



Preacher and spirituality: Perspectives from the Pastoral Epistles

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Abstract

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In an attempt to supply guidelines for the renewal of contemporary mainline churches and the recovery of their vitality, the main aim of this article is to investigate the Scriptural foundation of spirituality and its implications in the light of the Pastoral Epistles. Furthermore, guidelines for a Scriptural praxis aimed at enhancing the preacher's spirituality are provided. The preacher's spirituality and guidelines for the praxis of spirituality will be investigated both from basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical perspectives.

1. Introduction

Since the 1960s mainline churches in many parts of the world have been declining more and more (Stott, 1983:338; Harrop, 1996:278). Of course, some local churches and certain denominations are still continuously growing in their specific situations. Today there, however, is a decline of the church in various parts of the world. In America many congregations are struggling with declining membership and poor attendance at evening worship services (Jost, 1996:5). In Germany the number of believers represent a five-percent drop since a similar survey in 1992 (Van Houten, 1997:3). In South Africa, according to Jurgens Hendriks, a Dutch Reformed theologian at the University of Stellenbosch, the number of white and coloured Christians are declining (Aben, 1996:8). The churches in Korea have been declining since the early 1990s.

Kim (1993:77) states that the "fossilization phenomenon" in contemporary conservative churches acts like a destructive force. He furthermore states that ...

the fossilization phenomenon has distinctive features: the loss of vitality, empty churches, decline of church members, formalism of faith, the loss of compassion for evangelism, a striking decrease of conversion, a superficial worship, ethical problems in the church, and skepticism of young people in the church.

The decline, all over the world, is one of the most serious problems in today's churches. We either grow or we die. The decline is not a way of life but of death (Willimon & Wilson, 1987:75).

How should this problem be solved in view of this decline? In order to solve this problem, one should know, first of all, what the cause of this decline may be. In as much as the decline of the church is serious, there are various ways to explain it.

Mulder (1991:205) states that as our contemporary society is changing into an economic society, people marry late, couples want to have fewer children and the divorce rate is gradually increasing. Van Wyk on the other hand (1992:204-206) says that the church has to improve its educative role in order to counteract the decline. Willimon and Wilson (1987:76-77) state that another factor contributing to the decline is the bureaucratic attitude of the church's leaders. Algera (quoted by Jost, 1996:6) points to a next factor when he says that "if churches do not lead people to Christ, and if we do not reach out to people in our community, we will die". He also points out a lack of evangelism as the cause of the decline.

Of course, these are all reasonable factors to explain the decline of the church. The church, however, is born from the seed of the Word. Christianity began with the preaching of an event (Broadus, 1979:7). Because of the close relation between the church and preaching (the Word of God proclaimed) one can state that *the decline of the church today may be caused by the decline of the impact of preaching* (Lloyd-Jones, 1981:16, 34; White, 1973:7; Home, 1975:15; Stott, 1983:43, 338; Van der Walt, 1987:15; Geluk, 1995:12). Forsyth's statement, namely that "it is, perhaps, an overbold beginning, but I will venture to say that with its preaching Christianity stands or falls", is true today (quoted by Stott, 1983:38). The main cause of the decline of the church may have its origin in the decline of the impact preaching.

Why have the impact and influence of preaching been declining in the church today? There are many possible factors influencing the power of preaching. Stott (1983:89) mentions three factors: *The anti-authority mood* makes people unwilling to listen, *addiction to television* makes them unable to do so, and *the contemporary atmosphere of doubt* makes many preachers both unwilling and unable to speak. Vorster (1996:71-72) also points out three factors: *Secularisation* causes people to turn away from the Word of God, *post-modernism* influences people not to accept the Word of God as the absolute, and the development of communication possibilities by *the cybernetics revolution*

undermines the one-way method of preaching. In spite of various factors, however, the most important factors can be reduced to two: *the congregation and the preacher himself* (Kim, 1997:5).

