

In Nyanja/Chewa this offering is called "mphantso" or "mtulo" (something unload), which means that the complainant has been carrying a load which he wants to unload before the chief. This load is the problem he wishes to bring before the chief. If the chief accepts his gift, it means that the chief is allowing him to state his problem. When both the complainant and defender have been given a chance to state their side of the case, the chief and his elders look into the matter and pass a verdict. This court is the second highest in the hierarchy. If one party is still not satisfied with the verdict passed by the chief, he is free to appeal to the Paramount Chief.

Westerners should understand that if an African gives a gift to the chief in order for his case to be discussed, this does not amount to bribing him as Westerners may think. In African tradition this is not bribery, it is a token of respect for the chief. It is the right action. And it has the cultural approval of the community. In fact the higher a person appeals, the bigger the gift he carries with him to the authority because he has to show greater respect to the higher authority. The Westerner says: *The higher you go the cooler it becomes.*

But the African would say: *The higher you go the heavier it becomes.*

4.4.3 Communication between the paramount chief and his people

This is the highest court and the highest level of communication in an African society practising the Chieftaincy. The people are aware that they cannot go to the paramount chief directly, but have to pass through headman and chief. Only in times of crisis a direct approach to the chief and paramount chief is acceptable. People are aware that if they go to the chief or paramount chief, they must have a gift for him. For the purpose of continuity let us continue

with the story of unsatisfied complainant. When he approaches the paramount chief, the complainant is aware that he is in the presence of the highest authority, the most important person and the most respected man in the society. Hence he chooses his words carefully and gives the best gift to the paramount chief to prepare the way for the discussion process to begin. He pays the greatest respect to the paramount chief, and he is ready to accept anything that he says. So when the gift is given to the paramount chief and he accepts it, it is a sign that conversation will take place. If by any chance the gift is rejected by the paramount chief, it means that he is not willing to speak to the person concerned.

In studying this African social communication system, one discovers that it comprises certain communication models such as the following:

- Interpersonal communication, which implies communication taking place at personal level.
- Verbal model communication, which implies that communication is verbalised.
- Non-verbal model communication (Knapp, 1978), that is communication by means of body language without the message being verbalised.
- Symbolic communication, in which a symbol conveys a message about something else. For instance, a bigger gift given to a higher official or a more important and respected leader in the community, symbolises the respect due to the person's position.

Furthermore, it would be no exaggeration to say that Africans learned to give gifts to their tribal leaders long before missionaries came to Africa. And if the modern preacher should use this knowledge already invested in the African and give it a new meaning, a Christian meaning, it would make a great

difference in an African Christian community as far as the finances of the church are concerned. As Thiel *et al*, (1990:109) writes: *When the first missionaries entered England, they discovered that the pagan Saxons there used to celebrate the feast of their goddess, Ostara, with bonfires in the spring of each year. They transformed that feast to commemorate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, retaining even the bonfires, and the name, from which is derived the English word Easter.*

In this case the Saxons did not find it difficult to celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ because they were already used to that kind of celebration. They only had to learn its new meaning. This is what is meant when it is recommended that a Christian meaning be given to some African ways of doing things. One may hope that the old meaning of the Saxon celebration is completely gone and that what remains is the present one - Christ's resurrection. And if this is so, one can image how much change this brought to the world, especially to the Saxon community.

4.5 Communication in the African church

Communication in the African church takes place at various levels between different people and different groups. For the purpose of this study the Reformed church in Zambia (RCZ) was chosen because the researcher has studied it for twenty-one years. At the congregation level the communication system involves the following:

4.5.1 Communication between the Christian and the elder

For each section of the congregation there is an elder and a deacon who are responsible for all the Christians in their section. They have to see to both their physical and spiritual needs. Thus if any Christian in a certain section has a problem, the first person to be informed is the elder or the deacon of that particular section before it is communicated to anybody else. The elder

and his deacon are responsible for reporting to the church council any sickness, funeral, or a case affecting their section. Both are obligated to do regular house visitation in their section and to edify the Christians spiritually.

4.5.2 Communication between the elder and other elders

In the case of a funeral, the elder of the section is responsible for informing other sections of the funeral through their elders in writing or verbally. He also ought to tell the pastor of the church about it. For any case affecting a section to be discussed by the church council, it must be tabled by the elder concerned, or someone who has been authorised by the elder of the section to do so in his absence. In short, no elder or deacon is allowed to report a case concerning any section to the church council without having first discussed it with the elder of the section concerned. The elder of the section also has the powers to look after the physical and spiritual welfare of other elders as long as they belong to his section, but he has no right to discipline them. This power is vested in the church council.

4.5.3 Communication between the elder and pastor

The pastor and the elder work hand in hand in many issues and even with regard to some decision-making. For instance, the pastor together with the elders and deacons form a church council which governs the congregation. During the holy communion, the pastor and the elder work together to see who are not qualified to partake of the Lord's supper because they are under discipline or have committed an offence which deserves a disciplinary action. May the Westerner learn that as far as the sacraments are concerned, the African church believes in both self-examination and the elder's close supervision; while the Western church only depends on self-examination.

4.6 Communication models in general

4.6.1 Introduction

The modern English word communication comes to us from the Latin root "communis" or common. In the broad sense of the word, communication is a process in the course of which, through the exchange of messages, people come to share and to hold common thoughts, feelings and actions. The message may be verbal or non verbal or sometimes a combination of verbal and non verbal.

There is a real need for communication in preaching to form part of the curriculum for preachers. Since by the nature of his work, the preacher is a communicator, a knowledge of the communication process becomes a necessity to him. Because if a preacher is to proclaim the Word of God to the people, he must be able to communicate the message to them. And this process of taking the message to the people is what we call communication. One must remember that there are bad and good communicators in the world. But a preacher must always strive to be a good communicator because of the message which has been entrusted to him by God - the message of salvation, good news, hope, forgiveness of sin and reconciliation.

The question is how can a preacher become a good communicator? This is a good question. It is important that one should understand that the preacher is not born a good communicator, but he must be teachable, flexible and adjustable in order to meet this requirement. One, therefore has to be willing to learn what the secular world has put in place as far as communication is concerned. Learned people have written about proper methods of approach to be followed in communication, and have proposed good principles to guide us towards effective communication.

These proper methods of communication are formulated scientifically, philosophically, empirically and mathematically. However, if one studies them closely, one finds that they are well-suited to the situation of the preacher - theologically, homiletically and culturally.

Because of the importance of the subject, it is strongly suggested that for a preacher the study of communication is a necessity in order for him to be effective in his ministry. Since communication is a broad subject, we shall discuss a few selected models which will provide us with a full exposure to the communication process.

4.6.2 The Aristotelian model

This model fixes attention on three elements: the speaker, the message and the audience. This model has guided the study of public address and homiletics over the years. It points out that attention should be paid to the speech itself in order to study its parts, the organisation of material, its arguments and the way in which information is handled. One must also focus on the audience: what they are, their age, social life and culture. Through audience analysis, a speaker finds his target. It even makes sense to study the speaker himself: whether he has a good character, is an important person in the community, enjoys their goodwill and has a good sense of humour.

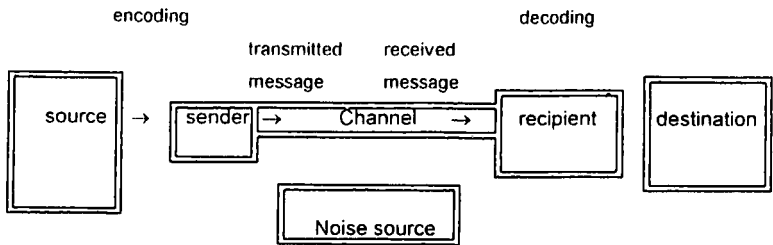
This model is not regarded as very effective nowadays because it lacks the communication element called channel. However, Berlo (1960:29) notes that most of the current communication models are similar to this model of Aristotle.

4.6.3 The Shannon-Weaver model

The Shannon-Weaver model deals with five elements of the communication process: a source from which the message comes, a transmitter that encodes

the message, a signal that carries it, a receiver that decodes (translates) the message and a destination to which the message is directed. In this model one sees several links in the communicative process that are not apparent in the Aristotelian design. This shows that this model is more effective than Aristotle's.

The Shannon-Weaver model can be portrayed diagrammatically as follows:



Sources: Fauconnier 1985:43 and Shannon-Weaver 1949:7

Source and sender: It is said that in most descriptions of the communication process only the sender is mentioned. However, in a technical model these concepts are distinguished. For example, during a telephone conversation the brain or the mouth is the source, while the telephone is the sender of the message. If one thinks of the preacher preaching to a congregation, which is a face to face communication, one would describe the brain as the source and the mouth as the sender of the message. Fauconnier (1985:44) says: *A real signal is the spoken or written form of a word.*

Receiver and destination: This implies converting "the content of the mind" into a code which makes transmission possible. Thus the sender converts the content of the mind into signs (spoken or written word, images or sounds) so that they are transmitted to the receiver through the channel. When the receiver receives them, he decodes (translates) the original message for himself to restore the original meaning.

Channel: This indicates a link which bridges the gap between source and receiver. Fauconnier (1985:45) adds that *it can also indicate the (material) means by which signs and signals are transmitted, for example wires, cables, tubes, lines, air and water. The term can also be applied to radio and television which enables us to receive programmes (programmed messages) via various channels.*

Message: This term signifies that which is expressed and transmitted to the receiver and can refer to any of the following: meaning, information, opinion, knowledge, feelings, signs or facts. It can also mean written or spoken words.

The Shannon-Weaver model therefore has ways of analysing of the source, the encoding transmitter, the signal, the decoding receiver and the destination. Hence these can increase someone's understanding and facilitate his use of the communication process. The model is very useful for technological communication. But as far as human communication is concerned, one needs something more advanced than this. Berlo's SMCR Model is one of the more appropriate models for human communication.

4.6.4 The Berlo SMRC model

Abbey (1973:32) says: *Berlo's model is designed for the study of human communication, as distinguished from technological communication.*

The DK Berlo model deals with the four elements of the communication process: source (S), message (M), channel (C), and receiver (R). The SMCR communication model can be outlined as follows (Kellerman, 1978:73) and (Berlo, 1960:72):

S	M	C	R
SOURCE	MESSAGE	CHANNEL	RECEIVER
Communication	Elements	Seeing	Communication
Skills	Structure	Hearing	Skills
Attitudes	Content	Touching	Attitudes
Knowledge	Treatment	Smelling	Knowledge
Social System	Code	Tasting	Social system Culture

The following components are included in this model:

4.6.4.1 The source

The source is a person who wants to communicate the message to the receiver. One may ask therefore ask: Does such a person have the skill of communication? Certain skills such as writing, speaking, reading, listening and discussing can facilitate communication. Kellerman (1978:74) notes that, "... the words we can command and the way that we put them together affect

- (a) what we think about
- (b) how we think, and
- (c) whether we are thinking at all".

4.6.4.2 Knowledge of the source

It is important that one understands that the amount of knowledge a source has about his subject, will greatly affect his message. As Berlo (1960:48) puts it as follows: *One cannot communicate what one does not know; one cannot communicate with maximum effectiveness content material that one does not understand.*

4.6.4.3 The social system of the source

One must know the kind of social system within which the source is operating. This is important because different people from different social systems or cultures communicate differently.

4.6.4.4 The attitudes of the source

Attitudes can be subdivided into three: attitude toward the self; attitude towards the subject and attitude towards the receiver. A negative self-attitude or a negative attitude towards the subject makes communication unsuccessful; while a negative attitude towards the receiver complicates the communication objective.

All these factors - skills, knowledge, social-cultural context and attitudes also apply to the receiver. Fauconnier (1985:47) writes: *The source is required to speak and write well, while the recipient should be able to listen and read well the required communication skills.*

4.6.4.5 The message

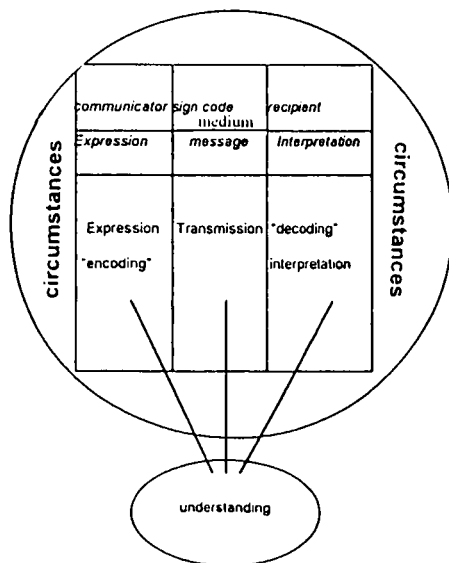
A message is defined as the actual physical product of the source encoder. When one speaks, the speech is the message. When a person writes, the writing is the message; when he paints a picture, the picture is the message. Even if he uses gestures, the movements of his arms and the expressions on his faces constitute the message. However, one must pay attention to three message factors: message code, message content and the message treatment. They are very important as far as message is concerned.

4.6.4.6 The channel

Channel is the bridge between the sender and the receiver. Berlo's communication model helps us to see the interacting parts of the process in ways that can advance our study materially at this point, in the sense that in dealing with the four elements mentioned above, it proceeds further the other models. It also accepts that a sender must know the social system and culture of the receiver.

4.6.5 The analytical model of M van Schoor

The analytical model of M van Schoor (in Fauconnier 1985:56; figure 3:10) is constructed around three components: communicator, medium and recipient. The communicator wants to express a message intended for the recipient, so he uses a medium which combines codes and signs.



This communication model is characterised for the most part by intersubjectivity. Fauconnier (1985:57) writes:

According to Van Schoor communication is characterised essentially by intersubjectivity, that is: *The understanding that results from communication and interpretation, and leads to mutual understanding. This means that there always exists some kind of common bond between source, message and recipient. This bond makes it possible to interpret a message accurately...*

The common bond therefore makes both source and recipient subjective to the message. This model is divided into four steps:

Step one is the externally visible stage of communication where we find the communicator, signs, code, medium and recipient.

The second step reflects the inner dimension where the meaning of the message is expressed and interpreted.

The third step is that of action, Fauconnier (1985:57) states: *The source communicates, encodes and delivers the message at the point where it can be decoded and interpreted by their recipient.*

The fourth step is the dimension of the social circumstances in which the communication process takes place. Thus the communicator expresses himself according to his own circumstances and transmits the message to the recipient who in turn, decodes and interprets it according to his own circumstances too, to arrive at a point of mutual understanding. Fauconnier (1985) notes that the Van Schoor communication is essentially a quest for mutual understanding and even for well-being. He regards the pursuit of mutual understanding as a dramatic synthesis of the communication process as well as the core of all human communication. Thus Van Schoor

emphasises on mutual understanding between communicator, message and recipient.

This model is effective for the human communication process because the recipient plays a very prominent role in it. The socio-cultural framework also is mentioned explicitly as a co-determining element by Van Schoor as well as Berlo.

4.6.6 The AD Litfin communication model

The Litfin communication model comprises three steps: a source, a signal and a receiver. It can be portrayed diagrammatically as follows.

Source encoding \Rightarrow SIGNAL \Leftarrow decoding RECEIVER

Source: Litfin 1981:15

This diagram shows that human communication involves three steps:

- 1 A source encodes his meaning in a signal.
- 2 The signal of the source which carries the meaning of the source is transmitted to a receiver.
- 3 The receiver decodes it, attributing meaning to it.
- 4 Finally, if the meaning the receiver finds in the signal is similar to the meaning the source (sender) intended, communication has occurred. If it is not the same, communication has failed. Litfin (1981:15) says: *To the extent that the two meanings do not match, communication has not occurred*

However, there are other writers who have also come up with their own theories concerning communication in preaching such as Pieterse and Sweazey to mention a few. Pieterse (1987:74) says: *When God's Word truly happens through the words of the preacher, that sermon is a Word event. The nature of this Word event is communication between God and man in the poignant (pricking) sense of something in common, something shared, a fellowship - an encounter culminating in a relationship of faith.*

One could say that preaching as a communication event exhibits the nature of a dialogue. In this communication event the Holy Spirit is at work as an unseen agent effecting a communication event which culminates in faith.

Sweazey (1976:46) writes: *Communication is the church's business. The church is called to proclaim, to evangelize, to teach; its health depends on how well its members communicate with each other; its Lord is the Word.*

Thus Sweazey believes that the church is a system or an organisation which facilitates communication. He is right because we do have a social system and organisation which facilitates communication.

4.6.7 Conclusions concerning a communication model for the African context

In the African context of all the communication models mentioned above, the two models: DK Berlo's and M Van Schoor hold the best promise of doing well in the African community because of the following reasons:

- According to Berlo's model, both communicator and receiver need to have communication skills. Thus the communicator will have to have African communication skills to communicate the message effectively to an African receiver

- According to Berlo's model states both communicator and receiver must have attitudes. In this case the preacher must have an African attitude in preaching to the African community in order to be able to communicate the message to them. He must not have a Western attitude which is foreign to them.
- Berlo's model insists that both the communicator and the receiver's social systems must be involved in communication process. This is a important factor which Westerners tend to ignore when evangelising an African community. Westerners usually regard their social system as superior to the receivers' (African) social system. Berlo's model is therefore an appropriate communication model for the African community because it will recognise the African social system.
- Berlo's model demands that the cultures of both the communicator and the receiver be taken seriously in the communication process. This is an element which the early missionaries did not even dream about when they brought the gospel to Africa. Hence Berlo's communication model will be suitable for communicating the gospel to the African people. It will utilise their culture which is a very important element in communication system, since culture shapes the thoughts and lifestyle of the people. But it is an element which Western missionaries deliberately overlooked because they wanted to do things their way.
- Similarly, Van Schoor's communication model would work effectively in the African community. The major characteristic of this communication model is the intersubjectivity of the communicator and the recipient with regard to the message. There is thus a kind of common bond between communicator, message and recipient. This common bond makes it possible for the communicator to transmit the message to the recipient accurately. And since the message is transmitted accurately by the source to the recipient, the recipient interprets it correctly and mutual

understanding is achieved. In the African context, this model can work for the African preacher. This means that the preacher must know an African socially, mentally and culturally in order to have a kind of common bond to facilitate communication. To do this, the preacher must submit to the listener as well as a listener to the preacher. Finally both the preacher and listener must submit to the message - the Word of God. For the Word gives them character accepted by God.

4.7 Communication language

One must not be surprised at the fact that we speak of communication language because nearly all professional fields have their own languages. That is why we hear people talking about medical language, political language, theological language and military language. Even parental language is also recognised in the world. The best ever known phrase is "parental advice".

The question is: What is the language? What is communication language? What does a person mean when he speaks of communication language? These are good questions to devote attention to if one wishes to address this topic comprehensively. Let us therefore briefly consider these questions one by one.

What is language? Here we are concerned with the concepts, terminology and idioms used in preaching and communication. The language consists of oral and written words for communication purposes. It is the way people express themselves and the words and concepts they apply to things that concern them. Thus for the preacher to communicate properly, he must be conversant with the mental, cultural and conceptual world of his listener and speak to him in those terms. This matches what Pieterse (1987:124) says: *People's reading matter moulds their concepts, thoughts and mental world.*

This means that the preacher who preaches to such people must also be interested in reading various books, newspapers and magazines in order to meet his listeners in their own world, because language reflects the human mind.

What is communication language?

When a person speaks of communication language, he means a language which can convey a message to the listener; he means a common language, a familiar language spoken or written by the community concerned. Let us clarify this point further: when one speaks of using a common or familiar language, one does not mean English, Chewa, Swahili or Zulu, but concepts, idioms and terminologies which are known to the audience. This is what is called communicative language. If the preacher uses the common language in his preaching, people will listen to him and the message will be communicated to them, for listeners feel very happy and motivated to pay attention to such preacher. They believe that the preacher knows them and is part of them when he uses the common language spoken by the community in his sermon. This is how communicative language sounds in the ears of the listener.

However, communication in preaching has its own terminology just as any other professional field. The same words can be used in other fields, but they may have different meanings than in this field. Without wasting time here are a few terms belonging to the field of preaching:

- **Proclamation:**

This means to proclaim the Gospel; to announce the good news for mankind. It is to announce what God has done for mankind in Jesus Christ.

- **Information:**

In communication science this word is used in a very specific circumscribed sense. It relates to the unexpected news. It tells people something they did not know before. Hence the gospel is news of this kind. That is why the preacher has the task to dig up the old treasures of God (Word) so that he can convey to the congregation the new information they have never heard before.

- **Worship:**

For Christians, worship is to worship God. Blackwood (1981:118) says: *Christian worship is God, seen and adored through the life and cross of Jesus, who is the supreme proof of God's goodness.*

- **Pluralism:**

This does not mean a boy to boys or a girl to girls, but meaning different cultures, languages, traditions, values and norms found in a community. Pieterse (1987:123) says: *Pluralism refers to the aforementioned diversity of the life styles, views, jargon, values and norms found in a differentiated community. Naturally this pluralism is manifested in the church as well...*

Therefore, because of the pluralism found in the church, the preacher must use the common language to accommodate all his listeners.

- **Content:**

The content of the sermon in preaching comprises the ideas, thoughts, concepts, illustrations, interpretation and theology as they are found in that sermon.

- **Evangelize:**

This means to bring the gospel to the people And speech is oral communication.

- **Verbalisation:**

In homiletics this word is often referred to as delivery. Delivery in this sense refers to the way the content is presented. In preaching delivery involves the body language, non-verbal language and gestures of the preacher, including the vocal variety, pitch, volume, gestures, movements, eye contact and so on.

In conclusion the researcher wants to conclude this topic with Nichols's (1980:61) words: *For effective preaching, the languages of preaching must be appropriately connected to the experience they shape and consistent with their context.*

From this one can see the need for preaching the Gospel to an African according to the African lifestyle experience, culture and understanding. The question is who can do this very well? The answer is, of course, an African, because an African has the experience and understanding of life in the African context. The foreigner without this experience will be preaching in the air without directing the message to the people's hearts for their edification and spiritual growth. As Nichols (1981:61) says: *If we either disconnect or decontextualize them (languages and experience they shape), we are in*

trouble. If we keep them straight, we ought to be well on the way to doing in preaching what we aim to do as prophets and priests.

In short Nichols says that if we do not contextualise the message, we have failed in our work as preachers. This leads us to what the barriers to communication in preaching.

4.8 The communication barriers in preaching

By communication barriers the researcher means things, words, actions or elements which can stop, confuse or disrupt communication in preaching. He warns both the Westerner and the African that some of the factors influencing communication can also play the role of a barrier if taken as a negative point instead of a positive point. For example, good listening is a factor which influences communication and so is a good attitude; while a bad attitude functions as a barrier to communication. Here are a few barriers to communication:

4.8.1 Failure to listen

Failure to listen is a barrier to communication. As Pieterse (1987:80) testifies: *Speech without listening is empty. Listening is an indispensable part of communication. When the art of listening is lost, the art of communication is also lost.*

4.8.2 Noise

In the case of preaching noise includes all those things that disturb communication between people. These can include a poor relationship between the preacher and congregation members; noise drowning the preacher's voice or psychological problems. Even bias or hatred of the preacher and his message constitutes noise which disrupts communication.