Which one is the main factor causing the decline of preaching – the congregation or the preacher? Of course, there are always members of a congregation who do not glorify God in spite of knowing God. They are people resembling those people listening to Stephen while he was preaching the Word (Acts 7:54-56). The more serious problem, however, is not just under the pulpit but on the pulpit. Runia (1983:15) also states that “the problem is ... usually preachers themselves!” Paul commands Timothy to preach the Word and to minister in season, out of season, even though the congregation may shut their ears to the truth (2 Timothy 4:2-4). If the preacher is alert and spiritually strong, his preaching can change the congregation even though the members may act stubbornly and cling to a secular lifestyle. The decline of the church today can, therefore, fundamentally be caused by the person of the preacher, who may have lost his spiritual power and love towards God and man.

As mentioned previously, preaching is very closely related to the vitality of the church. What a striking irony thus that contemporary homiletics has developed dazzlingly during the past twenty years, while the church has been staggering during the same period (Trotter, 1995:237). How can we explain such disharmony? One naturally comes to the conclusion that there are some problems concerning contemporary homiletics. In that case, what is the problem of contemporary homiletics? One answer may be that contemporary homiletics focuses mostly on style, method, delivery, skills of preaching and hermeneutical methods of analysing the text (Trotter, 1995:237). *The core of the problem may be that contemporary homiletics – to a large extent – neglected dealing with “the preacher himself”.*

Preaching implies the communication of truth by man to man. Preaching is inter alia the bringing of truth through the *personality of the preacher* (Brooks, 1969:5). Preaching is the proclamation of God’s message by a *chosen personality* to meet the needs of humanity (Broadus, 1979:3). According to Stott (1983:10) the biggest secret of preaching does not imply technical aspects but theological and *personal* factors. Therefore the preacher and his personality, not only his technique or skills, should be studied more profoundly.

The preacher’s personality relates very closely to his spirituality. The preacher’s spirituality governs his personality and his whole life, not only when he prepares the sermon and delivers it to the congregation, but also when he visits and counsels members of his congregation during the week. Accordingly, it is very important to study the preacher and his spirituality. In this regard, a Protestant scholar (Lovelace, 1988:25) states the following: “... as I began to study

movements of spiritual awakening in Protestantism, I had a scholarly awakening. I woke up to the fact that *spirituality was a drastically neglected subject among scholars*'. The necessity to study the preacher's spirituality is strongly required in view of Reformed tradition and Scripture".

On the other hand, in the Pastoral Epistles much of the material appears to be designed for the communities to which Timothy and Titus had been ministering. Paul sent Timothy and Titus *as pastors* to minister the congregations in Ephesus and Crete (1 Timothy 3:15, Titus 1:3). According to the picture set out in the Pastoral Epistles, Timothy and Titus were then apostolic delegates in temporary charge of the churches of Ephesus and Crete respectively (Kelly, 1963:2). Guthrie (1990:62) therefore mentions that "these Epistles have constantly supplied Christian leaders with sober practical advice in Christian discipline".

Unfortunately, however, the preacher and his spirituality have not as yet received sufficient attention in studies in the light of Scripture, especially studies taking the Pastoral Epistles as point of departure. The Epistles contain important material about a spiritual leader, especially the pastor in the church. In this article the focus is to study the Pastoral Epistles and to highlight the relevant data on preacher and spirituality.

The main issue which should be addressed thus implies the following: What kind of person should the preacher be in order to renew and recover the vitality of the church?

This investigation focuses on the Pastoral Epistles, because these epistles contain the most relevant and applicable material on pastor, preaching and spirituality in the New Testament. From this view the hypothesis is that the Pastoral Epistles contain data on preacher and spirituality that deserve to be investigated more closely. In the investigation of the central issue, relevant data will be analysed and interpreted with the focus on more contemporary sources. Due to the limitations on the length of an article, exegetical detail is not included. Only the deductions on account of the exegetical analysis are given.

2. The Pastoral Epistles and basis-theoretical perspectives on preaching

Schuringa (1995:193) stresses that

The vitality of Reformed preaching is the hope of the church in the world today as she awaits the coming of her Lord. The vitality of the church's preaching is central to her life and liveliness. Vital preaching is the hub around which the life-wheel of the church's ministry must rotate. If there is deadness in the church, diagnosis should begin in the pulpit. The overall vitality of the church can hardly be expected to exceed that of her preaching.

Accordingly, it is necessary to examine and scrutinise preaching for the sake of renewing the church and rediscovering the church. What does preaching thus imply?

2.1 Definition of preaching

There are nine different verbs used for “preaching” in the Pastoral Epistles (Venter, 1976:108):

1) *parakalein* – *paraklesis*

1 Timothy 1:3, 2:1, 4:13, 5:1-2, 6:2; 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:9, 2:6, 2:15.

2) *parangellein* – *parangelia*

1 Timothy 1:3, 1:5, 1:18, 4:11, 5:7, 6:17.

3) *elengein* – *elengmos*

1 Timothy 5:20; 2 Timothy 4:2, 3:16; Titus 1:9, 2:15, 1:13.

4) *didaskein* – *didaskalia* – *didaskalos* – *didaktikos*

1 Timothy 2:7, 3:2, 4:11, 4:13, 4:16; 2 Timothy 1:11, 2:2.

5) *kerussein* – *kerugma* – *keruks*

1 Timothy 2:7, 3:16; 2 Timothy 1:11, 4:2, 4:17; Titus 1:3.

6) *epitiman*

2 Timothy 4:2

7) *lalein*

Titus 2:1, 5.

8) *paideuein*

2 Timothy 2:25

9) *anagnosis*

1 Timothy 4:13

The following basis-theoretical deductions can be made from the terms for preaching occurring in the Pastoral Epistles when they are analysed in context:

- Preaching is official work done by a person called by God or Christ for a specific task.

- Preaching in its different forms is the central and primary form of ministry in the church.
- Preaching in its different forms is internally directed towards the congregation in its diversity: elderly people, widowers, young men and women, servants and masters. Preaching is externally directed to heathens and heretics.
- Preaching is deeply rooted in God, in Jesus Christ as Sender of the preacher, and in the truth of the Word and the doctrine based on the Word.
- Preaching, therefore, is more than just recounting the story *about* the Word of God spoken by Jesus. In preaching *this Word itself* comes to the listeners. Preaching *is* the Word of God coming to man.

2.2 Goal of preaching

The goal of preaching can be defined in many ways. Preaching aims to glorify God (Romans 11:36), and it works and upholds faith in the heart of the believer (Romans 10:19) (Venter, 1992:4). The references relating to the goal of preaching are stated in several verses in the Pastoral Epistles. The important ones among them are the following: 1 Timothy 4:16, Titus 1:13-14, and Titus 3:8.

The following basis-theoretical deductions can be made from the references relating to the goals of preaching. The goals of preaching imply the following:

- to help hearers in the world to obtain salvation through faith in Jesus Christ,
- to help new converts to grow soundly in their faith,
- to equip believers to devote their strength as workers of God to spread the gospel.

2.3 The central theme of preaching

Important references relating to the central theme of preaching are embedded in the Pastoral Epistles: 1 Timothy 1:15, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, and 1 Timothy 3:16.

In the light of the above-mentioned verses from Timothy, the following basis-theoretical deductions can be made about the central theme of preaching:

- Preaching should centre in Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners.
- Preaching should emphasise that Jesus Christ, the mediator between God and man, gave Himself as ransom for all sinful men in the world.

Preaching should also focus on the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. The Pastoral Epistles and basis-theoretical perspectives on the preacher

The decline of the impact and influence of preaching can also be linked to the preacher himself. Schuringa (1995:192) states that “The vitality of Reformed preaching is inescapably linked to the vitality of the preacher who seeks the Spirit and walks with God”.