4.8.3 Lack of sincerity

Lack of sincerity on the part of the preacher bars communication in preaching. Sincerity is a strong factor in communication. When this is lacking, it greatly weakens communication. Pieterse (1987:93) confirms: *Sincerity on the part of the preacher is a cardinal requirement of good communication and enhances the credibility of his message.*

4.8.4 Cultural conflicts

Cultural conflicts are barriers to communication. Sproule (1981:20) writes: *When cultures are in conflict, communication is often at the root of the problem. This is evident in the following description of an advance manual concerning how to behave when doing business in the People's Republic of China*

And he proceeds to quote from *Odessa American* (October 28, 1973:104) *Failure to observe the special set of the rules for China, the manual notes, can turn frustration into failure as it did for one European businessman "who playfully flipped a piece of ice from his drink at a companion". The cube missed the target and landed on a nearby official. The businessman was sent home and so was another visitor who playfully patted a waitress. Flirting with Chinese women, even in the most innocent way, is definitely out", says the manual. Also: "Do not touch any part of your acquaintances anatomy... Shaking hands is the exception, but shoulder-slapping, button-holding and arm-gripping are in extremely bad taste" (Ibid).*

This illustrates how serious it is to be in conflict with other people's culture and how important it is to learn and understand other people's culture for the sake of mutual communication. There are numerous barriers to communication, but the few listed and explained are enough to serve as an

eye-opener and let us see and understand what can disrupt communication in preaching

4.9 Conclusion

Research has shown that an African family and the African society communicate in different ways from the Western family and society.

It has also revealed to both African and Westerner that communication in general occurs at different levels, involving many elements depending on the type of communication model, and happens in various ways depending on what one wants to accomplish.

It was also discovered in the course of the research that there are at least four kinds of factors that influence a communication source - encoder and recipient-decoder. These are communication skills, attitudes, knowledge and social cultural system. And each of these factors affects one's communication, behaviour, purpose, encoding mechanism and messages. And similarly, each factor affects the way in which the recipient responds to his messages. Because of these reasons, an African asks: Is it not possible for a sermon to be prepared and delivered to the African community in the African way rather than in a Western way, because communication factors include the social cultural system and attitudes of the particular community? Since these two communication factors are very different in the African culture compared to the Western Culture, do they not create cultural conflict? Of course the conflict is there, but a further question is: Does this conflict not bar communication between communicator and recipient?

Remember when cultures are in conflict, communication is often at the root of the problem. And Achebe (1966 4) says remarkable in this regard *We are proud to be Africans Our leaders are not those intoxicated with Oxford, Cambridge or Harvard degrees but those who speak the language of the*

people Away with the damnable (condemning) and expensive university education which only alienates an African from his rich and ancient culture and puts him above his people .

Achebe is concerned about the African identity and style of communication which are at threatened by the Western cultural influence.

CHAPTER 5

5 THEORY OF PREACHING

5.1 Introduction

Is there any need for preaching today? Is there any place for preaching in the modern African church and in the modern African world? Are people not so highly educated and do they not possess such a lot of skills and knowledge that they no longer need anything else? Does the material of this world not occupy the minds of the people to such an extent that they no longer have time to listen to any new teaching?

The answer to all these crucial questions is that there is still a place, a time and a need for preaching because the pastor does not preach the knowledge of this world, neither the skills of modern technology, but Christ Jesus, the Saviour. He preaches Christ Jesus because salvation is in Christ alone (Acts 4:12); and all people need redemption, for all people have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23-24), and are justified freely by his grace as a result of the redemption that comes through Christ Jesus.

Since all people, white or black, red or yellow, rich or poor, illiterate or highly educated, underdeveloped or developed have sinned before God, they all need redemption. And this redemption comes through Christ Jesus whom all people do not know. And for them to know and to accept Him as their personal redeemer, they need to be told, to be taught. He has to be announced, proclaimed and preached about (Rom 10:11-15). For without knowing Him they cannot believe in Him, and in the absence of belief in Him (John 3:18, 36), there is no redemption but condemnation. Hence preaching still remains vital to the redemption of mankind. And Kellerman (1997:1) in a lecture to his students, remarkably summarises the importance of preaching in these words. *The primacy of preaching for the church has been prominent*

right through her history, except during the dark middle ages, but especially since the Reformation in the sixteenth century. It is unthinkable that as far as the future is concerned that preaching will not be an important activity of the church. If this is true of the church in the West and to a certain extent in the East, it is more true in Africa where the people are not so individualistic as for instance in the West, but rather function as a corporate community. For the African words are important and as preaching is oral communication within a gathered community, it will always have a prominent position and function.

Kellerman is right, the Africans are communally orientated people and they like to verbalise.

However, although it is now clear that preaching can play a major role in one's redemption, one may still ask: What is preaching? What is not preaching? What is the theology of preaching? What is the purpose of preaching? These are good questions and the researcher will attempt to answer each question separately.

5.2 What is preaching according to different homileticians?

Preaching is very important in the church for its edification and growth. Because of the role it plays in the church, it is necessary to understand its nature.

In the New Testament preaching is the proclamation of the Good News. It consists of a person receiving a message from God and then going on to share this message with other people.

According to Matthew 28:20 preaching is also known as teaching. Teaching concerns the whole counsel of God and all that Jesus commands one to do. Teaching about God - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit creation, fall of man, sin, salvation, and so on, is included in preaching.

Preaching cannot be devoid of teaching. Jesus Himself set an example for us by focusing on teaching his disciples and the crowds that followed Him.

Furthermore, preaching in the New Testament is described as caring. In the Gospel of John, we read how Jesus asked Simon Peter three times whether he loved Him. And in answer to each of Peter's replies, Jesus remarked: "Tend my lambs, shepherd my sheep and tend my sheep", (John 9:15-17). This applies to pastoral care, but it can also be applied to preaching. Thus what is called preaching can also be described as comforting. Because of the marks that sin leaves on a person and because of the hardships of life, the comforting power of the gospel must be preached with loving care in the power of the Holy Spirit - the great Comforter.

Furthermore, the New Testament describes preaching as proclamation (Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47) - the announcement of the Good News of the salvation of God through his Son Christ Jesus our LORD. Jesus Christ came into the world to bring salvation and healing to people in their need. Thus preaching should always contain a proclamation of the unique message of the gospel, the Good News for here and now.

In the Old Testament: preaching consists witnessing to the past history. It comprises the story of God's acts, promises and messages. As Althaus quoted in Westermann (1971:27) puts it: *The Old Testament has a pastoral significance for the Christendom in so far as it is the deposit of history of faith, under God's tutelage (protection), which moves away from the bonds of nationalism and particularism, on toward the gospel.*

5.3 Different homiletic definitions

Preaching is a complex subject, hence different homileticians have defined it in different ways. There are many homileticians and many definitions, but a

few have been selected to serve as an eye-opener to both the African and the Western preacher.

5.3.1 Buttrick (1989:449-456) defines it as follows

- *Our preaching, commissioned by the resurrection, is a continuation of the preaching of Jesus Christ.*
- *In our preaching, Christ continues to speak to the church, and through the church to the world.*
- *The purpose of preaching is the purpose of God in Christ, namely the reconciliation of the world.*
- *Preaching evokes response: the response to preaching is a response to Christ, and is, properly, faith and repentance.*
- *Preaching is the "Word of God" in that it participates in God's purpose, is initiated by Christ, and is supported by the Holy Spirit with community in the world.*

David Buttrick's definition of preaching is a comprehensive one, for it covers the issues of preaching, the authority of preaching, the purpose of preaching and the theology of preaching.

5.3.2 Pattison (1893:3) defines preaching as *the communication of divine truth with a view to persuade*. Perhaps the classic definition of preaching comes from

5.3.3 Brooks (1907:5) who puts it as follows: *Preaching is the communication of the truth by man to men. It is the bringing of truth through personality.*

Which means that preaching has two essential elements, truth and personality, which again means that the preacher is part of the message he preaches. Thus one must not separate the preacher from the truth he preaches.

5.3.4 Blackwood (1937:3) however, modifies Brooks' definition. He says: *Preaching is divine truth ... voiced by a chosen personality to meet human needs.*

Blackwood's modification of the Brook's definition is correct because the preacher is indeed called by God to proclaim the good news of salvation to meet local human needs. The African asks whether the Western preacher aims to serve African interests or his own interests when he takes away African culture and replaces it with his, and when he takes away an African's name and gives his own name to an African? Does this not contrast with the principle of preaching? One may say yes, it does, because the Westerner wants Africans to do things the way he does. For example, the Westerner, without understanding the African culture, believes that an African name is pagan, so he gives a new "Christian" name to the African Christian. Thus he believes his needs to be met.

5.3.5 Lloyd-Jones (1983:227) defines preaching as follows: *Preaching is speech addressed to people in a direct and personal manner. It is not something theoretical or an academic lecture; it implies a living contact.*

It is important to note that the message and personality of the preacher cannot be separated as far as preaching is concerned. This also reflects the fact that preaching is not theoretical or an academic lecture as some people may think

5.3.6 Moreover, another homiletician says that preaching is a dialogue between the Word of God and the congregation with the preacher as

intermediary. That is, God speaks to the congregation by using the preacher as a mouthpiece for his Word.

5.3.7 Lischer (1987:95) describes preaching as follows: *Preaching is an event in which one person engages others with the gospel of God. The word accomplishes its mission when it is proclaimed in the assembly of believers and truly heard by the congregation. In preaching, the message, its articulation, and its reception are fused into a single transaction.*

This means that preaching is proclamation (kerygma) of the good news of God concerning Jesus Christ by means of which Christ Himself is made available to mankind.

5.3.8 Craddock describes preaching as an intersection of various elements. Craddock (1991:19) writes: *Preaching moment occurs at the intersection of tradition, Scripture, the experience of the preacher, the needs of a particular group of listeners and the condition of the world as it bears upon that time and place*

Craddock is of the opinion that there are five essential elements in preaching: **culture**, the **Word of God**, the **preacher's life**, the listeners' **needs**, **situation** and **circumstances**. Which means that if one of these elements is left out, it may affect the effectiveness of the message. If this is true, then African culture is essential in any sermon addressed to the African listeners.

With all the above-mentioned definitions in mind, one could define Christian preaching as follows: Preaching is the proclamation of God's message in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit through a chosen personality to meet the needs of humanity. Which means that the essential elements in preaching would be: God's message, the Holy Spirit, the chosen person (preacher) and the listeners with the needs of human beings.

Having now defined preaching, one may still ask: What then is not preaching? How can one differentiate between preaching and that which is not preaching?

5.4 What preaching is not

It is very important for the listener and especially the preacher to understand what preaching is not, so that the preacher does not mislead people or waste their precious time in that they are obliged to listen to something worthless. In order to answer the question as to what preaching is not, the researcher lists a few statements with some explanation where required.

- Preaching is not merely a matter of acquired technique. Technique is indeed necessary for a preacher to help him to preach well, but it is not preaching.
- Preaching is not a lecture on theology or an explanation of various theological insights, but rather an interpretation of a part of the Bible, a text at hand.
- Preaching is not an occasion for conveying personal insights or testimonies, but for preaching Christ Jesus, the living Word (2 Cor 4:5).

Preaching is not merely a speech containing good thoughts, but a revelation of God, a declaration of God's truth. As Lischer (1987:29) puts it: *The sustaining Christ is the dimension of the preached word. The biblical content of the proclaimed word makes clear this distinction from all other forms of speech.*

This means that preaching is different from all other forms of speech, events, teaching, dialogue and proclamation, because it has to do with God's truth, and not with human wisdom.

5.5 The purpose of preaching

The question one may ask here is: Why should someone preach? What does he wish to accomplish or to achieve? What motivates him to do it? These questions help one to focus on the purpose of preaching

J Daniel Baumann (1978:13) stresses the primary purpose of preaching when he defines it as follows: *Preaching is the communication of the biblical truth by man to men with the explicit purpose of eliciting behavioural change.*

Which means that the purpose of preaching is to transform the life of the people. Long (1989:31) also thinks along the same lines. He writes: *Preaching seeks to enable some beneficial change in the hearers, attempts to help them make sense of their lives, and strives to be a catalyst for more responsible living on the part of those who hear.*

Thus the preacher expects something good to happen to and for the listeners as a result of the sermon, namely that enemies will become friends; the unrighteous will become righteous and those rebellious against God will become obedient to God.

The purpose of preaching is to edify the Church of Christ. As Broadus (1979:7) writes: *It follows that preaching is always a necessity, for preaching is inextricably linked to the life of the church. It was the proclamation of the good news that brought the church into being. Only the same proclamation can keep life in the church. The record of Christian history has been that the strength of the church is directly related to the strength of the pulpit. When the message from the pulpit has been uncertain and faltering, the church has been weak; when the pulpit has given a positive, declarative message, the church has been strong.*

Still more, the purpose of preaching is to close the gap between what the Bible offers and what the people need. It serves to show people that God has revealed Himself through his Word, and finally through Christ Jesus, his Son (Heb 1:2). Which means God is not at a distance as people tend to think, but always with them through Jesus Christ, his Son, who is Emmanuel - God with us (Mat 9:10-13).

The purpose of preaching is to save the lost soul. It is written in Matthew that Jesus Christ came not for the righteous but for the sinners, so that upon hearing the Word of God and repenting of their sins, they would be saved (Mat 9:10-13).

Furthermore, the purpose of preaching is to effect an encounter with Christ. As Paul puts it: *For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake* (2 Cor 4:5 - RSV).

Thus the purpose of preaching is to bring about reconciliation between God and a sinful person through Christ. It is the ministry of reconciliation.

The researcher believes that the purpose of preaching is to persuade men and women through the power of the Holy Spirit to believe the gospel of Christ and live by it. This must be the ultimate objective of all Christian preaching, namely to persuade listeners to believe in the gospel and to live by it. Therefore, there must always be in every preacher's heart a haunting, hurting desire to see people coming to know and accept Jesus Christ as "the way", "the truth" and "the life" (John 14:6). The preacher's purpose is to instruct people to accept the Biblical truth. He is to spread the truth of the gospel of Christ, openly and without apology, because it is a command of Christ (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-6).

5.6 The theology of preaching

The theology of preaching and the purpose of preaching overlap because of their natures which complement each other. For this reason some Bible texts quoted under the heading: *The purpose of preaching*, also apply to this topic.

The theology of preaching is based on the Scriptures. The following passages from the Scriptures lay down the theological foundation of preaching:

In Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) Jesus says: *All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...*

This means that preaching is commissioned by Jesus Christ. To preach what? To preach about His birth, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension and second coming as well as the whole counsel of God.

Romans 10:14 reads: *But how are men to call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without a preacher? And how can men preach unless they are sent?*

This means that preaching serves God's purpose to reconcile the world to Himself through Jesus Christ. Thus the theology of preaching in this context is to teach people, to edify their faith and to share the Word of God as it is found in the Bible. In all of these Christ must be the focal point because He is the source of the salvation of mankind.

If a person is saved, he does not stay idle, but starts to testify about his salvation in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 NIV reads:

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Here preaching is described as witness. This witnessing to what Jesus did to save humanity can only be done faithfully through the power of the Holy Spirit. This means that God speaks to his people through the preacher by the power of his Spirit. In this respect preaching is seen as grace through the Word, the Holy Spirit and through the preacher himself (Gal 2:20). The theology of preaching in this context is that the preacher must first preach to himself and his family before preaching to others who are far from him. The principle is that he can only preach what he knows and he can only give what he has (1 John 1:1-3).

Isaiah chapter 6 is also a good text for clarifying the theology of preaching. In this chapter we read that Isaiah saw the glory of God and was terrified. God forgave him all his sins and by his grace justified him. As a justified person, Isaiah, heard God asking *who would go for his mission*, and Isaiah answered: *send me*. Isaiah 6:8-9 reads: *And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!" He said, "Go and tell this people:...."*

Here preaching becomes proclamation of the Word of God. The preacher is understood to be a saved person, called by God and sent by Him to do his will. God wants him to be his co-worker in building up his Kingdom on earth. The theology of preaching in this context is that the preacher is the servant of God who ought to proclaim God's message to people.

5.7 Certain, personal convictions

The theology of preaching is not only based on the Scriptures, but also on certain convictions. John Stolt marshalled five theological convictions in his

book, *I Believe in Preaching* (1992 92-125). All five convictions are very important, but the researcher is interested in four of them which will be discussed briefly

5.7.1 A conviction about God

The pastor who wants to preach this Living God of the Bible faithfully, powerfully and convincingly, must have a personal conviction about God's being, God's actions and God's purpose. The following three affirmations about God are very important to any pastor of the Word.

God is light (God's being). *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all* (1 John 1:5). Which means that God is holy, pure and the truth. He is open and not secretive at all He is open to every one and He delights in making Himself known. Thus, the pastor must reveal God to the congregation through his life style and the Word he preaches. *God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth* (John 4:24 NIV).

As a pastor, the preacher needs to understand that the God he serves is spirit - which means that He is everywhere, He knows everything, even that which is not spoken about or verbalised. And if the preacher knows this, he will always say the truth, do the truth and enjoy the truth. Worship which is not done in spirit and truth does not reach God and does not please Him.

God has acted (God's acts). This means that God has taken the initiative to reveal Himself through his deeds. He has demonstrated his power and deity in the created universe, with the result that heaven and earth display his glory. However, God has not only revealed Himself in creation, but also in redemptive actions. He called Abraham from Ur to the better place. He acted. He delivered the Israelite slaves from Egypt, and then the exiles from Babylon. This is another act of redemption. God performed many redemptive

acts in the Old Testament. And in the New Testament there is one major divine act of redemption. This is: God gave his one and only Son for the salvation of mankind (John 3:16 NIV). God acted. Hence the pastor, as a preacher, must understand that God acted, still acts and will continue to act for his people's salvation. He has to remember that God first loved people, not that people first loved Him.

God has spoken. This means that God has communicated with his people both through nature and in speech. As Stott (1992:95) puts it: *Scripture affirms that God has spoken both through historical deeds and through explanatory words, and that the two belong indissolubly together.*

Thus God acts and then explains his purpose in doing so. God spoke through the prophets and finally He has spoken to us through his Son (Heb 1:1-2). Thus, if the pastor is not convinced of the above-mentioned truths about God, he should not preach.

5.7.2 A conviction about scripture

The doctrine of God leads naturally and an avoidably to the doctrine of Scripture. The two are intertwined, in the sense that God has revealed Himself in Scripture and Scripture speaks about God. Thus we believe and are convinced that the Scriptures, speak about God. This conviction about Scripture must comprise the following elements:

The pastor must be convinced that Scripture is the written Word of God. It is the written Word of God because it was inspired by God (2 Tim 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Inspiration is not the same as dictation. It means that God put his Word into human minds and human mouths in such a way that the thoughts they conceived and the words they spoke and wrote were simultaneously and completely inspired by God. But God used each person (writer) as an individual together with his gifts, talents and personality. This is

why we find the different styles of different writers in the books in the Bible. Hence the book of Matthew has a different style from Luke, the letters of Paul have a different style from those of the prophets, and so on.

Stott (1992:99) is right when he says *It is certain that we cannot handle Scripture adequately in the pulpit if our doctrine on Scripture is inadequate*

The pastor must indeed be knowledgeable about the doctrine of Scripture. One may ask: What is the purpose of God's written Word? The answer is found in the Bible itself. Its purpose is to educate people, to edify people, and even to rebuke people through that which is written (2 Tim 3:16): *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work*

This then is the purpose of the written Word of God. Since preaching is also defined as teaching, one would not make a mistake if one were to say that the purpose of God's written Word is preaching.

The pastor must be convinced that God still speaks through what He has spoken. It would be useless for the pastor to preach if God does not speak today, as this would mean that he would be talking about a dead god who cannot respond to him and to the people he preaches to.

But the fact is that we are preaching the Living God of the Bible. And this God, being the living God, is able to listen, to communicate, to guide, to act, to speak and to respond to his people. He speaks to his people through his written Word. The pastor should understand that God speaks to him through his written Word and through His Holy Spirit. And he must also know that the Holy Spirit does not work in a vacuum, but uses the written Word of God to speak to the people as well as to him. Stott (1992:101) adds:

This concept of the contemporary voice of God is emphasised in Hebrews 3 and 4. The author quotes Psalm 95: *Today, when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.*

But he introduces the quotation with the words '*as the Holy Spirit says*'. He thus implies that the Holy Spirit is making the same appeal to his people to listen to him as he made centuries previously when the Psalm was written.

Stott is right, this is how God speaks today. He uses his written Word.

The pastor must be convinced that God's Word is powerful for rebuking or correcting, for equipping and for teaching (2 Tim 3:16-17).

- He needs to believe that the Word of God has the power to bring forgiveness and salvation to mankind (Acts 4:12; Jeremiah 31:33-34; John 3:16).
- He should believe that the Word of God has the power to change the heart of a wicked person so that he becomes a righteous person when he accepts God's Word (Isaiah 1:18-20).
- The pastor must also believe that the Word of God has the power to heal spiritually, physically, and mentally (Matt 11:28-30; Luke 8:40-56 etc).
- Lastly, he must be convinced that the Word of God has the power to build the marriages, villages and cities of the people (Psalm 127:1). Unless the pastor is convinced of this, he cannot proclaim the powerfulness of God's Word to the people.

5.7.3 A conviction concerning the church

Of course there are numerous convictions concerning the church which motivate people to join a particular church. But for the sake of illustrating this point, a few points have been selected.

For a person to join a particular church, he must be convinced that the church preaches the Word of God faithfully, powerfully and truthfully. This is the case because the church is created by God through his Word. Thus, where the Word of God is preached powerfully, the church is established. As Stott (1992:109) writes: *Not only has he (God) brought it into being by his Word, but he maintains and sustains it, directs and sanctifies it, reforms and renews it through the same Word.*

Stott is right because it is only through the preaching of the Word that the church is established and survives.

- People believe that a church is a good or true church if it has the three marks of the true church, namely that it preaches the Word faithfully, conducts Holy Communion according to the Scriptures and practises church discipline.

God's people live and flourish by believing and obeying his Word which gives life. As it is written *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).*

People who have this conviction will not join a church which just share personal testimonies without studying and preaching the Bible. Hence the pastor becomes a preacher of a particular church because he is convinced that that church preaches the Biblical truth.

5.7.4 A conviction about the pastorate

Pastorate means the position, rank or duties of a pastor. One may ask: Who is a pastor? What authority does he have in respect of people? To whom is he accountable? The pastor is a person called by God to proclaim his Word to the people. He receives his authority from God and he is accountable to God.

It is very important for the pastor as a preacher to know who has called him and why he has been called to the ministry. Unless he understands this well, he may end up pleasing himself or pleasing men, but not God who called him. It required courage for Peter and John to challenge the elders and Pharisees and refuse to stop preaching Jesus Christ to the people. They did this because they knew whom they served (Acts 4:17-20). When Peter and John were asked to stop speaking about Jesus, they replied: *Is it right in the eyes of God for us to obey you rather than him? Judge for yourselves. We cannot possibly give up speaking about what we have seen and heard* (Acts 4:19-20 REB).