3.1 Definition of the “preacher”

The expressions especially relating to the preacher are found in 1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11 and 2 Timothy 4:5 in the Pastoral Epistles: *keruks*, *apostolos*, *didaskalos*, *euangelistes*.

In the light of the words *keruks*, *apostolos*, *didaskalos* and *euangelistes* in the Pastoral Epistles, the following basis-theoretical deductions can be made:

- The preacher is a person called by God. The most important prerequisite to be a true preacher is to be called by God.
- The preacher is a person who has received the message from God. The preacher has really no message of his own – he must deliver the message given to him by God. The preacher should not give his personal opinion, his own view of things or his own philosophy.
- The preacher is a person who has been sent by and for God. He therefore has to be convinced that his preaching is the ministry of the truth which God gave him.

3.2 The preacher and his identity

Applicable references in the Pastoral Epistles relating to the preacher and his identity are the following: 1 Timothy 1:15 and 1 Timothy 6:11-12.

From the above-mentioned verses in the Pastoral Epistles the following basis-theoretical deductions can be made about the preacher and his identity:

- The preacher should recognise the fact that he is also a sinner who must be saved through Jesus Christ before ministering in the local church.
- The preacher should be constantly aware of the fact that he is in first instance a child of God. Only in second instance he is a preacher.

3.3 The preacher and his task

The following verses from the Pastoral Epistles are important in order to study the requirements needed by the preacher and his task: 2 Timothy 4:1-5 and Titus 2:1-10.

In the light of the above-mentioned verses in the Pastoral Epistles the following deductions can be made about the task of the preacher:

- The basic task of the preacher is to preach the Word of God correctly.
- The task of the preacher is to help various believers to grow and mature in their faith, and to live for the glory of God in a broken world.

3.4 The preacher and his authority

In referring to the authority of the preacher, the following verses in the Pastoral Epistles deserve closer examination: 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1 and Titus 1: 1-3.

In the light of these verses from the Pastoral Epistles the following basis-theoretical deductions can be made about the preacher and his authority:

- The authority of the preacher is rooted in God, in Jesus Christ the Lord as the Sender of the preacher.
- The authority of the preacher is linked to the truth of the Word and the doctrine based on the Word.
- The authority of the preacher is coupled with the ministering of the Word of God and Jesus Christ the Lord.

4. The Pastoral Epistles and basis-theoretical perspectives on the preacher's spirituality

Powerful preaching is dependent on the preacher himself. Hulse (1986:62) is of the opinion that "without piety the preacher will never be, and cannot be a preacher. Moreover, his effectiveness and power as a preacher will be directly connected to his piety". A preacher's personality is very closely related to his spirituality. De Jongh van Arkel (1988:19-20) emphasises the importance of spirituality as follows: "... spirituality forms the centre of human existence – the centre that gives meaning to life. Spirituality of a person shows how he realizes his being. Spirituality as life-orientation is responsible for a person's identity. Spirituality, therefore, is the structural *centre of a Christian way of life*". Han (1993:151) states that a pastor's effective ministry is utterly dependent on the relationship between the pastor and his spirituality or spiritual power. The

preacher's spirituality governs his personality and his whole life, especially when he prepares a sermon and delivers it to the congregation.

4.1 Spirituality as *eusebeia* in the Pastoral Epistles

4.1.1 Semantic meaning of *eusebeia*

In the Old Testament spirituality has to do with the fear of God that governs one in everyday circumstances to live according to the Tora. In Greek this concept has a strong moral connection – “*eusebeia* is one of the virtues of a man who is righteous and acceptable to the gods” (Günther, 1976:92). In accordance with secular usage, *eusebeia* indicates respect for existing values or value structures, as, e.g., when 1 Timothy 5:4 addresses the obligation of children and grandchildren to support their (grand)mothers (Fiedler, 1991:85). According to Louw and Nida (1989:532), *eusebeia* implies behaviour reflecting correct religious beliefs and attitudes.