Against the background of the African tradition of respect for elders and important people in the community, the pastor may fail to discipline or rebuke a very important person in the church because of his influence in the church or in society; or he may fail to discipline the elders in the church for fear of not being paid at the end of the month. So it is essential that the pastor should know very well who has called him and why he has been called and to whom he is accountable. If this is not very clear to him, his ministry may be jeopardised

5.8 Summary of the theory of preaching

After studying all the different homiletical definitions of preaching, its purpose and theology, the researcher reached the conclusion that preaching comprises the following:

5.8.1 Communication - communicating the Word of God to the people. God speaks to his people through his Written Word as conveyed by the preacher. The preacher communicates the hidden truth of God to the listeners by preaching the Word.

5.8.2 The Spoken Word - which means that a written sermon becomes a sermon when the preacher has spoken or preached it. As Long (1989:181) confirms: *A sermon itself occurs not in the writing but in the preaching.*

And D Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1976) adds that if a person cannot speak properly, he should not be a preacher. All this serves to emphasise that preaching is oral communication.

5.8.3 Teaching, proclamation and declaration of God's truth.

The **exposition** and **application** of the Word to the hearers. This means that if the preacher merely explains God's Word without applying it, he has done nothing as far as preaching is concerned. The Biblical truth needs to be applied to the hearer's heart by the preacher.

5.8.4 Integration - which means that when the preacher preaches, he touches all areas of human life. Hence every one of his sermons, should contain elements of proclamation, teaching, counselling, saving and healing, warning and comforting.

5.8.5 Theology - which means that if a preacher has a wrong theology, he will preach false messages or will interpret the Bible incorrectly, resulting in his misleading the people. But proper theology will lead to proper exegesis and application of the Biblical message. One cannot be a preacher without theology.

5.8.6 The combination of God's truth and personality. The two cannot be separated easily from each other. Thus, one says what he is, and he is what he says.

Buttrick (1987:449) writes: *Our preaching, commissioned by the resurrection, is a continuation of the preaching of Jesus Christ.*

This means that Jesus laid the foundation of preaching and we are building on it.

5.8.7 Finally. Ozora Davis as quoted in George Sweazey (1976:20) defines preaching as follows: *It is to heal, to exhort, to admonish, to confirm, and to edify.*

These are the purposes of preaching.

5.9 Conclusion

Even today preaching is necessary in the church because it is a command of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is one of the most powerful channels for declaring the salvation of mankind and for edifying the church of God. Without preaching there is no knowledge of faith and salvation, no encounter with Christ Jesus the Saviour, and no hope of eternal life.

Therefore, the researcher strongly believes that preaching is very important because it is the heart of the congregation, and he urges every preacher to

take his preaching responsibilities seriously always, everywhere and towards all people.

CHAPTER 6

6 SERMON PREPARATION IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

Scripture: Exodus 19:10-11, 14-15

And the LORD said to Moses, Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on the mountain Sinai in the sight of all the people... After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them and they washed their clothes. Then he said to the people, 'Prepare yourselves for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations'.

6.1 Introduction

In order to do any work effectively, successfully and faithfully, one needs to make some preparations even though the work may appear to be simple. This applies even more to God's ministry! Hence Moses was told by God to let the people of Israel prepare themselves by washing their clothes and abstaining from sexual relations before meeting Him. In the same way, when one speaks of sermon preparation in the African context, one is speaking of a big task because it involves the preacher's preparation as well as the preparation of the sermon. Since one cannot expect a mango tree to produce a lemon fruit, it makes sense that if a sermon is to be delivered in an African context, it must come from a preacher who is Africanised biblically, theologically, culturally and mentally, otherwise he will not achieve the desired result. Remember a person can only give what he has.

6.2 Preacher's preparation

6.2.1 The heart

The preacher must be convinced in his heart that he has been called by God to be a preacher (Eph 4 11-13), a watchman (Ezk 33:7-9), a servant of God (Is 42:1). He must understand that because he has been called by God, he is directly accountable to God for his performance whether good or poor (Acts 13:2). This awareness will always help him not to go into the pulpit with empty hands, with a dry mind or without proper preparation of what he has to preach about. He needs to avoid the temptation of the popular saying among Pentacostal pastors, namely that a preacher must not worry about what to preach because the Holy Spirit will give him the message (John 16:13). This is a misinterpretation of the text, because this text (John 16:13) does not say that a preacher must not prepare his sermon before he preaches. In fact, the text speaks of how the church will be guided and must proceed in future during time of trials and temptations. The preacher must also avoid the temptation of thinking that he knows the Bible so well that he need not prepare himself for the sermon. This is a temptation to which preachers often succumb. He must see his task as a "calling from God", not as a "job" opportunity for making a living. To grasp this is very important for any preacher. This is a big problem because it was there even during the time of Paul's ministry as we can see in Philippians 1:15-17: *It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defence of the gospel. The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely...*

It is important for the preacher to see this difference between the two attitudes, because the way he understands the ministry will determine how he is going to perform when he enters the ministry. In his heart, he must be convinced that he knows whom he believes in and that He is able to guard him throughout his ministry (2 Tim 1:12). Unless he understands this well in

his heart, the preacher will have big problems in carrying out his preaching ministry

6.2.2 The Bible

The African preacher must study the Bible thoroughly and seriously. Because the foundation of preaching - its theory, its theology, its authority, its history and the salvation of mankind - depends on the Word of God, the written Word, the Holy Bible, to ignore the Bible is to deny the authority of preaching and the salvation of mankind. The question is: What part of the Bible should one choose to preach from? The Old Testament or the New Testament? Unfortunately some preachers preach only from the Old Testament and ignore the New Testament. Their emphasis is on God's promises. Others, on the other hand, preach only from the New Testament and ignore the Old Testament because they believe that the Old Testament is already fulfilled and has nothing to do with the community today.

Both groups are at fault because they are splitting the Bible, the message, the gospel and even the God of the Bible into two. Some people teach that the God of the Old Testament is the "harsh God", while the God of the New Testament is the "kind God". This is a misconception. Such an approach to the Bible, however well meant, is wrong.

The preacher must preach from the whole Bible, that is, from both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Bible is a unit; it comes from one God and it has one message: salvation of mankind through faith in Jesus Christ. Van Kooten (1972:162) writes: *The whole Bible is a record of God in action - acting in and through his Word.*

The relation between the Old Testament and the New Testament is important because the two mutually decipher each other. It is a complementary relationship, not a contradictory relationship as some people think. This

relation can be expressed very well in allegorical terms as Ricoeur (1974:383) puts it: *But what is issue here is basically something else. It is a question of the typological value of events, things, persons and institutions of the old economy in relation to those of new.*

Another reason why the preacher must know and understand the Bible very well is because of some liberal theologians who doubt the infallibility of the Bible. And they ask questions such as these: Do we find the words of God in the Bible or is the whole Bible God's Word? Do we find God's words and human words in the Bible? Did God dictate to the Bible writers? Is the Bible without errors? Because of such questions, the preacher of the Word must understand the origin and authority of the Bible which is based on its inspiration, inerrancy and infallibility so that he can defend its trustworthiness.

The Bible as a whole is the inspired Word of God. Here one must understand that inspiration and revelation are not the same thing. Revelation is the exercise by which God made Himself known to the people. Inspiration, on the other hand, refers to the working of the Holy Spirit upon writers of the Bible which influenced them to record God's revelation in such a manner that what they wrote was God's Word. Kenneth Z Kamtzer is quoted by Van Kooten (1972:27) as defining inspiration as follows: *Biblical inspiration may be defined... as that work of the Holy Spirit by which, without setting aside their personalities and literary or human faculties, God so guided the authors of Scripture as to enable them to write exactly the words which convey His truth to men, and in doing so preserved their judgements from error in the original manuscripts. Or, inspiration is the work of the Holy Spirit by which He employed the instrumentality of the whole personality, literary talents, and various faculties of their human authors to constitute the words of the Biblical autographs as His written Word to men and, therefore, of divine authority and without error in faith (what we ought to believe) and practice (what we ought to do).*

This answers the question as to whether one finds God's Word and human words in the Bible. And the same statement removes the doubt concerning possible errors in the Bible, because God the Holy Spirit is the divine agent of inspiration.

The Bible is inerrant. This means that there is no misinformation in the Bible. It is free from any judgement or statement which in the intended sense is not true. Inerrant means wholly true. The Bible is infallible. This means that the Bible is wholly trustworthy and dependable for teaching, correction, rebuking and saving, because it is inspired by God (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 1 Cor 2:8-14). As Van Kooten (1972:104) states: *The entire Bible is inspired, not just parts of it. The written text is God's Word. And it is that Word which is infallible and inerrant, just because that Word comes from God.*

And he adds, quoting Packer, that this author correctly defines Biblical inerrancy and infallibility in terms of its origin in God: *"Infallible" denotes the quality of never deceiving or misleading, and so means "wholly" trustworthy and reliable; "inerrant" means "wholly true". Scripture is termed infallible and inerrant to express the conviction that all its teaching is the utterance of God 'who cannot lie' (Titus 1:2), whose word, once spoken, abides forever (1 Peter 1:23-25), and that therefore it may be trusted implicitly.*

This answers the question as to the origin and authority of the Scripture. It started with God and ended with Him. It is all from God. Therefore, it is trustworthy and reliable for human salvation as God planned. Hence the preacher must preach from the entire Bible and from texts from the whole Bible because the whole Bible is God's Word

Furthermore, Klaas Runia (1970) 265), systematically defends the infallibility of the Bible as follows: *The church fathers believe it as did the theologians of the Middle Ages, the Reformers, and the post-Reformation theologians, and all the evangelicals up to this very day, have believed it. It is also the official*

view of the Roman Catholic Church. Vatican II stated emphatically, "Since, therefore, all that the inspired authors, or sacred writers affirm, should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must consequently acknowledge that the books of the Scripture firmly, faithfully and without error, teach the truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures" (on Divine Revelation). Evangelicals agree with this. They too believe that "the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error, teach the truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures".

The discovery that the Bible is universally accepted by the church, and is indeed the Word of God, will prepare the African preacher to understand, to have confidence in and to defend the Bible he uses as the only source of preaching. And, in turn, this will close the door to any new teaching, a new gospel as Paul calls it. If he has all this Biblical truth in place, and has accepted it in his heart through faith, and practises it in his daily life, he will be ready to go out and face the world with confidence. And he will be able to see well in advance what can destroy Christianity in Africa. He will also be capable to use the Bible to prevent it from happening, as Byang H Kato did by challenging the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Council of Churches.

Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:108) say about this: *Despite the euphoria (power) of the occasion, the wording of the description, and the references to the Scriptures and Christ as the only Savior in the doctrinal bases of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), Kato sounds on alarm. In his view the ecumenical movement is largely in the hands of liberals who reject a fully authoritative, inspired, and inerrant Bible and who espouse a theology open to universalism and other aberrations (mistakes).*

If this is true, it is very important that the African preacher must be well prepared, and must equip himself with the Scriptures before he enters the ministry. A challenge such as this of Kato's, can only come from a person who is well versed in the Scriptures.

6.2.3 Theological preparation

There is no doubt that the Westerner has given the African a sound theology in most of areas. But in a few areas of theology he has failed by giving the African a partial truth or wrong theological interpretation of certain issues. This he did to further his own interests. The researcher wants to reflect on the Westerner's failure to prepare the African preacher properly before he enters the ministry. The African preacher turns away from this tradition of partial truths or wrong theological interpretations planted by the early missionaries such as the concepts of "riches in heaven" and 'salvation of the soul'.

Example one: "riches in heaven"

It has been said that some Christians in Zambia were taught or advised by early missionaries not to worry because they were poor now since they would be rich in heaven. The researcher interviewed a few senior ministers in the Reformed Church in Zambia to find out whether such a view or concept was planted by the early missionaries. One of the senior ministers interviewed was the Reverend Jason Guze Phiri. He is one of the few senior ministers left in the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ). He passed through all the stages which were required of a person who wished to become a minister at that time. He is a village teacher, evangelist and a minister. When he was interviewed, he confirmed that such a seed was indeed planted by the early missionaries especially among the local leaders. People were encouraged to concentrate on their work rather than worry about their poverty. If this is true, it means that a wrong theology was planted among the local people. And this needs to be corrected. It must be corrected because it is unbiblical. It is

unbiblical because Jesus Christ is not only interested in our heavenly life, but also in our life here on earth. In the Old Testament one learns that God blessed Jacob together with his family, possessions and animals, as we read in the book of Genesis Chapters 29 and 30. Therefore to say that a Christian should remain poor on earth because he will be rich in heaven when he dies, is unbiblical and must be corrected. And this correction can only be made by an African preacher who is Biblically equipped and has a proper theological grounding.

Example two: "salvation of the soul"

This is another theological problem the African preacher must reconsider when preparing himself to engage in a meaningful preaching ministry. The problem the African preacher encounters in this regard is that the Westerners who brought the Gospel to Africa emphasised "salvation of the Soul" and not "salvation of the whole person". According to William (1996) missionaries did the same to the Carribean people by limiting salvation purely to a salvation of the soul. Africans ask Is God interested in the "soul" only or in a person as a whole? Which is easier for an African to understand: God loves you or God loves your soul? Is "salvation of the soul" holistic or partial redemption? And to answer all these good questions Biblically and theologically, one must first go back to the Scripture and learn from it what it says. For example, Matthew 9:12-13 states that Jesus Christ came for the sinners, which means persons, not souls. In Luke 5:17-26 and Matthew 9:1-7 Jesus Christ bestowed holistic healing on a paralytic by forgiving his sins and by commanding him to go home with a sound healthy body.

An African Christian believes that meaningful salvation is that which addresses the whole person: soul, body and life. A religion which does not address all these areas becomes meaningless to him. James Ngugi (in Jones 1975:54) states: *He knows that religion can be meaningful to people only if it relates to them in their daily lives, only if it rises out of the important aspects of*

their past and speaks directly to their experiences in the present. A religion which speaks only of religious ideals and moral truths, without touching on the concrete situation of man in his every day life, can give to man nothing but emptiness.

Westerners should also understand that soteriology is much more comprehensive in the African church than in the Western church where it is often reduced purely to the salvation of the soul. In an African context (Daneel 1987:221-2) salvation, healing and sanctification are inextricably linked in an outlook that makes little distinction between the sacred and the profane; between earthly and eternal salvation. Similarly, Martin (1975:176) emphasises the richness of salvation which cannot be limited only to the "soul" and emphatically states: *The Gospel is the message of salvation. It is precisely this that Africa perhaps understands better than the West, since we have limited the word 'salvation' so much to the salvation of the soul.*

Salvation means in Africa what 'shalom' means to the Hebrew: Salvation and healing (not only from illness, but redemption in the widest sense), a new heaven and, above all, a new earth, social justice, and peace... it means brotherhood, order in liberty, development of all one's potentials in life, but in such a way that the community benefits, which to the African, is more important than purely individual development. Salvation includes healing: a new life on the new earth, free from hatred, passion, lying, corruption and oppression; and sanctification as an expression of gratitude...

Martin is right Salvation should not be limited only to the salvation of the soul, but it must be understood in a broader sense.

Example three: evangelism

Another theological reflection must concern the evangelical approach. The Westerner, when he brought the gospel to Africa, also brought with it his

culture. He imposed his culture on the African as if it formed part of the gospel by placing it on an equal footing with the gospel of Jesus Christ as a criterion for true conversion. Mitchell (1977:85-6) admits this when he declares: *For missionaries often made the mistake of blindly condemning the traditional way of life. Theirs was an English or an American version of Christianity which, in certain respects, required their converts to transform themselves culturally into black Englishmen or Americans. For example, African Christians had to be baptised with "Christian" first names such as Paul or Silas. An African name which might mean "God is with me" was unacceptable because it was African!*

The missionary approach is at fault in thinking that African names are devilish, paganish, heathenish and therefore must not be brought into Christianity. This was a grave mistake on the part of the missionaries because they destroyed many sweet memories and important records of Africans which were transmitted in the names of their family members. The African preacher must be aware of this wrong approach to evangelism so that he does not make the same mistake as the missionaries did. The African must now learn that he is not saved by a Christian name given by a missionary, but by receiving Jesus Christ in his heart through faith as his personal Saviour (Ephesians 2:8-9; Acts 1:12), because Jesus Christ alone was given to us by God as our Redeemer, Saviour and Lord (Mark 10:45, John 3:16, 18, 36; 1 Tim 2:5-6).

In fact this missionary attitude of transplanting their culture into Africa, once provoked Pope Pius XII so much that he warned the missionaries to stop this attitude at once. Van Thiel *et al* (1990:167) testify: *In his allocution of 28 June 1944, Pope Pius XII gave the following warning: 'the missionary, the apostle of Jesus Christ, has not been sent to transplant the European civilization into the mission countries'. Therefore, we must Christianise the art of the indigenous people. We must aim to utilise their music and their melodies as*

well. We must do whatever we can to incorporate African art and music into the Christian liturgical cult.

This statement shows that something was wrong in the mission field, and the Pope reacted like this to rectify the situation. This means that the Western mentality was transplanted into the African. And if this were to continue unchecked, the African himself will in future continue to transplant the Western mentality into his fellow Africans, something which might cause a lot of hardship to Africans because it is foreign to them. Therefore, the African preacher must be prepared in such a way that he will preach Jesus Christ to the African community from an African frame of reference, so that they will receive Him as part of their own culture and not as a foreigner. Indeed Amos Wilder and Paul Tillich (in Jones 1975) are right when they state that a religion which is imposed upon a people from above as law, is not only meaningless, but also destructive. For example, the Reformed Church in Zambia (RCZ) was not allowed by law to join any other Christian organisation without the approval of the mother body - the Dutch Reformed Church Mission of the Orange Free State. And this caused the Reformed Church in Zambia to lose some golden opportunities of scholarships for her ministers because they were not by not being members of those organisations. Another example is the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia. The mother body refused to give it permission to join the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ). Its ministers are only allowed to become observers. This means that they have no right to vote on important issues which affect the Churches in Zambia and the community as a whole because of a law imposed upon them from above.

6.2.4 Cultural preparation

The anthropologist Franz Boas, the philosopher FSC Northrop and researchers from various disciplines (Hesselgrave *et al* 1989:205) discovered that there are different ways in which people "think" and "know" things. The research from various disciplines also demonstrates that while all cultures

have their logic, the logic of different cultures is not the same. For example, some people know things through conceptualisation or postulation, thinking-learning through ideas. Others came to know things by means of mental pictures; while others know things (Hesselgrave *et al* 1989-205) through *the concrete relational in which life and reality are seen pictorially in terms of the active emotional relationship present in a concrete situation.*

However, though the logic of different cultures is not the same, the logic of a specific culture of equal value to that of other cultures, especially in its original culture. For no one cultural logic is proper or the best of all logics. Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:205-6) put it as follows: *FH Smith's approach dispelled the naive notion that there is one "proper" way of thinking and even the more sophisticated idea that there are only two ways of thinking. He not only elaborated three ways of thinking; he clarified the relation between them and insisted that people of all cultures think in these three ways. Differences among cultures in this regard, Smith said, are due to the priority given to one or another type of thought. Therefore, since all people think in these three ways, it is imperative that mutual respect is in order and cross-cultural understanding can be achieved.*

This means that African culture is equally important as that of the Westerner. Therefore, it must be learned and practised by a preacher who preaches to the African community.

The African culture is so rich and wide that nobody can study all its values in detail. However, a few cultural values have been selected for clarification of this point. Here are a few of the cultural values which must be observed by the preacher.

6.2.4.1 Honour

Honour is one of the most important cultural themes, since in a community of Chewa/Nyanja-speaking people it provides the framework which governs the individual's protection, status and behaviour towards his kinsman. The concept is directly related to family solidarity and ultimately to group survival.

In African society honouring people is a very important cultural value. If a person dishonours the key people in a community, he is likely to lose support if he is a preacher, to lose votes if he is a politician, and to lose respect if he is a member of the community. It is high time that the African should understand and accept the fact that not all Western ways of doing things, theologically, politically, economically, culturally, can be practically workable in the African situation. A good example is given by Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:209) who tell the story of two Westernised politicians. *Lucian Pye tells of an election campaign in Jahore State, Malaya, involving two Westernised political candidates. One of them took his message to the people via rallies which attracted large crowds in village after village. Since his reception was so enthusiastic it was assumed by many that he would defeat his opponent by a wide margin on election day. The election, however, was won by his equally Westernised opponent who had engaged in little direct campaigning. Why? Because in conducting his campaign the popular candidate had bypassed the opinion leaders in the villages he had visited. This omission resulted in distrust and cost him the election. The popular candidate failed election because he dishonoured the key people in the villages he visited.*

Something similar happened in Zambia. It is said that one of the early missionaries went to the Eastern Province of Zambia, bypassed Chief Mpenzeni of the Ngoni people and started evangelising some of his villages. When the story reached the chief, the missionary was stopped and ordered by the chief to leave his area. The missionary had no support because he did not honour the chief. It is therefore important for a preacher, whether Western

or African, to be acculturated into African culture in order to communicate effectively with the local community.

6.2.4.2 Hospitality

Hospitality, is another important cultural theme in African society. Among the Chewa-speaking people of Zambia and Malawi, including Mozambique, hospitality is a framework which governs the way in which the individual protects and behaves toward a guest. This concept, like most other values, is intended to strengthen group solidarity. For example, upon meeting someone, the individuals will engage in an extended greeting which includes prescribed inquires about the family and relatives left behind, and stereotyped responses. This creates peace and a sense of freedom which allows the individuals to engage in conversation with peaceful minds. Sometimes a guest may even be forced to stay until a meal has been prepared. It is important that the preacher should know something in this regard. If the food has not yet been prepared, you may excuse yourself, but if it has already been prepared, you may never, ever reject the invitation, because you will offend the person or the family concerned. It will humiliate the family if you do that. Remember this: one's response to such an invitation can either open a door to that family forever or close the door permanently. For to accept someone's meal is to accept him as a person. It implies fellowship with him and a way of honouring him. In Arabian society it is said (Hesselgrave *et al* 1989) that no matter how short a visit may be, the guest is never allowed to leave before he has been offered food or drink. All this shows how hospitable an African is. Westerners must know that African traditional culture does not allow a guest to be asked whether he wants food or not. One may be asked to stay for food, but not whether he wants it. Unless he is Westernised, this question may not be asked.

6.2.4.3 The welfare of the group

This often takes precedence over that of the individual. Among many African societies, family loyalty is a dominant theme. The family's place in society also determines the individual's position as already stated in another chapter. His chances of success, his expectation of education, his social status and achievement of wealth are largely determined by the family into which he was born. One may ask what this has to do with the preacher. This does indeed concern the preacher, for it may help him to understand why the family must be viewed as a major unit of identity and the object of intense feelings of loyalty. Hence, when an African wife says, "let me ask my husband before joining the church", one must respect her request because she wants to be loyal to her husband and keep the family unity. To force her to make a decision because she is an individual, is a Western way of thinking, which in most cases does not work well in African culture. There are many African cultural values which could be of value to a preacher's preparation, but the three discussed above are major ones which can serve as an eye-openers to the preacher as he prepares to enter the preaching ministry.

6.2.5 A positive mentality

The African preacher must be prepared to think positively about some issues which the Westerner taught him to interpret negatively. Whether it was due to the Westerner's feeling of superiority, a lack of knowledge of the African or his cultural influence, such issues must be re-examined Biblically, theologically and culturally. Here are a few example of such issues.