In the New Testament *eusebeia* emphasises the conduct of man and evaluates the conduct morally (Foerster, 1979:182). Specifically in the Pastoral Epistles, “*eusebeia* does not occupy the place which *pistis* did in the older Pauline Epistles. It denotes a way of life. It is the honouring of God the Creator and Redeemer of all men. Born of *pistis*, this takes place in everyday life. It is the divine service which remains within the orders of life” (Foerster, 1979:183).

To summarize – in the New Testament *eusebeia* implies the total lifestyle of the believer as based on his faith in Christ. This lifestyle is followed in the knowledge of the presence of God and includes man's attitude to and handling of creation in its totality (Louw, 1988:7).

4.1.2 *Eusebeia* in the Pastoral Epistles

In order to define the word *eusebeia*, the following passages in the Pastoral Epistles deserve closer examination: 1 Timothy 6:3; Titus 1:1; 2 Timothy 3:12-13; Titus 2:12-13; 1 Timothy 3:16.

The following basis-theoretical deductions can be made about spirituality as expressed by *eusebeia* in the Pastoral Epistles:

- *Eusebeia* used in 1 Timothy 6:3 and Titus 1:1 is very closely connected with “the truth” which comes from Jesus Christ.
- When *eusebeia* is used as an adverb in 1 Timothy 6:3 and Titus 1:1, it is very closely connected to “conduct” (lifestyle) which all Christians have to follow in this world.

- Spirituality as *eusebeia*, therefore, can be defined as “operational faith”. Furthermore “truth” and “conduct” (lifestyle) – according to the gospel – are very closely in harmony. This fact is also identified in 1 Timothy 3:16.

4.2 Perspectives from the Pastoral Epistles on the preacher's spirituality

In the previous section spirituality as *eusebeia* has been defined as operational faith strongly related both to *truth and conduct* (lifestyle). Accordingly, this section will focus on the two dimensions (truth and lifestyle) in order to highlight aspects of the preacher's spirituality relating to his preaching ministry.

4.2.1 Perspectives on the preacher's spirituality relating to the truth of the gospel

The Pastoral Epistles provide the following relevant references on the preacher's spirituality relating to the truth of the gospel. The core of these verses reflects some characteristics which the preacher's spirituality should exhibit when ministering the truth of the gospel:

- 1 Timothy 1:16-17; 1 Timothy 6:15-16: *The glory of God* should be proclaimed.
- 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 Timothy 3:15: The message of the gospel should be *Christ-centred*.
- 2 Timothy 2:3, 9: *A burning heart for the gospel* is a prerequisite for ministering the truth of the gospel.
- 2 Timothy 1:7-8, 12: The proclamation should be *bold*.
- 2 Timothy 2:15: The preacher should be *faithful* to the Word of truth.

The following deductions can be made from the Pastoral Epistles about the preacher's spirituality relating to the truth of the gospel. The preacher's spirituality and way of ministering should contain and reflect the following characteristics:

- *The proclamation of the glory of God*: The preacher should desire with all his heart that the message proclaimed by him will be to the glory of God.
- *Christ proclaimed as the centre of the gospel*: The message proclaimed by the preacher should always focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Saviour.

- *The preacher should have a burning heart for the gospel:* The preacher should eagerly love the gospel as the Word of God, even though he may experience persecution and sufferings.
- *The proclamation of the gospel should be bold:* The preacher should not be ashamed and afraid to proclaim the gospel in this broken world, even though persecution and suffering may overtake him.
- *The preacher should be faithful to the Word of truth:* The preacher should handle the Word of God correctly and faithfully both when he prepares his message in the office and delivers it on the pulpit.