6.2.5.1 The poor language used by the Westerner

Sometimes it is unbelievable to hear which terms were used by missionaries when evangelising the African, words which one would not have expected to be used by a Christian leader, such as "kaffir", and "pagan". And

unfortunately Africans were obliged to receive the gospel message in these harsh terminologies without question. Kurewa (1982:47) testifies about this *We hear missionaries, like colonialists, calling the African person a 'heathen', a 'kaffir', a 'native', a 'boy'. Yet even worse were the early African evangelists who adopted the Westerners' terminology. No longer would they speak of their own people as Africans, but as 'heathens', as they had been taught by their Christian education or theology.*

This habit of calling the African person a "kaffir" is unchristian as the Bible teaches that we are all humans and were all created by God in his image. As Christians we are all equal in Christ (Eph 4.3-6; Galatians 3:26-28). Westerners must understand that to call an adult African person a "boy" is an insult to him according to African culture. An African preacher must be aware of this and must refrain from using the term. It is time that the bad terminologies be replaced by good ones such as Christians and non-Christians; believers and non-believers, disciples and non-disciples. This type of terminology is more Biblical than that of the missionaries. And it also portrays the respect of one man for his fellow-men.

6.2.5.2 The inferiority complex

When the Westerner came to Africa, he believed that he was a superior being, the person with the best education, best religion, best medicine, best culture to offer to the African, while he considered the African to have nothing good to offer to the Westerner, and not even to himself. He therefore proceeded to "diplomatically" plant this mentality into the African minds and succeeded so well that finally the African accepted the idea of his inferiority as inculcated by the Westerner. He came to believe that the Westerner was superior and he himself inferior; the Westerner had the best things in life while he had worthless things; the Westerner was the giver and he the receiver. Because of this way of thinking, the African developed the bad attitude of admiring and adopting nearly everything which came with the

Westerner. The reason for all of this was the way in which the Westerner brought the gospel and education to Africa. As Idowu (1965:20) confirms: *The real handicap of the Nigerian preacher in this matter is his faulty upbringing. Having been brought up under the same influence as all educated Nigerians, he has developed a morbid kind of exaggerated admiration for everything European and a disdain born of a deep-seated inferiority complex for the things of his own race...It has been instilled into him that to use the indigenous material all amounts to contaminating the purity of the Gospel with filth from a 'heathen' cesspool.*

If Idowu is right, then, training of African preachers must be reviewed and contextualized. Until the African preacher comes out of this ghetto and begins to think positively of himself and to realise that he is superior and not inferior, a giver and not only a receiver, creative and not passive; and that indigenous materials are worthy of being used for expression in the sermon, he will not become progressive and effective in his ministry. Foreign illustration does not address the heart of the local African listener, even though it may be effective to him who formulated it. Therefore, it is important that both the African and the Westerner should understand that every truth is of God: whatever is true is holy and worthy, and the preacher may use it wherever it is appropriate.

Moreover, as time went by the Westerner admitted his mistake and realised that although he may believe that that he has the best, he has no right to transplant his knowledge into the African mind without contextualizing the materials. Why? Because an African has his own social structures, situations, problems and ways of doing things which are different from those of the Westerner. As Van Thiel *et al* (1990:169) admit: *In Africa, we realise more and more that we, missionaries, cannot continue to just import European thought and action, in the way that has been done in many other domains - education, social, industrial, agricultural and so forth. For experienced European agriculturalists are known to have worked out the most wonderful schemes, designed according to European circumstances, and based upon*

Western principles. But because of not taking sufficient account of the typically African peculiarities such as climatic factors, types of soil, lack of technical equipment, untrained labour, etc, many of those schemes, excellent in their conception, failed.

In the same way, if a preacher imports Western expressions into a sermon to be delivered to an African community, such expressions, however excellent, may fail to reach the hearts of the African listeners because they are foreign to them. This must be a lesson to both Western and African preachers namely that if they take the gospel message to another nation, they must acculturate themselves to that community, and not expect the community to adopt their culture. In this way there will be no superior and inferior because both the Westerner and the African will learn to adjust to each other. As the old saying says *When you are in Rome do as the Roman does.* So when the Westerner comes to Africa, he must do things as Africans do them.

6.2.5.3 The mentality of "sheep-stealing".

The African preacher must understand that this is not his problem, but the problem of the Westerner who wanted to promote his own denomination and nationality, and even his superiority over others. In Zambia it is said that if the Roman Catholic Church established its congregation in a certain area, they did not want the Dutch Reformed Church to come into that area and establish theirs. If they did, the Roman Catholic Church felt obliged to burn their church building. And the Dutch Reformed Church, it is said, also did the same thing to the Roman Catholics if it was the first to establish a congregation in a certain area. They all did this in order to protect their "sheep" from being stolen by other denominations. This "sheep-stealing" was not only practised in Zambia but also in South Africa. Bosch (1971:47) writes as follows about sheep-stealing among the early missionaries: *Prior to the recent ecumenical awakening there was considerable antagonism and competition with subsequent leaders in the three churches represented by their missions*

(Roman Catholics, Lutheran Church and Congregationalist Church). Besides basing their missionary outreach on their particular denominational emphasis, the early missionaries represented also a national outlook which they brought with them from Europe and America.

Through the influence of the missionaries the idea of sheep-stealing came to be adopted by the African converts. It was brought by missionaries and planted among Africans. The African being a baby as far as Christianity was concerned, thought this was part of the Biblical principles and adopted it. Later they discovered that it was not Biblical, but they wanted to promote their own names and not the Name of Jesus Christ; their own nationalities and not Christianity. The question is: should the African continue to preach this when he knows it is wrong? The researcher believes that the African preacher must correct the situation. And he can do this by preaching Jesus Christ effectively, Biblically, theologically in an African context. Since the truth makes one free, the mentality of sheep-stealing will die a natural death if preachers preach the Biblical truth. Moreover, one might ask: What picture did the missionaries paint to the African by speaking of stealing sheep from each other? What type of message was conveyed to the African by this behaviour? It is possible that Africans came to believe that missionaries only paid lip service to the gospel, because they preached that one should love one's neighbour as oneself, while they themselves did not love one another; stole sheep from one another and burnt down one another's church buildings. It also showed that they really preached a message of hatred instead of a message of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). Therefore, let the African preacher demonstrate to the Westerner that true Christianity is to live by what one preaches and to be known by what one preaches. Since the preacher is called to preach the Good News, the gospel, Jesus Christ who is Love, he must love everyone. And since love does not think evil of anyone, the sheep-stealing attitude must cease.

6.3 Sermon preparation

Sermon preparation in the African context means Africanising the gospel message, contextualising the Biblical truth, and it also means using African expressions, illustrations, proverbs and African idioms in the sermon rather than Western expressions, illustrations and idioms which are foreign to Africans. Preaching requires study, practice and hard work. It is (cf Long 1989) a mixture of art and craft, gift and training. All this begins with the preparation of the sermon. Since sermon preparation is a very demanding work, it involves a lot of reading, research, writing, personal commitment and prayer in order for one to come up with an effective and meaningful sermon for the listeners. Therefore, for a person to be able to do this, he must be guided by the following elements.

6.3.1 Prayer

The preacher must understand that he is engaging in a serious business which demands not human wisdom or earthly power but wisdom from heaven (Matt 11.25). Earthly wisdom cannot reveal God's secrets, but the Holy Spirit of God can for He is the only key to the heavenly wisdom. Thus, the preacher must speak to God through a prayer, the Holy Spirit will intercede between God and the preacher, so that he will be granted heavenly wisdom by God, which will finally lead him to discover God's hidden secrets in his Word. As it is written: *This is the Word of The LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty* (Zech 4:6).

This demonstrates that a preacher badly needs the Holy Spirit in order to interpret the Word of God to the people. Without his help, the preacher cannot do it.

Prayer is very important to the preacher for God's communication. In fact, it is his only effective and quickest communication with God. He can speak directly to God and can listen to his voice through faithful prayer.

During sermon preparation the preacher must remember to pray for a peaceful mind so he may understand the Word (text) properly; to pray for forgiveness of his sins so that there will be a mutual relationship between God and himself before he engages in sermon preparation. Since it is written that any unconfessed sin can hide God's face or separate one from God (Isaiah 59:1-3), it is important that a preacher should ask God to search his heart so that if there is anything that must be put right with God, he will be able to do it there and then.

It is very important that he should understand that God first speaks to him before He speaks to the congregation. And God speaks to him during sermon preparation. If a preacher has difficulty hearing the voice of the Lord during sermon preparation, it is believed that such a preacher will have an even bigger problem delivering his sermon to the listeners, for he will go into the pulpit with a mixed-up mind, empty-handed and with an empty heart. For this reason the preacher also badly needs to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance throughout sermon preparation as well as during the delivery of the sermon. This is because the sermon becomes a sermon when it is spoken. As he prays for himself, he must not forget to pray for his listeners that the Holy Spirit will prepare them to receive the Word with open hearts and make them willing to treasure it in their hearts.

6.3.2 Gathering information for a sermon

6.3.2.1 House visitation

The preacher gathers very helpful information during house visitation. A committed minister visits his congregation members at least once every year

During this house visitation, he prepares a specific theme to discuss with the members. The theme can be doctrinal, ethical, may concern Christian growth, and so on. After the house visitation is over, the minister should know what knowledge the congregation lacks and what type of messages must be preached to them. This method works very well among Africans in both urban and rural congregations.

6.3.2.2 Listening carefully to what people talk about

A good preacher is a good listener, and a good listener is a good communicator. The minister can gather information for preaching by listening carefully when people speak about politics, economics, marriages, children, education and funerals, and also by observing how people dress, how they socialise and their lifestyle. In this regard it is important to add that reading newspapers daily will give the minister the latest information and enable him to preach about relevant themes. In reading the newspaper, he listens to what the individual, the nation, the country and the world at large has to say. Listening is an indispensable part of communication. As Pieterse (1987:80) writes: *Speech without listening is empty. Listening is an indispensable part of communication. When the art of listening is lost, the art of communication is also lost.*

This means that the preacher must be a good listener if he wants to be effective in his ministry.

6.3.2.3 Asking people what topics/themes they want to hear about this year

This is another way of gathering information for preaching. To do this the minister must first do his homework. He can do this by preparing a long list of topics or themes and printing large numbers of the list. On Sunday when people come for worship, they may be given their copy at the door as they

enter the church. The minister then explains about the list of themes and how members are to choose the themes they wish him to preach about during the year. Enough time (2-3 weeks) must be given to the members to choose their themes. During the third week all the marked copies can be collected on Sunday for the minister's analysis. In the week that follows the minister can then announce the themes according to the congregation's choices. During sermon preparation, the minister can then pick up any of the listed themes and continue in this way until all the themes have been addressed by the end of the year. This method cannot work in rural congregations, because stationery is a problem, but it can work in urban congregations since they do not have stationery problems in towns.

6.3.3 Knowing the listeners

It is important to understand that when focusing on the listeners the preacher ought to include their contexts (personal, domestic, social, political, economic and theological), because all these contribute to a better understanding of the listeners. The preacher cannot know his listeners well unless he knows the world and situation in which they find themselves. He needs to involve his listeners in his sermon by stirring their imaginations. He can do this by asking himself questions such as: Who are these listeners? Where are they from? What do they do? Are they rich or poor? Are they highly educated or poorly educated, adults or youths, heathens or saved people? Are they already motivated to receive the gospel or not? Once he has determined who his listeners are, it will be a great help to him in preparing a suitable and meaningful message which will address their needs for this will help him to prepare his sermon focusing on his listeners' needs as he knows them.

Coming back to the question: who are these listeners? The answer is: They are both audience and congregation.

6.3.3.1 The listeners as audience

To think of the listeners as an audience is to regard them as the gathering of men, women, youth and children who will hear the sermon. It is to think of them as strangers, because to see them thus is to preach to people who are not of one's congregation. It may be compared to when a person is called to address the college graduates or university graduates. Most of these people will not be known to him by name or he will not have met them anywhere, but will be meeting them for the first time, so they will be strangers to him. However, through imagination he may intuitively guess what their needs might be, and address these needs in his sermon. Craddock (1991:86) says: *For a minister to regard the listeners in this way requires a disciplined act of imagination.*

There is great value in seeing the listeners as an audience because this creates enough distance for the preacher to understand and accept the listeners in and of themselves, apart from their relationship with him. It is very important to remember that any assembly of worshippers includes the following people: the saved and the unsaved, the educated and the non-educated, Christians and non-Christians, men and women, adults and children. The minister called by God to look after his sheep must always remember that these people are found in practically all assemblies of worship. Therefore, he must always address them all in his sermon so that nobody is left unchallenged by the message. Lloyd-Jones (1993:126) testifies: *The wife of the principal came rushing to me and said, 'Do you know, this is a most remarkable thing I have known in this chapel!' I said: 'What do you mean?' 'Well', she said, 'You are the first man I have ever heard in this chapel who has preached to us as if we were sinners', she added, 'all the preachers who came here, because it is a college chapel of Oxford have obviously been taking exceptional pains to prepare learned, intellectual sermons, thinking we are all great intellects... and the result is that we go*

away absolutely unfed and unmoved. We have listened to these essays and our souls are left dry'.

This is what happens if the preacher does not know his listeners and forgets that each assembly of worshippers includes the saved and the unsaved, the educated and the non-educated.

It is true that sometimes the preacher takes for granted that his message is reaching everyone in the assembly in spite of his focusing on one group of the listeners only, and yet many of them are left untouched by the message as was the case with the wife of the principal of Oxford College. This is a challenge to the preacher of the Word. He must make sure that he accommodates every group at various levels in his imagination as he prepares his sermon. Which means that if his listeners are adults and children, his language must not be adult language throughout, but he must also use children's language in order to also accommodate children. If his listeners as an audience are both highly and poorly educated, it is better that he should use simple language to accommodate both.

In the African context, for example, if a preacher is preaching to the adults and children, and there are certain issues he does not wish the children to know about because culturally they are not entitled to such knowledge because of their age, he can speak to the adults in African proverbs or idioms. The adults will understand the message very well because African proverbs and idioms are powerful expressions. While his sermon will therefore be understood by the adults, the children will understand nothing. It is comparable to speaking in parables which are earthly stories which illustrate heavenly truths to some but not to all who hear them. As Stein (1981:27) puts it: *The powerful illustrative nature of Jesus' parables is such that even secular society uses them as illustrations. Yet this view encounters several difficulties not the least of which is the fact that, even for the disciples, the parables were not always self-evident since Jesus frequently had to*

explain to them (Mark 4:13; 34, 7-17). It appears, therefore, that while parables at times reveal and illustrate, they are not always self-evident but at times may even conceal.

The best example is Mark 4:10-12, where we are told that to some the secret of the Kingdom of God is revealed while to others everything comes in parables - meaning that it is not revealed, it is not clear. What is important here is that the preacher must know his listeners so that he can find the right method or form to communicate the message to them. Although in this category the preacher sees his audience as strangers, in the second category he sees the listeners as familiar and close friends.

6.3.3.2 The listeners as congregation

According to Craddock (1986) to think of the listeners as an audience is an attempt to understand them as strangers as explained above, that is they are regarded as persons, no more and no less. But when one thinks of the listeners as a congregation, it means that the listeners are known to the minister. This category can be divided into two assemblies, viz

- * the listeners as a rural congregation; and
- * the listeners as an urban congregation.

In the case of both assemblies, the minister knows the listeners by name, has their addresses, knows their homes and has even established personal relationship with them. In contrast to the first category, the listeners are now known even as individuals, family units, social groups and a community of believers. The problems, differences and distinctions among the listeners are understood by the minister and are taken into account in his sermons. This is very different from the first category. However, although the listeners as a congregation constitute one congregation, whether rural or urban, are known to the minister and have interrelationships with one another, this does not

mean to say that they are one in everything. It is impossible to treat them at one level because there are differences within the congregation. Whether it is in a rural congregation or an urban congregation, a small congregation or a big congregation, there are differences among its members. Therefore they must be treated at different levels. As Craddock (1991:90) confirms: *No congregation is homogeneous, not even the small rural one which consists basically of three 'main families'. This is true not simply in terms of age, education, income and personal experiences, but also basic postures toward the Christian faith...*

This means that although the preacher preaches to the congregation, he must still remember that in every assembly of worshipper there are believers and unbelievers, saved and unsaved persons, people who are for and against the Christian doctrine. The preacher must therefore attempt to address them all. He must not assume that because it is a believing community everyone in it is a believer.

For example, infant baptism is accepted by the church and practised by its congregations. Some members of the congregation may not be in favour of this doctrine and will not bring their children to be baptised as infants. What should the church do with such people? Should it remove their names from its books? No! Should it force them to baptise their children? That is another extreme. No, what is needed here is to educate them Biblically. How can the preacher do this? He can do it by accommodating them in his sermons. Thus, a sermon which addresses both types of members (those for and against infant baptism) will be an appropriate sermon for such congregation members. It is important that the sermon must reflect both sides of the coin if it is to help all members who worship in the congregation. For example, if the theme of the sermon is "Obey God", the preacher must explain to the listeners both the advantages of obeying and the disadvantages of not obeying God, so that at the end of the service, everyone will have heard and received what he/she deserves. Once both types of listeners have been

challenged by the preached message, they will have been helped towards making a meaningful and wise decision.

To return to the two assemblies, viz the rural congregation and the urban congregation: for one to understand the difference between them, it is better to discuss them separately.

6.3.3.2.1 The rural congregation

It is important for the Westerner to understand that the rural congregation is different from the urban congregation because of the composition of its members. In the rural congregation, most of the members are very close to one another. Very few tribes if not just one constitute a congregation; while in urban congregations the members hail from many tribes if not nations. And most of the rural congregation members are poorly educated.

Worshipping, in a rural congregation, is done at various worshipping centres and only on great occasions are services held at the main station. They do this because of the long distances to the main station. For the great events of the church such as holy communion, adult baptism and revival meetings, people come and stay at the main worshipping (mission) station for a few days until everything is over.

Rainy season: During the rainy season, Christian activities in rural congregation almost come to a standstill, because most of the people are busy working in their fields. Some even stay there for the entire farming season to protect their crops from the wild animals.

Financial: The rural congregation has difficulty meeting all its financial obligations, because most of its members do not have a monthly income. This affects the minister who works in the rural congregation. He sometimes receives no salary for a month or more. For example, in the Reformed Church

in Zambia where a minister is paid by the local congregation in which he works, this is a big problem. However, it is said that a minister is paid back after the crops have been harvested and sold at the market. The Anglican priest experiences no such problems as he is still paid by the overseas board. Therefore whether he serves in a rural or urban area, this financial problem does not exist for him.

Hospitality: Though the rural congregation has financial problems, it is more hospitable than the urban congregation. For example, when a Christian slaughters an ox or a goat, the minister is given a free piece of meat. The congregation members are more respectful towards the minister than the urban members. This is possible because most of them have been brought up in this way and have experienced very little influence from the outside world. But above all, they know that a minister is a man of God who deserves to be respected as a national leader (chief).

6.3.3.2.2 The urban congregation

There are several major difference between the urban congregation and the rural congregation, for example with regard to their membership. The urban congregation is composed of highly educated members as well as government officials, heads of organisations and many different professionals. The number of poorly educated members is small compared to the number of well-learned ones. The youth are more active in urban congregations than in rural congregations.

Financially, the urban congregation is far ahead of the rural congregation, because most of its members have a monthly income. Fortunately some of its members receive fat cheques each month and give one tenth of their salary to God. This makes a significant financial difference between the two types of congregations. Hence an urban congregation pays its minister well and regularly.

Hospitality in urban congregation is practised on at a very low scale if at all, because the members have the attitude that their minister also receives a monthly salary like themselves and therefore deserves no extra earnings. Respect for the minister is also at stake because of political influences. For example, five years ago, the youth in one of the congregations of the United Church of Zambia refused to listen to their minister and formed their own church. Something similar happened in the Reformed Church. In 1994 one of the congregations in the Copperbelt Province locked up the house of the minister, because the members did not want the minister who had been posted there by the Synod. The elders warned all the Christians not to give food to the minister and his family. It is said that the family starved and the Synod was forced to transfer the minister and his family to another congregation in Lusaka where he was accepted. This is the result of political influences.

Therefore, it is important for a minister to know his listeners before he prepares his sermon. And to know his listeners well, is to know their personal, domestic, social, cultural, political, economic and theological contexts, because all of these contribute to a better understanding.

6.4 Choosing the text

The text for the sermon can be chosen in various ways, but the following three methods have been selected for discussion.

6.4.1 Using the lectionary (church year)

A lectionary is a list of Biblical passages together with themes assigned to the various days of the church calendar. The lectionaries vary from denomination to denomination. Some denominations have a lectionary with a lot of information while others have a lectionary with less information of only list major events on the church calendar and major aspects of worship. In some

traditions the use of a lectionary is already the established practice. For example, in the Presbyterian Church of Zambia and the Anglican Church in Zambia, the preachers are commanded to follow the lectionary. The Reformed Church in Zambia also has its lectionary (Mlozo), but its preachers are not forced to choose a sermon text from it. They have a freedom of choice. However, the lectionary provides the church and the preacher with necessary information, important readings, major festivals and holidays. In general, the lectionary is a very suitable source for obtaining sermon texts. As Long (1989:62) confirms: *The use of a lectionary is a superb plan for obtaining sermon texts. The readings are set to the rhythm and seasons of the church year, which provides an opportunity for co-ordinated planning of a sermon, music, prayers and other aspects of worship.*

This shows how a lectionary can be helpful to a preacher during his sermon preparation, because some of the aspects of worship are already well fitted into the plan of worship. He can also save time in this way, which can then be spent on the preparation of the whole sermon since other elements are already in place. Above all, it helps the preacher to preach from the entire Bible and to cover everything the church wants its members to learn and hear during a particular year. However, the lectionaries have their limitations. One may find a wide range of Biblical texts included in a good lectionary, but many texts are omitted, sometimes even an entire book of the Bible. Moreover, it limits the preacher's freedom.

6.4.2 Personal Choice

This means that the preacher is free to choose any text from any book of the Bible according to how the Holy Spirit leads him at a particular moment. It is a personal choice because the preacher is not controlled by the lectionary of the Church, but, of course, by the Holy Spirit. The choice of the text is based on the preacher's knowledge of the listeners and their needs, and his knowledge and experience of the text chosen through personal Bible study

The advantage of this method is that the preacher preaches with confidence on the text of his choice. It is a flexible method and it gives a preacher freedom. As Long (1989:63) puts it: *The only real advantage of this process is flexibility, which can also be a liability... if the church burns down or a riot erupts in the town, no preacher will feel bound to a lectionary or any other prior program for selecting a text*

In such a situation a preacher will need to find a text which is suitable for addressing the issue at hand. And to do this, the preacher needs the freedom which only the personal-choice method provides. However, this method also has some limitations just like the lectionaries. Its main disadvantage is that some preachers tend to neglect some books of the Bible and only preach from the books they like and find easy to interpret.

6.4.3 Situational guidance

This is where the preacher is guided by the situation as to what type of text to be select for the sermon; or where the situation dictates the text of a sermon. A good example is Good Friday. On this occasion one has to select a text which speaks about the crucifixion. There is no way one can select a text which says nothing about the crucifixion and think it a suitable text for Good Friday.

Another example is funerals. When there is a funeral, the preacher must choose a text which fits the situation of the funeral. Even in times of famine in the country, the preacher must look for suitable texts from the Bible which can address the situation meaningfully. Failure to do this, will mean that the preacher will not meet the needs of his listeners in their particular situation. The specific situation therefore dictates the sermon text on such occasions.

By using these methods and a few other methods not discussed here, the preacher select sermon texts which will be suited to the listeners' needs.

6.5 Interpreting the text to the listeners

In order to understand this point well, the preacher must ask himself the following questions: What is interpretation? Why should the text be interpreted to the listeners? What is the purpose of interpreting the text to the listeners? By trying to answer these questions, the preacher will come close to understanding what interpreting the text to the listeners involves, and why it is important.

6.5.1 What is interpretation?

Interpretation is an explanation of something which is not clear, to make it more clear to the listeners. It can also mean translation, for example translating the message from another language to the local language, so that the listeners will understand the meaning of the message. Therefore, interpretation is to communicate the Biblical truth to the present listeners according to their own situation and in their own language.

6.5.2 Why must the preacher interpret the text to the listeners?

It is important for the preacher to understand that the text he is now ready to interpret is an ancient text written for a specific group of people who had their own specific cultural, political, economical, social and spiritual needs at the particular time. This in itself creates a gap between the text and the listeners of today, and makes interpretation of the text the most important task of the preacher. If the preacher does his text interpretation faithfully and effectively, he will bridge the gap between the ancient text and present-day listeners very well. And this will minimise or completely rule out all the misunderstandings caused by poor interpretation. The preacher must do this work during his sermon preparation, not during sermon delivery for then he must only communicate what he has already interpreted

6.5.3 What is the purpose of interpreting the text to the listeners?

The purpose of interpreting the text to the listeners has already been stated under Point 6.5.2. It is to prevent the listeners from misunderstanding the text. As Grant (1989:154) testifies: *The central problem is the need to avoid misunderstanding.*

This is because a person approaches the text with pre-conceived ideas, pre-theology and his own cultural context. This can cause him to misunderstand the text. Hence the preacher must interpret the text thoroughly to avoid misunderstanding caused by these factors. And he can only do this by means of proper theology and through exegesis of the Scriptures.

6.6 Contextualising the Biblical message to the listeners

Contextualising the Biblical message to an African community, in other words implies Africanising the gospel message for them. It involves communicating the gospel message to them in an African way. And this includes: African thinking and culture, the African social communication system and the African lifestyle. Is contextualisation a new concept? Not at all! Contextualisation is not a new concept in the social sciences and theology. In fact, the missiological world is full of such concepts as indigenisation, communication, conceptualisation, incarnation, inculturation and as well as contextualisation. It is therefore not a new concept among African theologians, sociologists, anthropologists and educators. But one is surprised to discover that contemporary contextualisers are not more unified. Especially when one examines proposals coming from schools, churches and missions around the world one cannot but conclude that consensus is lacking.

However, although there is a lack of consensus among contemporary contextualisers, the African preacher must not be discouraged from

contextualising the Biblical message for the local listeners, for it is necessary to do so. It is Biblical and theologically supported as proved above.

6.6.1 The unquestionable necessity of contextualisation of the gospel

History has proved that contextualisation is necessary in all cases. As Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:37) put it: *History - whether sacred or profane, ancient or modern - testifies that some sort of contextualization is necessary if we are effectively to cross cultural barriers with the gospel.*

This demonstrates that contextualisation is important for the sake of the listeners as well as for the sake of the gospel, if one is to communicate it effectively to the listeners. Since contextualisation helps the preacher to overcome cross-cultural barriers, it becomes a necessity.

It is important for the Westerner and the Westernised Africans to understand that to contextualise the Biblical truth is not to water it down. Neither does it amount to contaminating the Biblical truth with culture, nor propagating heathenism as the Westerner believes. But it has to do with effective communication of the Biblical message to the listeners in a way that is faithful to God's revelation and according to his purpose of salvation for mankind. Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:200) are right when they write: *From a Christian point of view, contextualization can be thought of as the attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, word, and will of God in the way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teachings of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. Contextualization is both verbal and non-verbal and has to do with theologizing; Bible translation, interpretation, and application; incarnation lifestyle; evangelism; Christian instruction; church planting and growth; church organization; worship style - indeed with all of these activities involved in carrying out the Great Commission.*

This is a comprehensive definition of contextualisation. It makes sense that one should not plant a church in Africa in the same way as one would plant it in America, for the two communities have cross-cultural barriers which can only be overcome by contextualisation. The two have different social systems, cultures and worldviews. It is equally true that the Bible cannot be translated in the same way to Shipibos of the jungles of Eastern Peru (Nida 1952:35-6) who have no idea what a wilderness in the Biblical context is, as to the African who does know the wilderness. Kurewa (1982:56) says much the same thing: *Evangelization was the most important method which the Methodist Episcopal Church used in order to liberate the African from the deadly paganism of his land. Christianity truly became a liberating power only when it was permitted to take African forms.*

This shows that meaningful Christianity is Christianity which assumes a local colour.

6.6.2 Contextualisation is supported by the Bible

When one turns one's attention to the New Testament, one finds a radical altered set of circumstances. This serves as Biblical support for contextualisation. To illustrate the point, the following examples were selected:

6.6.2.1 The Jews' acceptance of gentiles in the church

It was a great problem for the gentiles to be accepted in the church by the Jews. The Jews wanted all the gentiles to be circumcised in order to be accepted as Christians. Circumcision was Mosaic law, which later became part of the Jewish culture. The Bible tells us that the early church leaders ran into a big problem, when they tried to avoid the need of contextualising the gospel message for the gentiles. At last they realised that it was God's will that they should do so, and allowed it to happen in the church. The problem

was finally resolved once and for all at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:1 ff). As Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:8) testify: *God in his mercy prodded and directed the early church, as in the case of Peter's ministry to Cornelius (Acts 10). It becomes apparent that the contextualizing activity of the New Testament believers was not simply a matter of a voluntary or spontaneous response to cultural differences, but rather a matter of God's pushing them to destroy the barriers between Jews and the Gentile world.*

6.6.2.2 The New Testament documents

This is another example of contextualisation, since the New Testament documents themselves are the fruits of the work of contextualisation. And this is proved by the works, the forms and the expressions of the Gospels' writers. Hesselgrave *et al* (1989:8) are right when they write: *Each of the four Gospels, for example, reflects the cultural orientation of its author and is clearly addressed to a particular audience, Matthew's Jewish orientation is reflected in his emphasis on messianic prophecy, kingship, the divine titles of Jesus, and the Aramaisms which characterise his Jewish-Greek language. Luke, on other hand, reflects a distinctly Hellenistic mind set.*

This proves that each of these authors contextualised the gospel message in order to communicate it to a specific group of listeners. And if the authors of the Gospels, led by the Holy Spirit, found it fitting to contextualise the gospel message, what is wrong with an African preacher doing the same when proclaiming the gospel to his people? Why is he suspected by the Westerner of contaminating the gospel message with his culture when he speaks of contextualising the gospel truth? In this context contextualisation is supported by the Bible. The Westerner has no Biblical reason to suspect the African preacher who wants to contextualise the gospel message for the African listeners. If he wants to do so, he must first deal with the authors of the Gospels for contextualising the gospel.

6.6.2.3 Jesus' first coming to earth

This is the most radical example of contextualisation. One must remember that Jesus Christ is God, has no beginning, and He was with the Father when He created the world. The question one might ask is: Why did He become man? Why did He allow Himself to be kept in a womb for nine months? Why did He allow Himself to have a beginning, and yet He has no beginning? Why did He take this humiliating action and yet He is a honourable Person?

All these questions are answered by the two statements: Jesus contextualised God's message for human salvation by becoming a man. And He did this to communicate God's message to the people in an effective and meaningful way, since God's message for human salvation is: God with his people (Matt 1:23), that is God dwelling among his people. So Jesus was born and lived among his people. God has no culture, but He knows all the cultures of the world. So when Jesus was born, He took the culture of the community into which He was born, the Jewish culture. He took this form because He did not want to be rejected by the people, since to reject Jesus could mean to reject God's message and their own salvation. For instance, if He had come as an angel, people would have run away from Him thinking that He was a ghost. If He refused to be circumcised, the people (Jews) would have said that He was not one of them according to the law of Moses. So Jesus adopted the culture of the Jews to whom He belonged. That is why on the 8th day after his birth He was circumcised (Luke 2:21). When He was twelve years old, He went to the temple as the custom was to learn the law (Luke 2:42, 46-49); and when He became thirty years old, He began his public ministry. All this was in accordance with Jewish culture and the Old Testament.

Jesus is a model for every Christian. His action of humiliation, his becoming human and adopting this cultural pattern, communicate to Christians that in order for some-one to win the people to himself, he himself needs to adjust to

the level of the people and not expect the people to adjust to his level. This is what is called contextualisation. The question now is: Did the Westerner adjust himself to the level of an African during his missionary work in Africa? Or did he want the African to ascend to his level? Did the missionary keep his superiority towards an African inferiority, or did he humble himself to the level of the African? The answer is no! He maintained his superiority. This is proved by his giving Africans Christian names during baptism and by commanding them to do things the way he wanted. This model contradicts Jesus' model. Therefore the African preacher must follow the Jesus' example because He is the head of the church.

6.6.3 Contextualisation is theologically supported.

Circumcision once again serves as our point of departure for this discussion. In the Old Testament circumcision was to the Israelites a sign of their being God's people, a seal of the covenant between God and his people Israel. It served as the entrance into the covenant of God. And this comprised cutting males' foreskin.

In the new Testament circumcision is theologically interpreted to mean baptism as the seal of the new covenant of God, the entrance into the new Covenant, a mark of Christianity. And this has to do with faith in Jesus Christ, and does not involve cutting males' foreskin (Mark 16:16). Thus both Jews (circumcised) and Gentiles (uncircumcised) were accepted by God into his new covenant because of their faith in Jesus Christ. In Galatians 3:26-28 (NIV) we read: *You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

This proves that contextualisation of the Biblical truth is theologically supported. Therefore, the African preacher must not hesitate to contextualise his sermon. The Scriptures are not violated by doing so, since the truth

remains the same. What changes is the method of approach. Thus, for example, Joseph Diangienda, the leader of Kimbangu church, used bread baked from a mixture of potatoes, maize and bananas and honey and water instead of wine for the holy communion. Martin (1975:180) confirms: *During the special service, Joseph Diangienda announced the nature of the elements to be used in the communion, namely bread baked from the mixture of potatoes, maize and bananas, and "wine" made of honey and water... The foods used to make the elements are found in Zaire and the neighbouring countries. In order to be obedient to the spirit of the Gospel our church has chosen African foods, just as Christ in His day used bread and wine, the daily foods of Palestine.*

Diangienda did not violate the Biblical truth by using the local foods for holy communion elements. In fact, this action made the communion very meaningful to the local listeners. Thus, contextualising the sermon means to use local expressions, local materials and local illustrations in the sermon as Diangienda did.

6.7 The structuring of sermon

Many preachers have spoken and are still speaking about the form of sermons. Some say that the sermon must have no form. Let the preacher preach as the Holy Spirit leads him or her. Others say no, every sermon must have a form; because giving the sermon a form, helps the preacher to be systematic in his or her presentation. Moreover, others say that one form should be used for all sermons, while others say let the text determine which form will be suitable for that specific text.

With this information in mind, one must ask oneself whether it is necessary that a sermon should have a structure or form? Does a form contribute anything to the text or to the sermon? Does a sermon form help the a listener

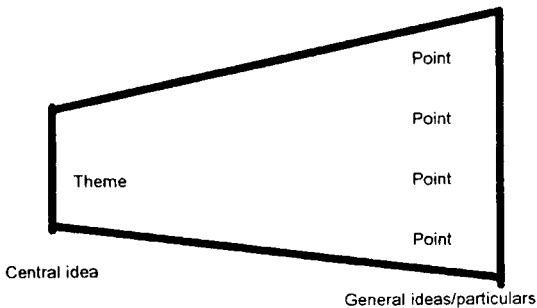
to understand the message? It is important to take these questions as points of departure for meaningful discussion of the structuring of the sermon.

6.7.1 The form of the sermon

6.7.1.1 The deductive sermon form

The most dominant sermon design is the deductive form. After the introduction, the theme is stated and its various aspects or points are developed one after another. One major advantage of this form is that the point of the sermon is made clear from the beginning and can be reinforced by the preacher throughout the sermon. It is also expository sermon because each point is explained and applied at the same time.

Diagrammatically the deductive sermon form can be portrayed as follows:



A sermon outline, if taking a question order, may look like this:

Text: Philippians 2:11 (NIV).

"Let every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Theme: I confess Jesus Christ is Lord.

1 Why should I confess Him?

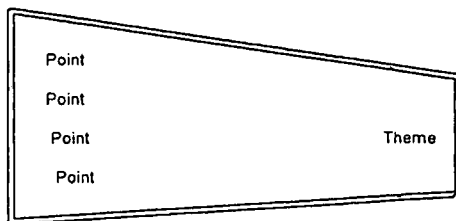
- 2 How should I confess Him?
- 3 When should I confess Him?
- 4 Where should I confess Him?

6.7.1.2 The inductive sermon

This sermon form is different from the deductive sermon, and it does the opposite. Instead of starting with a "theme", or "central idea", it starts with the "particulars", the "general ideas" and finishes with the theme.

A major advantage of the inductive over the deductive sermon development (Greidanus 1989) is that inductive sermons produce a sense of discovery in listeners, as though they have arrived at the idea on their own.

Schematically the inductive sermon looks as follows:



Source: Greidanus 1989:143

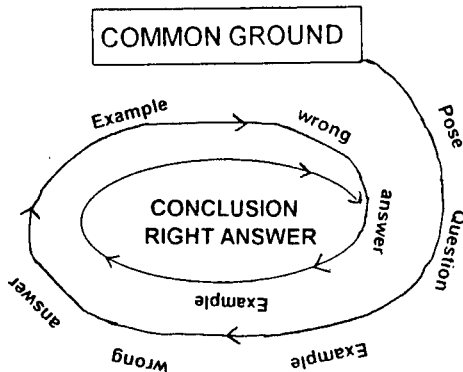
6.7.1.3 The didactic sermon

This form of sermon is taken to illustrate the inductive sermon. The researcher uses as representative of this form the model presented by Ralph L Lewis in *Inductive preaching* (1983). Lewis (1983:97-101) gives many examples of inductive sermons, but the three examples: **problem-solution**;

question-answer; and elimination are similar in structure and purpose. Hence, one example of these demonstrates them all.

Here is how the didactic sermon is formulated: The preacher starts on the common ground with a life-related example that poses the question that gives the sermon its direction. For example: What is Christian perfection? Then by using additional illustrative material, Bible references, quotations, and so on, the preacher one by one introduces and checks off a number of things that Christian perfection is not. After eliminating all the most common misconceptions, he finally concludes with the right answer.

Diagrammatically the sermon may look like this:



The sermon outline may look like this depending on the chosen text:

Life - related example

Question or problem:

What is Christian perfection?

Not angelic perfection

Not Adamic perfection

Not a perfect body

Not perfect knowledge

Not perfect performance...

But:

Example - perfect love

Example - perfect motives

Example - perfect attitudes.

In the course of such a sermon the preacher would eliminate the most common misconceptions concerning Christian perfection. Finally he would conclude by explaining what Christian perfection is. That is why it is called an elimination sermon.

This form can work in African congregations, both rural and urban.

The word "didactic" comes from the Greek word (*didache*), meaning "teaching". Teaching is the act of giving instructions, of providing someone with knowledge or information he/she did not possess before. The teaching is therefore a form of communication which emphasises the giving and receiving of information. Didactic information can form a part of any form of sermon (including, narrative, parables, stories) and is more suited to a deductive approach.

It is important to understand that the didactic sermon derives its theme and subpoints from the text in the Biblical context. Although it is not developed as a deductive sermon, it exhibits many similarities. It aims to provide some information on the text, and the sermon is directed at the listeners' intellect. Yamsat (1993:22) is right when he writes: *Because didactic preaching endeavours to provide information to the hearers, it aims at the hearers' intellect, the hearers' mental comprehension of the information the preacher wants to impart.*

This means that the listeners must be on the same intellectual level as the preacher in order to grasp the points and the logic of his argument. One can easily imagine this sermon form as being only suitable for intellectuals. It will

probably not be effective in a rural congregation where most of the members are not well educated. Since most of the members will not be able to follow the preacher's argument, they will miss the points and misunderstand the whole sermon. Yamsat (1993:22) is correct when he states: *This didactic approach is bound to be foreign to most of the hearers, especially to Africans who think holistically. Not only is such a preaching bound to be foreign to most of the people in the congregation, it also assumes that preaching is only for the mind rather than for the heart as well.*

If the assumption is true that the didactic sermon is only for the mind and not for the heart as well, it will fail in its purpose among Africans who believe in the holistic approach to preaching as well as in the holistic salvation of humans.

Greidanus (1989:146) listed the strong points of the didactic sermon:

- It is Biblical to the extent that the theme summarises the message of the text and the supporting points are taken from the text.
- It makes for a clear, coherent structure that provides the hearers with a solid, logical framework for understanding the sermon.

The weak points of the didactic sermon are as follows:

- The sermon is formal and impersonal.

The most serious objection to the didactic form is formulated as follows by Greidanus (1989:147): *In reshaping the form of the text, it may unintentionally distort the message of the text. For passages whose aim is specifically to teach doctrine, the didactic form may work well, but for passages whose aim is to proclaim, to surprise, to encourage, to seek praise, etc the didactic form*

is not very appropriate because the message becomes transformed into an intellectual topic

Greidanus is right in stating that this is a serious weakness of the didactic form for it does not promote proclamation, encouragement, comfort and praise which are very important elements in preaching. To transform the Biblical message into an intellectual topic or idea is another weakness, because preaching comprises transmitting the Biblical truth to the listeners, not intellectual ideas.

The outline of a didactic sermon on John 3:16 may look like this: (Daane 1980:70):

Text: John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Theme: The Greatness of God's love (God's love is great).

- i Its costly expression
- ii Its unworthy object
- iii Its saving purpose

Note that each of the points begins with "Its". Although the didactic form does not necessarily require these possessive pronouns, Daane insists on them since they make for a tight, logical form. Daane (1980:66) states: *The use of this possessive pronoun indicates that what is asserted belongs to the divine love and is an aspect of its greatness.*

6.7.1.4 Storytelling

Story is an interpretative resource, a model and an outline by means of which a person makes sense of what is happening to himself/herself and frames his/her own actions. It shapes the process of a person's life. Story is therefore a much more powerful tool for acting out and reproducing life than philosophy. That is why Africans like stories. As Estlinger (1987:41) puts it: *Whatever else the Bible is to the black church, it is story, and whatever can be said about black preaching likewise involves storytelling. At a more general level of cultural transmission (Mitchell, Black Preaching 1979), 'plays and stories are processes which engage the vital emotions, making possible new understanding and a new orientation and commitment'.*

This demonstrates how much Africans love stories since they are brought up as oral communicators. And because of this background which is part of the African culture, Africans understand the Bible better through storytelling, something which the Westerner tends to reject because it stirs people's emotions. Since Western Christianity is allied to Greek philosophy, and this philosophy condemns stories, the Westerner finds no pleasure in it. Cupitt (1991:42) confirms this: *Western Christianity was allied to Greek philosophy in general and to platonism in particular... Philosophy condemned stories for stirring up our emotions and seducing us into identifying ourselves with the central characters.*

However, the storytelling preacher may prove to be very effective in his preaching because he can be just as true to the Biblical message as the herald and, at the same time, as sensitive to the human situation as the pastor. How is this possible? Long (1989:36) puts it as follows: *What enables the preacher to combine these virtues is the use of narrative as the sermonic form of choice.*

This sermon form is effective because it marries the Biblical truth with the human situation. This means the preacher, by choosing this form, addresses human needs in a Biblical manner.

The storytelling preacher chooses the narrative form because he believes that narrative is superior theologically and with regard to communication. Theologically narrative is superior because the gospel itself is a narrative. For example, a person says: "I believe in God". Since there are many gods in the world, one has to ask: Which god? And to respond to this, he tells a story: The God who made heaven and earth, the God who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ who was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died and was buried..." and off he goes narrating the important story of faith. Furthermore, since the gospel is a narrative, the preacher in choosing narrative as sermon form, chooses the right form, because it will reshape the text as it becomes one with the content. As Davis (1958:9) testifies: *There is a right form for each sermon, namely, the form that is right for this particular sermon. A right form can never be imposed on any sermon. If it has to be imposed it is not right. The right form derives from the substance of the message itself, is inseparable from the content, becomes one with the content, and gives a feeling of finality to the sermon.*

Davis is right. The form of the sermon must not be imposed on the text, but must be derived from it. If one imposes it on the text, it might distort the text.

The story is a powerful communicative tool for preaching. It is said that long after the rest of a sermon has been forgotten, many Africans can still recall the stories told. And most Africans like listening to the stories, and telling stories. Long (1989:37) is right when he writes: *We like stories. Not only do we like stories, we live our lives out of them. We remember in stories, dream in stories, shape our values through stories.*

Above all, it does not start with the African preacher, it started with his master, Jesus Christ, who did not speak to his listeners without a parable, a story (Mark 4:34). This proves that storytelling preaching can be effective in an African community. Lewis (1983:69) puts it correctly: *Jesus' little stories are tied to very big ideas. The story of the good Samaritan forms a sermon on compassion. The prodigal son teaches forgiveness. The parable of the talents instructs us about personal responsibility. When Jesus preached, narrative carried much of the weight of his message.*

One might call Jesus the Master Storyteller, since He did not preach without using a story, most of which were parables.

Why is storytelling preaching important among Africans? It is important because of the following reasons:

The storyteller preacher recounts both God's story and our human stories, seeking to weave our human stories, the narratives of contemporary African life into the framework of God's story. As Long (1989:40) puts it: *By weaving the stories of human experience into the biblical narrative, and by naming the theological dimension of these experiences, the storyteller announces, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing'.*

- A story which is well told both enables and demands a high level of involvement on the part of those who hear it. And since Africans are good listeners to stories, this works well for them. Long (1989:38) confirms this: *The idea is that a story listener cannot be passive but must participate with the narrator in creating the world of the story.*

In the same way, Cupitt (1991:48) states that stories actually produce desires and patterns of human behaviour. He says: *They teach us and equip us with selves to be, feelings to have, action to perform, people to meet, games to play, and a world to inhabit.*

- People listen and in many cases hear the Biblical witness afresh.
- The African preacher believes in holistic preaching to the whole person rather than only to his mental faculties as the Westerner does. And this form does just that.
- Story speaks to story, Rice (in *New Hearing* 1987) observes, that when that happens, *not only can worship come alive, but a whole community of faith can be enlivened.*

However, this method of preaching is not always appreciated by the Westerner. This is because of his cultural, theological and philosophical background. The following examples serve to illustrate this point:

- The Western cultural frame of reference recognises nothing short of the whole human when it addresses only his mental faculties. Even though the Bible is straightforward when it says: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength (Mark 12:30).*

This first summary of the Law teaches us that God addresses man holistically and demands that the whole man should respond to him holistically. Yes, despite the clarity of the Biblical position, Mitchell (1990:17) says: *Western culture has for centuries preached primarily to the mental faculties, emphasizing the appeal to reason, to the virtual exclusion of other gifts.*

This differs from the African culture which emphasises holistic preaching.

- The Western preaching method is designed to a homiletic model based on argument and reasoning with people. As Eslinger (1987:39)

writes: *The primary difficulty with the rationalistic preaching of the white churches is that it profoundly misunderstands the complex processes of human personality as well as the nature of biblical faith. Preachers have long considered preaching a matter of reasoning with people.*

This is the weakness of rationalistic preaching, because it does not address the whole person. Above all, faith involves the whole person and all of his faculties, not only the cognitive. And yet most Westerner preachers take this to be their preaching model, while African preachers prefer a holistic preaching model.

- According to Eslinger (1987), the Westerner believes in dualistic Christianity. This is a Christianity which is based on Greek philosophy which separates the spirit from the body; creating a dualism of flesh and spirit.

Like all the other preaching models, storytelling also has limitations. Since the whole Bible is not a narrative literary form, this limits the possibility of using a narrative form for every sermon. But it is more effective among African Christians than others, who may find other forms of worship boring. As Eslinger (1987:39) testifies: *The majority of sermons preached in mainline American churches are dull, lifeless, and incredibly boring, according to Henry Mitchell. This preaching is far removed from the lives of the listeners: it trades in argument and concept. At its root lies a syllogistic model of communications. The dullness of most mainline preaching is due to its being conceived of as argument rather than art - as syllogism rather than symbol.*

The ideas are arranged in a certain order by the preacher and then transmitted from the pulpit to the people. This dominant approach to preaching, with its rationalistic norms, is identified by Mitchell as "white preaching". And that is why it becomes boring preaching to Africans. Because the preaching is far removed from the lives of the Africans, it becomes a

boring preaching to an African. Something interesting (Eslinger 1987:29) is that increasingly, *storytelling is being established on hermeneutically firm foundations.*

6.8 The importance of sermon form

The importance of the sermon form has already been reflected on above. Its necessity will now be discussed briefly without much explanation.

6.8.1 The sermon form reshapes the form of the text

The significance of a sermon form becomes evident when one realises that a particular form will distort the text's message. Once this is discovered, one must abandon the specific form., that is when one finds out that the theme does not follow from the chosen text.

6.8.2 The form facilitates the movement of the sermon

Craddock (1979:145) says: *The movement of the sermon is so vital to its effectiveness that a structure should be provided which facilitates rather than hinders that movement.*

6.8.3 Form shapes the hearers' attitudes

Craddock (1987:173) declares that, *ministers who, week after week, frame their sermons as argument, syllogism armed for debate, tend to give that form to the faith perspective of regular listeners.*

6.8.4 The sermon form is important for the sake of the sermon unity

Blackwood (1947:144) writes: *But the prudent preacher... singles out one vital truth and then makes it shine.*

6.9 Conclusion

- Sermon form is necessary for reshaping the text, shaping the listeners' attitude and for sermon progress and unity.
- There is no one suitable form for all sermons, because Bible texts have various forms.
- The Western and the African preacher differ with regard to preaching. The Westerner believes in rationalistic preaching which appeals only to a person's mental faculties, while the African preacher believes in holistic preaching, that is preaching which appeals to the whole person and addresses all his faculties. However, today there are indications that the Western approach has also changed to a more holistic approach. This can be seen in psychology where the cognitive, emotive and conative faculties of man are seen as a whole. In the field of biokinetics and medicine emphasis is placed on the fact that a healthy body houses a healthy spirit. But although this is so, it is not always heard in some preachers' sermons. Many tend to only speak to the "soul" of a person and to forget that he lives a human life in the world.
- Sermon preparation involves the members of the congregation, the preacher himself, the content, the situation and the listeners' culture.

CHAPTER 7

7 SERMON DELIVERY IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

In Ezekiel 3:1,4,10 and 11 we read: *Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel. Son of man, go now to the house of Israel and speak my words to them. Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. Go now to your countrymen in exile and speak to them (NIV).*

7.1 Introduction

What delivering a sermon in the African context entails is this: to deliver the sermon according to the African communication system. This means that the African cultural way of communication must be introduced into the sermon by using African proverbs, language and idioms, as well as African expressions, illustrations and images, instead of the Westerner's. Expression such as: *Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow (Is 1:8)*, may in the African context be changed to: *though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as a white cloth, or as white as white paper or as white as table-salt*. Since these elements are familiar to and used by the Africans, they will, if used in the sermon, bring the message powerfully home to an African. This is important in order that the preacher may not be misunderstood by his listeners. Martin Luther, the father of the Reformation, also discovered this secret as soon as he became the pastor of a small town church in Germany. He used the local language and expressions to make himself understandable to his listeners. Adams (1986:67) writes: *When he (Luther) became pastor of the town church at Wittenberg, he soon discovered that he "must make himself understood", as he said, by raw Saxons. So, he gathered collections of German proverbs and country sayings and used these as illustrations and a medium for his message. The conscious effort to be understood was so successful that people said it was impossible to misunderstand him. Possibly*

the most valuable use one could make of Luther's sermons is to study his use of language, examples and sayings.

From this one learns that Luther successfully communicated the message to his listeners and avoided misunderstanding between himself and his listeners by using the listeners' (Germans') language, proverbs and sayings as illustrations and the medium for his message. This is something which the African preacher seldom does, and yet he needs such skills, because the delivery of a sermon is the most dynamic moment of the preaching experience as, in that moment, all the sermon preparation is brought to maturation or miscarriage; to success or frustration; to joy or sadness. Thus if the sermon is delivered effectively, the preacher joyfully forgets the long hard hours of toil in preparation. But if he/she fails, all his/her labour in preparation becomes to him/her as a heavy and useless burden. This is true, because a sermon is never a sermon until it is preached.

Delivering a sermon does not only involve vocalisation and gesticulation, but also the personality of the preacher and other factors. As Broadus (1979:264) puts it: *Delivery does not consist merely, or even chiefly, in vocalisation and gesticulation, but it implies that one is possessed with the subject, that he is completely in sympathy with it and fully alive to its importance, that he is not repeating remembered words but setting free the thoughts shut up in his mind.... The speaker is not undertaking to represent another person, to appropriate another's thoughts and feelings, but aims simply to be himself, to speak what his own mind has produced.*

In the same way, the preacher does not preach a message he does not possess himself. He preaches a message he understands, believes and accepts as true. When he preaches, he expresses his feelings, his convictions, his commitment and the importance of the message he delivers. He does this because he possesses the message as his own, and the message and personality become inseparable.

Therefore, a study of sermon delivery involves a discussion of the preacher's personality as it relates to preaching, the preacher's use of his body (non-verbal delivery), the use of his voice (verbal delivery), the methods of sermon delivery, the introduction, the application and conclusion of the sermon, the common mistakes and the fears experienced in the pulpit.

7.2 The preacher's personality

One might ask: What sort of man may be a pastor? What are the qualifications for a person to become a pastor, a preacher? What are the true conditions for a preacher's success? What type of life should a preacher portray before the people? All these questions and many others will help the African church to focus on the personality of the preacher. One must admit that it is not easy to prescribe, in view of personal liberty and personal rights, the methods of inspection and authority which should be used to control the admission of preachers to their sacred work. But for the sake of the holiness of the ministry and because of the necessity for orderliness in the church, the African church needs a clear understanding and a fuller statement of the true Biblical conditions for a preacher's success. Here are a few selected points which may serve as guidelines for the church in admitting the preacher to his sacred ministry in the hope that he may be successful in his preaching. The preacher must have these qualities in order to be successful.

7.2.1 The preacher must be a spiritual person

The spiritual life of the preacher is very important to the preaching ministry, since without spiritual fire, one cannot preach. This must be regarded as the most important quality of a preacher. As Brooks (1959:38) emphatically puts it: *I must not dwell upon the first of all the necessary qualities, and yet there is not a moment's doubt that it does stand first of all. It is a personal piety, a deep possession in one's own soul of faith and hope and resolution which he*

is to offer to his fellow-men for their new life. Nothing but fire kindles fire. To know in one's whole nature what it is to live by Christ; to be His, not our own.

Brooks is right in saying that nothing but fire kindles fire. No pastor who is spiritually dead will keep a congregation spiritually alive, for he has no fire to kindle the congregation's spiritual fire. John Knox (1946:89) says more or less the same thing, but expresses it somewhat differently when he writes: *True preaching from start to finish is the work of the Spirit.* Which means that without the Holy Spirit there can be no preaching.

Both Western and African preachers must understand that people in Africa today will no longer accept a person's Christian message if his lifestyle contradicts what he preaches. African people today want a preacher who practises and lives by what he preaches; who believes what he teaches and shows that he is committed to it. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, one of the outstanding Protestant preachers of his time, devoted many pages and chapters to emphasising the importance of a preacher's spiritual life and faith. He describes Luther's faith and preaching as follows (in Thieliicke 1963:103,118,95): *Nobody doubted that he (Luther) believed what he spoke. He spoke with thunder, for there was lightning in his faith. The man preached all over, for his entire nature believed. You felt, 'Well, he may be mad, or he may be altogether mistaken, but he assuredly believes what he says. He is the incarnation of faith; his heart is running over at his lips'.*

In other accounts, Spurgeon (in Thieliicke 1963) adds: *There is no rhetoric like that of the heart and no school for learning it but the foot of the cross. Know Jesus. Sit at his feet. Consider his nature, his work, his suffering, his glory. Rejoice in his presence. Commune with him from day to day.*

This means that the most essential qualities for a preacher are a deep personal faith, a love of Christ, a life of prayer. As Thieliicke (1963:103) correctly puts it: *A man's life is always more forcible than his speech; when*

men take stock of him they reckon his deeds as pounds and his words as pence.

This demonstrates how important a preacher's spiritual life is to the hearers and his presentation of the gospel. Thus, the preacher's good character will promote the effectiveness of the gospel message preached; while the preacher's bad character will rob it of its power. The preacher must be a person of good character, filled with the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which includes love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). Surprisingly, even the secular rhetoricians have noted that the good speaker ought to be a good person. As Quintilian (1933, Book 1:pr 9,11) says: *My aim, then is the education of the perfect orator. The first essential for such an one is that he should be a good man, and consequently we demand of him not merely the possession of exceptional gifts of speech, but of all the excellencies of character as well.*

This shows that people expect their pastor to be known by the fruit of the Spirit and not by the works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-23). Thus people trust, accept and believe the preacher who has a good reputation.

7.2.2 The preacher must be an honest person

The preacher must understand that he is a human being, and that his authority is given as a gift when he brings his humanness to God. He does not need to become human, because he is already human. What he needs is to be simply an honest, genuine, sincere, reliable, trustworthy and authentic person, to avoid playing dishonest games with himself and others. He needs to be natural. He should never pretend to be what he is not. Naturalness means not adding to or subtracting from his personality. In fact, it means being neither more nor less than what he is. The problem here is that some pastors try to be more than they are: they want to appear holier or more profound, or more dynamic, or more clever. Such an attitude causes the

preacher concerned to behave in a dishonest way. One must realise that people quickly discover whether a person is a genuine preacher or not. Once they discover that the pastor is not honest with himself, they stop trusting him and his ministry suffers badly. It is important to note that an authentic life on the part of a preacher does not simply happen. It requires hard and disciplined work. It demands a daily encounter with Jesus Christ through prayer. Halvorson (1982:21) describes it as follows: *The authentic personhood is established through prayer. Prayer is, above all, the practice of the presence of God. To pray is to be open to God. Sadly, the devotional life of the preacher is the first fatality of being busy. Without prayer, we become pretenders, phonies, and no amount of human warmth, intellectual honesty, or moral earnestness will hide the truth.*

And James W Cox (1985:258) says something similar when he remarks: *If genuine commitment of life to God is lacking and if those disciplines through which this commitment is channelled are lacking, then the results will show up in the pulpit. The preacher may have brilliant intellect, superior speaking gifts, and a radiant, friendly bearing, yet fail to speak for God with the conviction and compassion that authentic preaching requires.*

Halvorson and Cox are right. For an African preacher to be successful in his preaching ministry, he needs to be sincere, honest and authentic as a person as well as in his preaching.

7.2.3 The preacher must be a passionate person

The word "passion" is derived from the Latin "passio" and the Greek word "pathos" (Webster's Dictionary). It means suffering, enduring, an intensity of love born of shared suffering, empathy, identification with those who are hurting as a result of injustice, abuse or the nastiness of life. According to Nouwen (1985) it is very important for a preacher to be as passionate as Jesus was.

Jesus had a passion for the people. His suffering and agony on the cross brought us peace, love, justice, healing, hope and salvation (Isaiah 53:3-6; Mark 10:45, NIV). A person cannot be an effective preacher if he has no passion, no intensity of love for the people he serves. He needs to be on fire himself if he wants the people he serves to become fired up spiritually. He needs to put himself into the shoes of those hurting or mourning. Romans 12:15 puts it beautifully: *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another* (NIV). When Jesus saw that Mary and the Jews who accompanied her were weeping about Lazarus, He also wept (John 11:35). Passion is very important for a preacher to have, because it persuades people. As Black (1978:59) writes: *The passions are the only orators that always persuade; they are, as it were, a natural art, the rules of which are infallible: and the simplest man with passion is more persuasive than the most eloquent without it.*

Since the purpose of preaching is to persuade people to believe the Message, the African preacher must have passion for the people he preaches to, for without it, he will fail to win the people for Christ.

7.2.4 The preacher must be a courageous person

The African preacher must be courageous enough to preach the whole Biblical truth to the people, because in his hands he carries the life and death, salvation and destruction, hope and despair, justification and condemnation of the people. It will therefore not be good to preach "peace" where there is no peace. He needs to be courageous because he will be preaching to uncles and aunts, fathers and mothers, chiefs and politicians, something which is not easy for a young man to do. In African society it is not easy for a young man to challenge such people and tell them that they have sinned before God. It needs courage to do so. Thus for the sake of the gospel and the salvation of the people, the preacher ought to do as Nathan did to King David (2 Sam 12:5-10). And to have been able to do so, Nathan had be

bold enough to challenge the King. For this is not a ministry for cowards. Brooks (1959:59) affirms: *The timid minister is as bad as the timid surgeon. Courage is good everywhere, but it is necessary here. If you are afraid of men and a slave to their opinion, go and do something else. Go and make shoes to fit them. Go even and paint pictures which you know are bad, but which suit their bad taste. But do not keep on all your life preaching sermons which shall say not what God sent you to declare... Be courageous.*

Brooks is right. A timid preacher is vulnerable to the temptation of twisting God's message to please the listeners because he is afraid of them; especially if God's message goes against what the hearers are doing. Paul reminds such a preacher: *God did not give him a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline (2 Tim 1:7) NIV*. Therefore, he needs to be courageous.

7.2.5 The preacher must not be egotistic

It is important to understand that one quality not needed in a preacher is egotism, the excessive love of self; self-centredness. In fact, many authors mention that the one persistent and stubborn problem that affects most of the public speakers is egotism. As Markquart (1985:63) puts it: *Among preachers, the danger is to use the gifts and calling of God to gain the admiration and respect of others, rather than using God's gifts for his service and glory.*

It is true. There are some African preachers who use the gifts and calling of God to gain the recognition and respect of others, rather than using them for God's service and glory. The preacher must remember that he is a servant of God and that all the glory belongs to God.

7.3. The preacher's body language during delivery

7.3.1 The preacher's appearance

Should one separate the preacher from his sermon? Should the African congregation not worry about the bad behaviour of its pastor as long as he preaches well? The answer is **NO WAY!** One must not separate the two, because they are inseparable. Brown *et al* (1963:165) emphatically describe the preacher's emotions as follows: *In at least one area of personality the minister is himself in delivery, whether he likes it or not. It is inevitable that his emotions will be seen in his preaching. Delivery has its first residence not in the mouth or in the body, but in the inner feelings of the speaker. What the speaker is and feels as a person will be seen and heard through his eyes, his face, his voice, his gestures, his posture, and his attitude toward the congregation.*

This shows that one cannot separate the preacher from his message, because even if he does not want to speak out, his body will say it. Brown *et al* (1963:179) add: *One of the delights of an audience is to observe a speaker who speaks with his body and thus, by his total personality, transmits an idea from himself to others.*

In the same way, the preacher's body speaks, communicates the message to the hearers as he preaches to them. This also includes the way a preacher should dress in the pulpit. He must be neatly and appropriately dressed so that he does not call attention to himself. Brown *et al* (1963:181) stress the importance of the pastor's appearance in the pulpit as follows: *The minister should dress according to the accepted pattern of his pulpit. If it is customary for him to wear business attire, ... he should dress so as to call no attention to himself. Here is one of those places where the first principle of body usage is determinative. When attire calls attention to the speaker, rather than to his message, it is inappropriate. A minister should be dressed conservatively and*

neatly in clothing which is correctly chosen as to colour and which is correctly worn. To be careless at this point or in cleanliness of person is inexcusable.

What we wish to emphasise is that the body language of the minister must facilitate communication rather than hinder it. In this way the body becomes a vehicle of communication.

7.3.2 Eye contact

The most forceful delivery involves expressive actions such as the appearance of the preacher, eye contact and gestures. Therefore, although some African traditional cultural customs discourage young people from looking elderly people in the eyes when speaking, the young African preacher must look into their eyes when preaching for the sake of the gospel and in order to monitor their reaction.

The African preacher must understand that preaching is a form of dialogue, of conversation. It requires an awareness on the part of the listeners who are being addressed. The preacher has to monitor this awareness through eye contact with the listeners. As Baumann (1978:190) puts it: *Because preachers are not carrying on a soliloquy (self talk), they are to look people in the eye, not simply staring but seeing them so as to discover what their reactions are. The goal is more mental directness than mere physical directness, a relationship with the listener which makes him feel that the speaker is thinking of him and talking personally to him.*

Baumann is right. The purpose of eye contact is mental directness rather than mere physical directness. The young African preacher must therefore not feel that he is jeopardising the elderliness of his listeners by looking in their eyes. The goal is communication, to see whether he is reaching them with the message. In fact, these days scholars are increasingly interested in non-verbal communication. As King (1989:113) puts it: *While communication*

research traditionally emphasised the study of language and verbal messages, scholars today are increasingly interested in non-verbal communication. Non-verbal codes appear to complement language, expanding the efficiency and effectiveness of human communication. The study of non-verbal communication extends our view of the human communicator. And it provides new insights into the structure, function, and evolution of communication systems, large and small.

Since non-verbal communication enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of human communication, the African preacher must be encouraged to practise it in his preaching.

7.3.3 Gestures

Gestures are very important in delivering the sermon. The language of gesture is important because many distinct and meaningful signals are transmitted to the hearers via the gestures. And if gestures are not appropriate, they can confuse the listeners. Hence, whatever the preacher does, he must make sure that his gestures are appropriate, natural and definite. As Baumann (1978:189) confirms: *They certainly ought to be definite... There is no value to a half gesture. It should be a definite, meaningful movement. Random fidgeting with the hands or flailing of the arms is always distorting.*

Gestures should be natural. When the preacher uses a lot of gestures in his sermon, or when gestures are not congruent with what the preacher says, such gestures are unnatural. In order to keep his gestures natural, the preacher therefore needs to practise them and to pay attention to factors that contribute to naturalness. Cox (1985:254) says: *For one thing, timing must be right. A gesture is ludicrous if it does not slightly anticipate the corresponding spoken word.... Also, there must not be too many gestures... Moreover,*

gestures must be congruent with what the speaker is saying. To talk about God's love with a bitter scowl cancels the words.

Gestures should be characterised by variety (Baumann 1978:189). According to Baumann, it is easy to fall into a comfortable pattern in which one uses the same gesture again and again. Baumann is right. Some African preachers fall into such a pattern, whether intentionally or not. Therefore to avoid this, the preacher must regularly consult his wife or a faithful close friend if he is not married, to discover whether there is anything in this regard that needs improvement.

It is very important for the African preacher to understand that gestures are formulated by the culture, the language and the social communication system of a particular community. As Baumann (1978:186) testifies: *Americans tend to develop gestures, movements, and intonations which are distinctly part of the American idiom.*

Hence an African preacher must develop gestures, movements and intonations which are distinctly part of the African idiom, proverbs and expressions. He must no longer use Western gestures, because they do not appeal to African people.

7.4 The preacher's verbal language in delivery

This involves the spoken language, the rate of speech and the voice of the preacher. The researcher will discuss each of these separately.

7.4.1 The language

The preacher must take language seriously. The primary reason for doing this is that the gospel comes to the people via language. Language is the foundation of all communication and is at the heart of all relationships

between God, preacher and people (listeners). Moreover, language is one of the crucial tools of his ministry. The importance of language has been emphasised by many writers on preaching. Markquart (1985:175) is one of these and he quotes Martin Luther: *Although the Gospel came and comes every day through the Holy Spirit alone, nevertheless, it came by means of languages, spread through them, and must also be maintained through them.... And let us realise that we shall scarcely be able to maintain the Gospel without languages. Languages are the sheath in which the knife of the spirit is contained. They are the case in which the jewel is borne. They are the vessel in which the drink is held. They are the room in which the food is stored. And as the Gospel itself tells us (Matt 13:20), they are the baskets in which the bread and fish and fragments are gathered up.*

For this reason, a good preacher speaks on a variety of language levels and has flexibility of style in order to reach all his listeners. His language level is determined not only by the sermon, but also by the listeners and the situation of the day. As Adams (1971:124) puts it: *Good speakers speak on a variety of language levels and have flexibility of style. You do not wear the same clothes on every occasion; when going fishing, going to church, or before painting the front porch, you dress appropriately. Language is the dress of your thought.... At the home, at the office, at school,... speaking to a third grade Sunday school class, at a banquet, at a funeral, you should speak differently. You must learn to speak in a way that is adapted to and appropriate to each of these occasions and audiences. That is to say, your language level is determined not only by the topic, but also the audience and the occasion.*

Moreover, it is very important that the preacher should learn and understand the spoken language, and use it properly, because a single word can be understood and interpreted differently by different people. For example words such as "faith and belief", an "doubt".

Faith and belief: The Bible describes faith as being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Heb 11:1). Some people (as cited in Nida, 1952) understand faith and belief in different ways.

The Karre people of the Central African Republic speak of faith as "to hear and take into the soul". Thus simple hearing is not enough to be regarded as faith, because people may hear with deaf ears and rejecting hearts. For them, faith is taking "the truth into the soul".

The Kabba-Lakas describe "faith" as "to hear within one's self and not let go". Which means that it is not the hearing with the ears, but with the heart that counts, and faith leads to not letting go. Thus faith is to treasure in the heart what one hears.

The Uduks along the Ethiopian border say that "to believe God" is "to join God's Word to the body". According to Nida, this is the faith of living reality, not just accepting God's Word, but joining it to the body.

The Mossi people of West Africa speak of faith as "leaning on God". This would mean faith, confidence, trust and dependence on God, all included in one phrase.

The Nyanja/Chewa people of Zambia and Malawi speak of "faith" as "to hear God's Word", "to keep it in the heart" and "to do it". Thus, for them, faith is to live by and to do the Word of God.

It is clear that different people have different understandings of what faith and belief is. For some faith is to take the truth into the soul, to keep it in the heart and not let it go, to practise God's Word. Others understand faith as learning on God, joining God's Word to their body. Unless the preacher knows how the community understands "faith", he may fail to communicate the message fully.

Doubt: This is another word which is interpreted differently by different people. Nida (1952:123) writes: *For so many people "doubt" implies a hazy uncertainty, a kind of meaningless worry, or an anxious state of the mind, where thoughts never seem to find their proper places.* In this case one can describe it differently. The Huanuco Quechuas of the lofty Peruvian Andes (Nida 1952:123) describe doubt as "to have two thoughts". The Kekchi language spoken in Guatemala describes doubt as "his heart is made two". While the Navajo Indians in the south-western United States of America (Nida 1952:123) describe doubt by saying: *that which is two is with him.* And the Baouli people of the Ivory Coast in West Africa have a very good description of doubt (Nida 1952:124). They say: *My thoughts are not upon it.* Thus if one's thoughts are upon something, there is confidence, but if not, there is doubt. The Nyanja/Chewa people of Zambia describe "doubt" as "one with many thoughts" or "one is confused" or "uncertainty" or "half-truth".

In this situation the preacher must use the words, phrases or expressions which are familiar to the local listeners to whom he preaches, for unfamiliar phrases or words will not have any effect on the listener's minds. Jones (1952:176) agrees with this and says: *Unfamiliar words are worse than wasted. They not only fail to penetrate the listener's mind but prevent him from getting any meaning out of the sentence in which they occur.*

This demonstrates how important it is for a preacher to use words which are familiar to and used by the local listeners in order to be able to penetrate their hearts and mind with the message. Failure to use familiar words results in failure to reach the listener's mind. The preacher should therefore always use words that are familiar to his listeners.

7.4.2 Rate of delivery

According to Brown *et al*, the rate of delivery is a vital factor which involves various aspects, such as the preacher's personality, the size of the

congregation and the way the church building is made up. As Brown *et al* (1963:176) put it: *In no area is personality more determinative than in rate of speech. A good rule of thumb is: proper rate is varied and rapid enough to show vitality and slow enough to assure distinct articulation.*

This means that the preacher should allow the nature of his sermon to determine the rate of its delivery. He should know at which point he should move fast enough and at which he should slow down for the sake of articulation. Baumann (1978:191) says that, *the normal speaking rate is between 125 and 190 words per minute. A reduction in listenability begins somewhere above 200 words per minute. This is fast for the African listeners. For African listeners the normal speaking rate should be between 100 and 150 words per minute for the sake of the preacher to move together with his listeners.*

7.4.3 Voice

His voice is the preacher's great instrument. For him, as a communicator, his voice is very important and must be used properly. A famous saying by Cicero, repeatedly mentioned by Broadus (1979:281), reads as follows: *...For effectiveness and distinction in delivery the greatest share undoubtedly belongs to the voice.*

Since his voice is a vital instrument to the preacher delivering a sermon, it is therefore important that the African preacher should understand very well the four physical processes which determine speech, namely: respiration, phonation, resonance and articulation.

7.4.3.1 Respiration

This is the act of breathing. Breathing during speech is different from regular breathing. Breathing during preaching is deeper and more controlled than

ordinary breathing. It does not require shoulder and chest movements, but only movements of the diaphragm. Brown *et al* (1963:177) put it as follows: *Projection is a better means of assuring force and understanding. The ability to project the voice depends on the correct use of the diaphragm.* Thus an African preacher must learn to use his diaphragm properly when preaching.

7.4.3.2 Phonation

This process takes care of matters such as steadiness of vocalisation, projection, rate, pitch and phrasing of words. Hence good breathing will produce better results in respect of all the aspects mentioned above. As air passes from the lungs through the vocal cords, or folds, contained in the larynx, sounds are produced. This process is called phonation and involves such aspects of speech as pitch, range and inflection.

This means that if a preacher is sneezing or has a breathing problem, these factors of speech shall be affected and the sounds produced will not be as clear as they ought to be.

7.4.3.3 Resonation

This is the process of increasing the sound by resounding it. Once the tone has been formed in the voice box, *it is amplified and resonated in the cavities of throat, nose, head and mouth. The proper use of the resonating chambers gives tone quality to the voice* (Brown *et al* 1963:174).

The preacher is advised to keep his tone normal, for if he forces it, his throat will be affected, his mouth will become dry and the quality of the sound will not be so good as expected by the listeners. At the end of the sermon, a preacher who does not keep the tone of his voice normal, may even develop a headache. It has been said that the biggest problem experienced by preachers is related to tone. The tone of voice of most African preachers is

suitable. They are able to preach to large congregations without using the microphone and yet all the listeners hear them clearly.

7.4.3.4 Articulation

This concerns the ability to express oneself easily and clearly. According to (Brown *et al* 1963), this is the final process in speech production. The process involves the tongue, teeth and lips, which organs are used to shape sounds to form words. According to Brown *et al*, clear articulation is essential for effective preaching. Kellerman (1997:27) adds: *A preacher should make sure that he pronounces his words clearly and that the listeners hear and understand him well.* Especially if the preaching is done in English as a second language, the African preacher must be careful to pronounce the words correctly. For example, a preacher should not pronounce "God" as "Gawd", or "body" as "bade", as the listeners may not hear and understand him well.

7.5 Methods of delivery

There are many methods of sermon delivery. Some preachers prefer to deliver their sermons without notes, some with notes and still others with a manuscript. Brown *et al* (1963:185) summarise the problem of the method of sermon delivery as follows: *Many opinions as to the most effective means of delivery have been offered. The debate has often waxed warm. One says, for example, that the use of notes is heartily recommended only for the dull or lazy minister. Another replies that for him to preach without notes would only increase his temptation to use "trite phrase", "often-repeated illustrations", "worn-out perorations", So goes the argument.*

This shows that when it comes to the sermon delivery, there is no fixed style or method which must necessarily be used by every preacher. Every

preacher has to make a personal choice as to method of delivery, and must understand and examine the merits of each style for him personally.

7.5.1 Preaching without notes

This type of delivery can be divided into two: Extemporaneous and free preaching.

7.5.1.1 Extemporaneous preaching

The word "extemporaneous" literally means "from the time", or originated for the occasion. In Webster's Dictionary it is defined as: "made or done without previous study or preparation".

John A Broadus (1979:269), professor in Homiletics, defines the word as follows: *Primarily, ... it denotes speaking without (much mental) preparation, simply from the inspiration of the moment. The colloquial expression for this is speaking 'off the top of the head', meaning speaking without much mental preparation.* This popular phraseology is suggestive. This shows that some sort of preparation is done before the preaching takes place, even if not much. How does a sermon of this nature look? This type of sermon is a sermon with a Christian theme preached without dependence on any written materials, manuscript or notes. That is why it is called preaching without notes. The preacher studies the text and knows by heart what it is he wishes to share with the listeners. He therefore prepares by studying the text and even writing the notes, but when the time of preaching comes, he leaves all the notes in his office and takes only the Bible with him to the pulpit. As Bauman (1978:193) puts it: *Noteless preaching may be practised without any written preparation. Instead, thoughts and ideas are turned over and organised in the preacher's mind. For most preachers some notes or a manuscript have been prepared and then left in the study.*

This shows that extemporaneous (noteless) preaching is not preaching without any preparation, though the actual sermon is delivered without notes. This method is very effective because it allows the preacher to be flexible during delivery.

Kennedy (1947:88), Bishop of the Southern California area of the Methodist Church, is not alone when he suggests that noteless preaching has no equal: *It is worth all it costs, and many a fine preacher has surrendered a large percentage of his power to manuscripts and notes.*

Koller (1962:34) also makes similar remarks when he adds: *There are, as there always have been, ministers who preach effectively from manuscript or copious notes in the pulpit, as well as some who read their sermons in full; but some preachers would be even more effective if they could go note free in the pulpit.* From this it appears that preaching without notes is more effective than preaching with notes or a manuscript.

According to Broadus (1979:270-71) the advantages of this method are as follows:

- The method teaches one to think more quickly and with less dependence on external aids.
- It saves time for general study and for other pastoral work. This may apply to the experienced preacher, but not to an inexperienced one, because he needs more time for preparation.
- Sometimes the whole mass of prepared material becomes illuminated, animated, or even transfigured by the inspiration of this type of delivery, so much so that the preacher's language rises without conscious effort to suit the beauty of his conceptions.

- Moreover, the preacher can have eye contact with the congregation while he proceeds with his preaching and he can deliberately change the ideas expressed, according to his own feeling and that of the congregation.

However, every method has some limitations and this one is no exception. Broadus (1979:271) writes: *Perhaps the gravest disadvantage of all consists in the tendency to neglect preparation, after one has gained facility in unaided thinking and extemporised expression.*

7.5.1.2 Free preaching

What does this mean? Does it mean that the preacher is free to preach whatever he wants to, even though it may not be Biblically correct? What does it really mean in this context? In simple words, free preaching or free delivery is the same as preaching without notes or a manuscript. What happens is that the preacher makes his careful preparation. Thus when the preacher stands up to preach, he has made sure that he is fully prepared. This means that the completed sermon in the form of a manuscript or detailed outline has been completed, well organised. After the preparation is over, the preacher goes to preach without notes or a manuscript. His notes are usually left in his study. He carries only the Bible with him into the pulpit. One might still ask: Why is it called free preaching if the preacher has carefully prepared and written the sermon? This is a good question. The answer is, when it comes to delivering the sermon, the preacher does not use the words in the manuscript verbatim. Many of the words he uses in his delivery of the sermon are not in the manuscript. They just come naturally and are added to those in the manuscript which came during preparation. The preacher therefore has more freedom with regard to the choice of words. Free preaching can therefore be described as Broadus (1979:273) does: *There should be no conscious effort to memorise the sermon. To be sure, if a preacher has gathered material, has organised it into sermon, has then thought through it, he will reproduce much of it verbatim. But he is not to do this consciously; he*

is not concentrating on words, but on the sharing of thoughts and ideas. This means that the preacher masters the sermon and carries it in his mind and heart. In short, the sermon becomes part of him. And because it is part of him, he can reproduce it easily.

What are the advantages of this method?

According to Broadus (1979) the free preaching method has numerous advantages. Here are a few selected advantages to demonstrate the point:

- Though the preacher does not consciously memorise the sermon, free preaching will help him to develop memory skills.
- Free preaching has all the advantages of writing. Since the preacher writes his manuscript, he can keep a record of his work and even improve on it later.
- Free preaching has all the oratorical advantages such as eye contact with the listeners; the possibility of profiting from listeners' reactions, and the opportunity for inspiration of the moment.
- The free preaching method seems to surpass all other methods of sermon delivery. Kennedy (1947:88) puts this as follows: *Other things being equal, the man who stands without written support finds his way to the will of his hearers with more directness and welcome than any of the others.*

For Broadus (1979) the most popular method of preaching is free delivery because people like directness. The question is: Since this method is very popular and has many advantages, why do not all pastors use it? Does it mean that it has no weaknesses? The answer to these questions is: There is no perfect method made by a human being. Therefore, this method also has

disadvantages like all others. The major disadvantages of this method are the following:

- Some pastors do not use this method for fear of leaving out parts of their sermons, for example, an excellent illustration, some important material, or even a major idea.
- Another disadvantage is the danger of forgetting. Broadus (1979:275) emphasises this as follows: *This is a real danger... Preachers have forgotten sermons in the past and will in the future.*

Because of these factors, some preachers feel uncomfortable about using the free delivery method for fear of falling into the same trap.

A fair question would be: What is the difference between the extemporaneous and the free preaching methods, since both are characterised by an absence of notes. The answer is: One requires little mental preparation while the other is characterised by careful and detailed sermon preparation. As Broadus (1979:269) puts it: *Extemporaneous preaching is best understood as preaching after limited preparation.*

7.5.2 Preaching with notes

The most common practice of preachers is to use notes. Some researchers have discovered that eighty per cent of preachers use some form of notes in the pulpit. These notes may be in the form of a summary, a manuscript, or main points. Baumann (1978:195) quotes a Presbyterian minister who said: *For many years I boasted of 'preaching without notes', but there came a time when I realised I was using more mental energy trying to remember what came next than in giving convincing voice to the thoughts I wanted to communicate. Indeed, there were times when, weary of mind, I found that I was preaching not only without notes but also without ideas. With notes that*

can be used inconspicuously (hardly), I am more relaxed and maintain better contact with the congregation. After all, according to the Chinese proverb, 'The weakest ink is stronger than the strongest memory'.

This illustrates that one who uses a style of preaching without notes runs more danger of overstraining his mental faculties than the one who uses notes. Broadus (1979:272) adds that *writing promotes accuracy of thought as well as exactness of statement; the thought becomes objective and can thus be more carefully scrutinised.*

7.5.3 Preaching with a manuscript

It surprises one to discover that many competent preachers are dependent on a sermon manuscript. For example Jonathan Edwards, an outstanding preacher (Adams 1986:108) used to read most of his sermons. No wonder John Broadus calls it the reading method. Broadus (1979:265) writes: *One method is the reading method. A sermon is written, and the manuscript is taken to the pulpit and read. Some notable examples of effective readers were Jonathan Edwards, Thomas Chalmers, Horace Bushnell and Peter Marshall.*

Therefore, if a preacher chooses this method as his style of preaching, he must know that he is not alone and he must not feel embarrassed. In fact, it causes the preacher to be more at ease both before and during the delivery of the sermon since he limits himself to what is written. There are therefore fewer chances of saying what he did not intend to say. However, its weakness is that it lacks the power of eye contact with the listeners. Broadus (1979:266) adds: *The gestures are nearly always unnatural because it is not natural to gesticulate much in reading.*

7.5.4 Preaching using symbols

The African preacher must be trained and encouraged to use symbols in his sermon preparation and delivery because symbols speak to both educated and uneducated people, to the religious as well as to non-religious people. Megel (1981:22) confirms this: *This 'religious conception' (myth and symbolism) is able to persist and determine the behavior of non-religious, secular man, precisely because the myth is a symbolic expression and symbols work their effect even while remaining unconscious. For a symbol speaks to the whole human being and not only to the intelligence.*

If this is true, this style of preaching will suit the African believing community, because the African Christian believes in holistic Christianity, holistic preaching and holistic salvation. And the researcher believes that in every worship service there are both Christians and non-Christians, educated and uneducated people, especially in rural congregations. He therefore suggests that this would be one of the appropriate ways of delivering a sermon.

7.6 Fear in the pulpit

A question which sometimes arises is: Is it sin to experience fear in the pulpit? Is it cowardice to experience fear in the pulpit? Or is it a normal phenomenon? These questions are important to a preacher for his understanding of what is happening in the pulpit during the delivery of the sermon, because a frequent problem (disease) of preachers these days is anxiety. Therefore preachers need to know how to cope with this problem. For example, when he was a teenager Baumann (1978:196) was once rebuked by the pastor for failing to speak to the small congregation boldly. The pastor told Baumann: *You are afraid of people and that is a sin. You are depending upon yourself rather than God.* This proves that that particular pastor saw fear in the pulpit as sin. But one might ask: Is fear in the pulpit caused by one factor or many? Can one call all the factors contributing to

fear in the pulpit sin? For example, in the case of the young Baumann, is it not possible that he feared people because he had very little experience of speaking to people? Does this not demonstrate that Baumann had not had enough preparation in this regard? Perhaps the subject was one which he found very hard to discuss, with the result that he was nervous. If any of these was the case, was it in order for the pastor to tell Baumann that he was sinning? The researcher disagrees with the pastor. A rebuke such as this may even make the situation worse. It was well intended, but wrong.

Preachers, especially young ones, must understand that a little fear in the pulpit is important for them. It is a healthy and normal thing for them to experience, because such nervousness promotes humility and encourages dependence on God. It should be regarded as an introduction to a great achievement. Baumann (1978:196) puts it as follows: *A little nervousness is not only necessary, it is absolutely imperative. Without some sweating of the palms, without some fear, the preacher can go to the pulpit without the necessary adrenaline shooting through his system and the resultant excitement which allows his message to have contagious quality necessary in all effective communication. When the minister goes to the pulpit completely relaxed, it may be that he is not so dependent on God, but that he is overly confident in his own ability.*

Therefore, if a preacher experiences a little nervousness, he should not see himself as a coward, or abnormal, or incapable, because even competent preachers do experience the same. Baumann (1978:197) confirms that according to his limited knowledge *most competent preachers experience some presermon anxiety. It could be an upset stomach, a headache, sweating of the palms, or some other expression of finitude. Yet to see these men in the pulpit, one would never guess this was so.*

Knowing and understanding this might help to take away someone's psychological problem induced by the fear experienced in the pulpit. How

does one cope with this problem? The answer is: one must make full preparation for every sermon or speech one plans to deliver. When one feels nervousness one should remember it is a normal thing to experience, but one should develop the ability to control it, and not allow oneself to be controlled by the fear. The most important thing is to trust that God, through his Holy Spirit, will make one successful in one's delivery. A person should fear if he does not have Christ's Spirit in the pulpit. Since the battle is not by body and blood, but by the power of the Spirit of Almighty God (Zech 4:6).

Brown *et al* (1963:167) draw a correct conclusion about fear in the pulpit when they say: *It is an error to believe that all fear should be removed from the speaker. The minister who comes to the pulpit without nervous tension is unlikely to preach well. Tension is necessary to effective public speech. It makes for readiness, for zest (keen interest) in delivery. But if poise is to exit, fear must be controlled.*

7.7 Common mistakes in delivering a sermon

7.7.1 Apologising for the sermon

A preacher should not apologise for the sermon when he begins. Even if he struggled very hard to finish his sermon because of pressure of time, work, sickness or anything beyond his control, he should not apologise to the congregation. All the trouble he may have encountered during the preparation of the sermon should remain a secret between God and himself. He should tell God his problems and ask the Holy Spirit to help him during the delivery of the sermon.

Some African pastors apologise for the sermon when they begin, seeking to gain the sympathy of the congregation, or praise from the congregation should they do well. They may hope that people will praise them for the fact that they can do well even without preparation. This is nonsense. In

preaching all the praise should go to God for He is worthy of being praised. The question is: Why should the preacher not apologise to the congregation for the sermon? The answer is: The listeners come from home with great expectations in their minds about hearing the Word of God. And if the preacher begins his sermon with an apology, it means that he takes away all their burning desire to listen to the Word and send them home with that apology, for now the minds of the listeners are filled with the idea that the preacher has nothing to offer because he did not prepare himself well enough. As Sangster (1972:185) puts it: *The expectation in peoples' minds (which is always present, in some degree, as the sermon begins) is a precious asset of the preacher, and to smother it with apology and begin by implying, 'I have nothing much for you this morning', is among the most foolish things he can do... To douche the warm hearts of the people with cold water by way of introduction is the poorest way to start a fire ever devised by the vanity and unbelief of man.* This shows how an apology for the sermon as one begins can spoil the whole worship or paralyse it.

7.7.2 Preaching over the heads of the people, rather than to them and for them

Because of his training and experience in spiritual and theological matters, the preacher becomes so familiar with theological or spiritual terminologies that he often finds it impossible to preach without using them. To him they are simple expressions and easy to understand.

Because of this, he falls into the error of believing that those same things are familiar to his listeners too. Thus he may make statements which presume a knowledge or a viewpoint the people do not understand or have. This is what is called preaching over the heads of the people. It occurs when the minister in preaching provides information which falls outside the field of knowledge of the listeners. He needs to come down to his listeners' level. And he can only do this by living among them, socialising with them and belonging to them.

Sangster (1972:193) is right when he says the following about a true leader: *A leader must not be so far ahead that the people who are following cannot keep him in clear view. A leader belongs. He is kin. A minister is identified with his people in seeking and finding, in success and failure, in disappointment and achievement as well. So when he preaches, he preaches to them and for them.* Craddock (1985:86-98) says more or less the same but phrases it somewhat differently.

The preacher must therefore be wise enough not to preach over the heads of the listeners, but to them and for them, because the message is theirs, intended for their spiritual nourishment and the edification of their faith.

7.7.3 Despising or insulting the listeners

The preacher must be careful that what he does is in accordance with the will of God not just with his own ideas or emotions. History has taught us that there was a time when Roman Catholic churches used to kill the Protestants and regarded that to be the will of God. In the same way a pastor may despise his listeners and claim that he is doing the will of God and yet this is not the case. Sometimes the pastor may not know that he is insulting the listeners, or he may, more or less unconsciously no doubt, despise the listeners he serves. How can one determine whether the pastor is insulting the people? What can reveal this dilemma? The answer is: when the pastor loses love, care and compassion for the people he serves, it results in his despising, condemning and judging the people, excluding only himself. He does this without Biblical grounds or sometimes indeed on Biblical grounds, but with hatred, not love. And this dilemma reveals itself in his voice, or in his cold overtones as he preaches. Sangster (1972:184) puts it as follows: *The warm overtones of love: the proper deference which arises from honest respect for human personality: the accent which only genuine caring can put into a man's voice - all these are necessary if preaching is to have power. One cannot despise or patronise the people... and succeed in winning them...*

The gospel of love can hardly be effective on the lips of men who have not got it themselves.

Sangster is right. If the preacher has true love and honest respect, and genuinely cares for the people he serves, he will not despise them in his preaching. His voice will portray the genuine love he has for them. Even if he rebukes them on Biblical grounds, the people will gladly receive the message because they know that he does so because he loves them and cares about them. The preacher must therefore be wise and not despise his listeners so that he can win them for Christ.

7.7.4 Imitating

One may admire the voice, the power in presenting the sermon, the gestures and even the personal appearance of other preachers, but one must never imitate them. Why? Because every preacher is an individual, called by God to be used as an individual person with the gifts, talents, voice and appearance he has. To imitate someone implies that the preacher is doubting himself. Such a preacher sends a message to the listeners that he is not trustworthy. If a preacher imitates others, he will not discover his own gifts which God has given him. It is by developing one's own talents that one discovers how much more one is gifted. If one consciously imitates others, one makes a fool of oneself. Sangster (1972:196) describes it as follows: *Conscious imitation will only make us ridiculous, and not that only: it will hinder God in using what we are in ourselves.* Thus one must be wise and not imitate others, so that God might use one fully as a person called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28 NIV).

7.8 The elements of sermon delivery

Effectiveness in the pulpit is based on various factors, including the introduction, application and conclusion of a sermon. The researcher views these elements of the sermon in sequence.

7.8.1 The sermon introduction

Life has a beginning and an end. Everything and everyone has a beginning and an end. (Eccles 3:1ff). The sermon therefore also begins somewhere and ends somewhere. In fact it seems unnecessary to argue the validity of an introduction to a sermon. As Broadus (1979:97) puts it: *Listeners have a natural aversion to abruptness and appreciate a somewhat gradual approach. A building is rarely pleasing in appearance without a porch or some sort of inviting entrance. An elaborate piece of music will always have a prelude of at least a few introductory notes. And so any composition or address which has no introduction is apt to seem incomplete.* The researcher agrees with Broadus that people need a proper link between the speaker's purpose and their condition. And very few would disagree.

7.8.1.1 The purpose of the introduction

The sermon introduction has many purposes, but the most important are to secure the attention and arouse the interest of the listeners, and to establish the direction of thought of the listeners.

According to Baumann (1978) the purpose of the sermon introduction is to secure the attention and arouse the interest of the listeners, for we read in Isaiah that people have ears but unfortunately hear not, have eyes and yet see not. So they need to be shaken to hearing and seeing by the introduction to what is in store for them.

Another purpose is to establish the direction of the listener's thought. Many times people come to church with various problems on their minds, such as domestic, financial, psychological, spiritual and social problems. These problems misdirect the listener's thinking so much that although he is in church, his mind and heart are somewhere outside the church. Therefore he needs to be brought back to the church where he is supposed to be. And this is done very effectively by a good introduction.

7.8.1.2 The source of the introduction

An introduction can be taken from various sources. It can be taken either from story, personal experience, text, subject, imagination or from a specific situation. For example, if a preacher takes his introduction from a story, he must take an African life story and not a Western story, because it may not touch his listeners' hearts. For a textual introduction, the preacher may pick a part of the text which requires explanation. Thus his explanation may form the introduction to the sermon.

7.8.1.3 The length of the introduction

The introduction must be very short. Some writers say that it must not comprise more than five sentences because it is merely introducing the sermon.

7.9 The application of the sermon

7.9.1 What is the application?

The application is personal. It answers the question: "What must I do"? This was the question which was asked by the Jews after Peter's speech on the Day of the Pentecost (Acts 2:37). Application is relational. According to Baumann (1978), it is distinctly a relational issue. The listener attempts to

discover the relation between the gospel and himself or herself. And seen from preacher's perspective, it concerns the relationship between the gospel and his listeners.

Application is also dynamic. In this instance "dynamic" means that the application changes according to the listeners' needs, time, culture, situation and so on. However, the Biblical truth remains unchanged. As Baumann (1978:244) confirms: *Truth does not change.*

7.9.2 The purpose of the application

The purpose of the application is to bring the truth home to the listener so that he/she can use it for the right decision. Application is necessary if the preacher expects results from his preaching, since preaching produces results when the message is applied to the hearts of the listeners (Acts 2:36,37). Moreover, application challenges the listener and confronts him or her with the Biblical truth which demands immediate response. As Broadus (1979:166) correctly puts it: *The application includes three distinct things: (1) application proper, in which one shows the hearer how the truths of the sermon apply to him; (2) practical suggestions concerning the best mode and means of performing the duty urged; and (3) persuasion in the sense of moral and spiritual appeal for the right response.*

This means that the purpose of the application is to direct the listener, to offer suggestions and to persuade the listener to the right action.

7.9.3 Types of application

There are three types of sermon application in the preaching ministry. These are the direct application, the indirect application and the no-application sermon. The researcher rejects the last type of sermon as not suitable and believes that it should not even be recognised as an application of a sermon.

In fact, the preacher does not apply his message to the listener, he has not preached. Baumann (1978:247) echoes this sentiment: *Sermons of this type are strong biblically, exegetically and theologically; but practically they are woefully deficient.*

Thus a sermon which is strongly Biblical, exegetical and theological but practically weak, poor, does not serve the purpose of preaching. It can be regarded as a well baked cake, which is however not given to the people to eat.

7.9.3.1 The direct application

This type of application specifies what one must do. It is overt, open, explicit and direct. An example is Peter's answer to the crowd's question on the Day of the Pentecost: "What shall we do"? Peter's answer was: "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

7.9.3.2 The indirect application

This type of application does not tell the listener what to do, but suggests two or more options and motivates the listener to make his or her own decision. A good example of this is Joshua's sermon recorded in Chapter 24 of the book of Joshua. Joshua enumerated three possible options for the Israelites to choose from: the LORD, "the gods which your fathers served beyond the River", or "the gods of the Amorites" (vv, 14-15). And the people answered: "Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods" (Jos 24:16). One can see here that Joshua did not tell the Israelites which god they were to worship, but they made their own choice to serve God. This is what is called a multiple-choice application.

Although these two types of application, direct and indirect, are fully accepted by many preachers of the Word, Baumann regards the direct application as an insult to the listeners. And he recommends either an indirect or no application as the appropriate way of delivering a sermon. Baumann (1978:255) himself puts it as follows: *This occurs when the preacher takes pains to spell out the obvious. It is an insult to a congregation to tell them what they could have discovered by themselves... For most people, an application does not need to be laboured. The people who hear us are not made of stone. They are not helpless children who need every thought developed and explained.*

The researcher does not agree with Baumann that the preacher should not spell out the obvious and that to do so is to insult the listeners. The question is: What makes a sinner sin? Does he/she not sin by doing the obvious: Do not commit murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, and so on? Since it is by doing the obvious that people become sinners, the preacher must spell out the obvious to remind them that they have sinned before God, to remind them that they should repent and confess before God. If the preacher does not do this, the people will continue singing a song of "peace, peace where there is no peace" (Jer 14:13).

Furthermore, the researcher differs from Baumann when he says that the congregation should not be told the obvious, but should discover it by themselves. If this is true, then we should stop preaching because everyone can read the Bible and discover its truths himself or herself. But the opposite is true. The people need to be told the truth and it is the truth which will lead them to discover what they are before God. A good example is the story of what happened between David and Nathan as recorded in 2 Sam 12:1-9. The story shows that after Nathan had told the whole story to David, David did not discover himself that he was a sinner before God (2 Sam 12:5-6). Only when Nathan applied the truth to David (2 Sam 12:7), when he told David the obvious (2 Sam 12:8-12) did David discover himself to be sinful before God

(2 Sam 12:13). If Nathan had not taken the trouble to spell out the obvious and had thought that to do so would mean insulting the King, one can imagine that king David would not have repented. The researcher emphatically suggests that application must form part of every sermon, and wants to remind the Western as well as African preachers that it was only one sentence that changed David's life: *Then Nathan said to David, You are the man!* (2 Sam 12:7).

7.10 The conclusion of the sermon

It is an idle question, says Sangster (1972:128), whether the beginning or the end of a sermon is more important. If you do not get the people's attention, nothing you say will make any difference. If you get their attention and do not put it to the highest use, you will have failed to make the occasion 'a maximum for God.'

What Sangster is saying is that a preacher must make sure that he prepares properly for both the beginning and end of the sermon, because they are equally important to the effective and successful presentation of the sermon. If one is not well done, it affects the other and, thus, the whole sermon. Because of this, most skilled preachers pay more attention to the beginning and end of their sermons. As Killinger (1985:79) puts it: *Most skilled preachers, therefore, pay particular attention to the crafting of beginnings and endings for their sermons. They know that an apt beginning is like a good approach shot to the green: it puts them a comfortable distance from the pin. They also know that a good ending is like an accurate putt: it wraps up the game in the fewest possible strokes. Consequently they work hard to make these parks of the sermon as deft (skilful) and effective as possible.*

Killinger is right. Some pastors work very hard on these parts of the sermon because they do not want to lose the listeners' attention; and they do not

want the hearers to go home empty-handed as they came. That is why they work extra hard and skilfully on the beginning and ending of the sermon.

According to Sangster (1972) every sermon must have a subject and an object. He is right because an object helps a preacher to focus on what he wants to achieve by means of his subject or theme. In order to achieve his goals, he needs to have both a subject and object in his sermon. Unless his object is clear, he will fail to achieve the purpose of his preaching. As Sangster (1972:130) correctly testifies: *It is impossible to 'specify wherein' unless one has a clear object in view.... When the object is clear from the beginning, one knows what the conclusion must be. The sermon is as direct a path as possible to that conclusion.*

When applying the message to the listeners, the preacher must look the people in their eyes and project the point into their hearts and minds. The young African preacher must do this, because it is important to his ministry. Even though, culturally, it is hard for him to do so, he must do it.

There are numerous ways of bringing the sermon to a close. Much depends on the sensibility of the preacher and the type of sermon. Since the preacher builds the sermon around a personal viewpoint with certain objectives in mind for specific people, he or she may have feelings about the way the sermon should end. One cannot simply end all sermons in the same way.

However, there are a few rather often used ways of concluding the sermon. According to Killinger (1985) these include the following:

- 1 *Letting the last point serve as an ending.*
- 2 *Summing up what has been preached.*
- 3 *Concluding with an illustration (typically a story shared).*
- 4 *Concluding with a quotation.*

CHAPTER 8

8 THE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS AND SENIOR STUDENTS

8.1 Questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire used during this study was compiled for pastors serving in congregations and senior students at the Justo Mwale Theological College, Lusaka, Zambia. Justo Mwale Theological College was chosen because it is one of the few theological colleges in Southern Africa which is an international theological college and produces B Th graduates.

The researcher decided to conduct the study among the pastors and senior students of churches within the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition in urban and rural areas. As he is himself a member of one of these churches, he found it an obvious field for practical research. Twenty pastors were selected and nineteen completed the questionnaire. They were selected randomly, implying that every pastor in these urban and rural areas had an equal chance of being asked to complete the questionnaire. Sixteen senior students of Justo Mwale Theological College who come from various denominations were also included in the exercise because they are future pastors and they have done six weeks' practical work twice, once in an urban and once in a rural area. This means that they have experience of both urban and rural congregations and could make valuable contributions by completing this questionnaire.

The researcher wanted to have a cross-section of these pastors and students, and therefore he took the following categories into account in selecting his sample: age, type of congregation, place of training and degrees obtained. Thus the questionnaire was completed by pastors and students who had received or were receiving their training at Justo Mwale Theological College (JMTC), Andrew Murray Theological College (Zimbabwe) and Zomba

Theological College (Malawi). Because it was difficult to find respondents for a cross-section that fitted all the principal categories, the numbers for type of congregation, place of training and age are not divided equally.

As already mentioned above, the researcher secured the co-operation of the nineteen pastors and sixteen students who were approached to participate in this study. Only one pastor did not complete the questionnaire.

8.2 Sample

The purpose of this questionnaire was to try to discover what is wrong between the congregation members and the preachers, resulting in the sermons not addressing the listeners' needs. It was also hoped that it would indicate how this gap between preacher and congregation can be bridged, because congregations are complaining that most of the time the sermons of students and newly graduated pastors do not satisfy their demands. The former Pastor E Zulu of Chisomo Reformed Church in Zambia admitted to the researcher that he experienced the same problem during his first year in the ministry. The question is: Are these students trained to be academics or pastors? Are the students Westernised or Africanised by the training they receive? Does the training of pastors itself need contextualisation, or is it the balance between academic and pastoral which needs to be addressed? These crucial questions require answers; therefore the questionnaire was compiled to find answers to these questions.

Table 8.2.1 Biographical profile of preachers

Attribute	Number	Percentage
Age: Between 20 and 30	14	40
Between 30 and 40	8	23
Between 40 and 50	4	11
Between 50 and 60+	9	26
Total:	35	100

Type of congregation	Number	Percentage
Urban	22	63
Rural	13	37
Total	35	100

Place of training	Number	Percentage
Justo Mwale Theological College	21	60
Andrew Murray Theological College	3	9
Zomba Theological College	10	29
University of the North (SA)	1	2
Total	35	100

Highest degree obtained	Number	Percentage
Diploma	22	63
B Th	12	34
Doctor's degree	1	3
Total	35	100

It was discovered that pastors tend to become academically orientated rather than pastoral as their academic qualifications increase (from a diploma to a doctor's degree).

Another point is that the younger the pastor or student, the wider the gap in life experience between the pastor and his congregation. The statistics show that younger pastors predominate in the ministry. The church should therefore give them a proper and sound training which will enable them to deliver the goods to the people.

Furthermore, it was discovered that the training of pastors at Justo Mwale Theological College should be more contextualised in order to equip the students properly for the ministry.

The ideas for analysing the questionnaire were borrowed from Pieterse (1987:52-62). However from Table 8:3 onwards, the calculation of numbers and percentages was done differently. Instead of counting the number of the participates (35), the calculation was based on the points each participate marked with regard to each item. Therefore, the total number of points was $5 \times 35 = 175$ points.

Table 8.2.2 Preparation of the sermon

Where do the ideas come from?	Points	Percentage
Get ideas from lectionary	81	46
Get ideas from the reading Scripture	157	90
Get ideas from reading newspapers	100	57
Get ideas from socialisation	120	69
Get ideas from counselling	128	73

Table 8.2.2 shows that African preachers obtain most of their ideas from Scripture reading, counselling and socialisation and very few from newspapers. One interesting thing revealed by the statistics is that the African preacher loves to read Scriptures more than anything else. This is why he also likes to use the telling of stories as his method of preaching. See Chapter 6:7.1.4

Table 8.2.3 Involving the congregation in sermon preparation

To what extent is the congregation involved?	Points	Percentage
Congregation chooses the themes	65	37
Pastor chooses from house visitation issues	116	66
Preach about current national issues	120	89
Take a topic from lectionary	80	45
As the Holy Spirit leads	49	28

According to this study, the African preacher involves the congregation by addressing current national and house visitation issues. House visitation is therefore very important to an African preacher for his sermon preparation as well as for Christian edification. This agrees with what was said in Chapter 6 paragraph 6.3.2.1 where it was stated that house visitation is one of the important sources of information for a sermon.

Table 8.2.4 The text for the sermon

What method is used for choosing the sermon text?	Points	Percentage
Take the Bible book by book	84	48
Follow the lectionary	77	44
Preacher's choice	111	63
Dictated by the topic	80	46
Other means	75	43

The African preacher feels more comfortable with a personally chosen sermon text than with other methods of choosing the text.

Table 8.2.5 Forms of sermon

What is the favourite sermon form?	Points	Percentage
Inductive	92	41
Deductive	129	74
Moves	120	69
Homily	88	50
Narrative	105	60

It appears that most Africans like the deductive, the moves and the narrative forms.

Table 8.2.6 Application

	Points	Percentage
Should the preacher make applications for the listeners?	144	82
Should the preacher leave it to the listeners to make their own applications?	31	18

The researcher expected that 100 per cent of the respondents would apply the gospel message for the listeners, but he was surprised to find that 18 per cent said that they do not do so. The researcher believes that the seed of not applying the message to the listeners was planted by the Westerner by means of his textbooks, teaching and preaching.

Table: 8.2.7 Communication

When does communication become effective?	Points	Percentage
When communicating through imagination	36	21
When communicating in proverbs and idioms	69	39
When communicating through repetition	65	37
When communicating by means of facts only	81	46
When communicating by illustrations	121	69

The percentages above prove that the African preacher communicates effectively by using illustrations such as the telling of stories and riddles.

8.3 Conclusions

- According to this study the African preacher (Chapter 6, paragraph 6.3.2) involves the congregation in sermon preparation and delivery by addressing current national and house visitation issues.
- The African preacher uses various preaching methods, but his most favourite method (Chapter 6, paragraph 6.7.1.4) is storytelling.
- The African preacher must feel comfortable about using both application types (Chapter 7, paragraph 7.9.1) which make the appeal so powerful. It appears that the fact that congregation members complain that their pastor's sermons do not address their needs, may be due to his failing to apply the gospel message to their hearts. What happens is that these

people come from their homes with a great hunger for the Word and they return home as hungry as they came because the message was not applied to their hearts.

CHAPTER 9

9 FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND STATEMENTS

In Chapter 1 the aim of this study was indicated as follows:

- To develop a contextual model for preaching, preparation and delivery which will contribute towards improving the effective proclamation of God's Word in Africa.
- To contribute to the undeveloped field of scholarly reflection on contextual preaching in Africa.
- To remove the wrong conception, planted by Westerners, that African culture is "heathen" and should not be considered valuable in preaching. The study will identify those areas and prove them wrong Biblically and culturally.

The aim was to investigate whether the African rhetorical and communicational social system patterns were respected, and if this would not make preaching more effective.

9.1 Conclusions regarding worldviews

9.1.1 Christianity

Africans recognize holistic Christianity rather than the dualistic Christianity embraced by Westerners. Among Africans God is known by many names, not by one name only.

9.1.2 African culture's view of dreams

Though not all dreams are useful, Africans believe that a dream is meaningful and a revelation from God. Many Westerners however, believe that a dream is meaningless and only consists of the mental leftovers of the previous day.

9.1.3 African culture's view of witchcraft

Africans regard witchcraft as a reality and therefore preach against it. Westerners do not regard witchcraft as something real, therefore they do not preach about it.

9.2 Final conclusions regarding sermon preparation

9.2.1 Conclusions regarding the preacher

- The African preacher must prepare his/her heart very well before starting the preaching ministry.
- The African preacher must know, understand and interpret the Bible responsibly.
- The African preacher must learn and interpret the African culture of the people he/she ministers to correctly.
- Young African pastors should remember to respect the elderly pastors and people in their congregations.
- The African preacher should teach his/her congregation members that they have been saved by the name of Jesus Christ, not by the Christian name given to them by a missionary during baptism.

9.2.2 Conclusions regarding sermon preparation from a cultural perspective

- The African preacher should honour all people, especially those he/she ministers to, and traditional leaders.
- The research has shown that Africans are community-orientated and emotional human beings. Therefore they worship differently from Westerners who are individualistic and rationalistic human beings.
- The preacher should be hospitable to people.
- The African preacher should have no inferiority complex.
- The African preacher should take pride in using cultural elements in his/her sermon, because the gospel of Jesus Christ is received in the culture of the people concerned.

9.2.3 Contextualising the Biblical message

- Contextualising the gospel message is supported by the Bible (Acts 15:1ff; Acts 10).
- Contextualising the gospel message is illustrated by Jesus Christ's first coming to earth (Matt 1:18-23; Luk 2:21, 42, 46-49).
- Contextualisation is theologically supported. Consider, for example the Old Testament as opposed to baptism in the New Testament (Gal 3:26-29; Gal 5:1-6; Romans 6:3-7).

9.2.4 Sermon forms

- Sermon form is necessary for reshaping the text, shaping the listeners' attitude and for the sermon's progress unity.
- Most African preachers enjoy sermons which include the telling of stories, and they also love deductive sermons.

9.3 Final conclusions from the perspective of communication

- The African cultural-social system of communication has shaped the African attitude towards God and the custom of approaching God in a hierarchical manner.
- Communication occurs at different levels.
- Culture provides the basis for a meaningful system of human action.
- African women believe that the dignity of the mistress of a house demands decent concealment of dissension within it.
- The African woman is not expected to quarrel with her husband in public as it is regarded as a disgrace.
- Among the African tribes who have chiefs, their highest communicational level is between the Paramount Chief and his people.
- Communication barriers in preaching include a lack of listening, a lack of sincerity, cultural conflicts and noise.

9.4 Final conclusions regarding sermon delivery

9.4.1 Application

- Interpretation, explanation, storytelling and application can be regarded as elements of expository preaching in the African context.
- Application should form part of every sermon.
- The African and Western preachers should remember that it was only one sentence that changed David's life: *Then Nathan said to David, you are the man!* (2 Sam 12:7, NIV).

9.4.2 Conclusions regarding communication

The preacher should use his body, eye-contact, gestures and verbal languages to communicate the message of his sermon to the listeners.

9.5 Consequences of the final conclusions

This study focused on sermon preparation and delivery in the African context, with special reference to Zambia.

At the concluding stage of the study it can be stated that sermon preparation and delivery in the African context should constitute Biblical preaching. The following consequences of the final conclusion can now serve as guidelines for this type of preaching.

- One should remember that in the Old Testament and the New Testament sermons are presented within the framework of contextual preaching. Every preacher should recognize that the sermon should take the form of contextualising preaching, which in the African context entails

interpreting and applying a text from Scripture by using various acknowledged African methods of exegesis and elements of hermeneutics, and using these elements in conjunction with African homiletic elements.

- The preacher should understand that an effective sermon is one that has been contextualised to meet the listeners' needs.
- The preacher should remember that he should expect and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He must also understand that prayer is a most important element in sermon preparation and delivery.
- The preacher should identify and apply the essential elements to the praxis of elucidating the text in the process of hermeneutics, thus bringing forth God's revelation from the text and applying it to the hearts of the listeners.
- The preachers' training should be contextualised to equip the trainees for the local situation.

9.6 Recommendations for further studies

- An empirical study of the role of feedback from the congregations for more effective African sermon preparation and delivery.
- A study of effective communication in preparing and delivering a sermon in African context.
- An analysis of possible problems in African sermon preparation and delivery.

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APPENDIX

SERMON

Text Joshua 1:1-9

THEME: THE SECRET OF JOSHUA'S SUCCESS IN HIS MINISTRY

- 1 It was because God was with him (v5).
- 2 It was because he meditated on the Word and acted accordingly (v8).
- 3 It was because he was courageous (vv 6,7,9).

INTRODUCTION

Joshua was a young man at the time Moses died. However, his remarkable life was filled with excitement, success and honour. He was especially known for his deep trust in God (Jos 24:15) and as "a man in whom the Spirit dwell" (Nu 27:18).

- He alone among all the Israelites was allowed to accompany Moses up the holy mountain where the tables of the law were received by Moses (Ex 24:13-14).
- He was elected to represent his own tribe Ephraim when the twelve spies were sent to spy out Canaan. It is interesting that only Joshua and his friend Caleb were ready to follow God's will and therefore were spared from the stubborn old generation (Nu 20-26).

- He also successfully defeated all his enemies and took possession of the promised land. One wonders what the secret was that enabled him to achieve all these victories. The lesson for us today is as follows:

THE SECRET OF JOSHUA'S SUCCESS IN HIS MINISTRY

1 God was with Joshua. We hear God promising Joshua that as He was with Moses so he would be with Joshua. God even goes further to say: *"I will never leave you nor forsake you"*. This statement shows that Joshua was not on his own, but that God was working, ruling, fighting with him. In short, God was working with him at all times. And if one is working with God, who can stand against him or her? Joshua's victory becomes automatic.

However, one must understand that for God not forsaking Joshua, meant that Joshua was obedient to God. He was humble before God. He allowed God to increase and himself to decrease in stature.

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with you" (v5). This means that God's presence would be with Joshua just as his presence was with Moses.

This is in agreement with the New Testament when Jesus says: *"And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matt 28:20) NIV. He does not mean to be with his disciples physically but spiritually. So the secret of Joshua's success and that of any Christian is the belief that God exists and works within him or her.

2 Joshua meditated on the Word and acted accordingly, which means that Joshua took the Word of God seriously. He took the Word of God to be his tool

for ruling God's people, for passing judgement and for using when demarcating the land for the 12 tribes so that fairness and justice would prevail.

Joshua meditated on the Word of God so that he understood the will of God and actually did what God wanted him to do. The meditation on the Word gave Joshua the wisdom to govern the people of God wisely. No one undermined his leadership even though he was young. Therefore, the secret of Joshua's success was his meditation and taking seriously the Word and following it in practice. In the same way today, if a Christian wants a successful Christian life, he or she needs to study the Word seriously and practically do it. As it is written: Do not merely listen to the Word, and deceive yourselves. Do what it says (James 1:22). Therefore, the secret of Joshua's success in his ministry was that he was a doer of the Word.

3 Its because he was courageous (vv 6,7,9).

In African context it would be very difficult for a young man like Joshua, to lead people older than himself. Culturally and physically it was terrifying for Joshua to lead.