4.2.2 Perspectives on the preacher's spirituality with regard to a life according to the gospel

Relevant verses in the Pastoral Epistles referring to the preacher's spirituality relating to a life according to the gospel include the following and highlight the following aspects:

- *True love:* 1 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:7
- *Self-sacrifice:* 2 Timothy 2:3-4
- *Humility:* 1 Timothy 3:6
- *Holy life:* 1 Timothy 6:6-11; 1 Timothy 5:2

The preacher's spirituality should thus contain the following facets:

- *True love:* The preacher should love *both* God, who called himself as a preacher, *and* people as his flock in this broken world, even though they may be sinners, betrayers and enemies. The preacher should love with all his heart, his strength and his soul.
- *Self-sacrifice:* The preacher should be willing to make all kinds of sacrifices including his property and even his life in order to make his preaching ministry effective.
- *Humility:* The preacher should thoroughly realise that he cannot fulfil his ministry of preaching without the grace of God because he himself is too weak and sinful.
- *Holy life:* The preacher should lead a holy life. He should also live free from economical and political desires and ethical misconduct for the sake of the gospel of God.

4.3 Necessity for the preacher's spirituality

In the Pastoral Epistles 2 Timothy 3:3 can be identified as referring to the necessity for the preacher's spirituality. The following basis-theoretical deduction can be made concerning the necessity for the preacher's spirituality:

- Spirituality as *eusebeia* has power which may make the preacher's message effective. Therefore, mature spirituality is a very important prerequisite for the preacher.

5. Practice-theoretical perspectives on the preacher and his spirituality

In the previous sections, aspects of the preacher and his spirituality in the light of the Scriptural revelation of God, especially in the Pastoral Epistles, have been discussed. The discussion was thus aimed at compiling basis-theoretical principles.

The preacher in his spirituality, however, does not live an isolated life outside this world. He exercises his faith and experiences his spirituality as a person in totality. The preacher does not experience his spirituality apart from his general public roles, relationships, person, hazards and marriage life. It is therefore important to embed the concept of the preacher and spirituality within the context of concrete life. A selection of practice-theoretical perspectives will thus be applied in this section.

5.1 The preacher's general public roles

Brooks (1969:75-76) mentions that "the work of the preacher and the pastor really belong together, and ought not to be separated". The preacher's role is thus exactly the same as the pastor's one.

Preachers add different needs, expectations, viewpoints and opinions to their role in the church. Although their primary task as professional leaders is to preach the gospel and serve the church, preachers frequently foster the implicit expectation that their personal needs will also be met by their congregations (Kunst, 1993:207). According to Brewster (1996:353), the preacher is often simultaneously involved in multiple relationships: very often he is involved in a preaching, teaching, counselling, visiting, as well as administrative role with congregants.

The preacher as a pastor publicly plays various roles in the church: as *preacher*, *teacher*, *counsellor*, *visitor* and *administrator*. These roles imply that the pastor always has a lot of work to do. Problems may occur when the preacher in his role as a pastor becomes totally committed to only one of the roles, or excludes any of

the roles, or emphasizes certain ones while the congregation prefers other. An appropriate balance must be maintained. The preacher's roles as preacher, teacher, counsellor, visitor and administrator in the church relate very closely to his spirituality. In order to carry out his roles efficiently, the preacher should exert his personal relationship with God.

5.2 The preacher and his spirituality in multiple relationships

A preacher's relationships and roles as a pastor overlap and, at times, overwhelm him. Preachers may acknowledge the boundaries that *should* exist, but they are constantly tempted to ignore them – those relational and vocational borders that separate preachers' pastoral responsibilities from their personal needs (Asimakoupoulos, 1994:6).

The preacher in the role of pastor is engaged in multiple relationships: with *family, colleagues, congregation* and *society*. The members of the congregation whom he serves consist of various groups: children, young and old people, men and women, sick and healthy people etc. The result of the preacher's ministry will probably depend mostly on the quality of his personal and pastoral relationships with the people he serves. The preacher's multiple relationships relate closely to his spirituality. It is necessary for the preacher to have a satisfactory relationship with others: family, colleagues, congregation and society.

5.3 The preacher as a person

"Pastors are persons. Most of the problems pastors experience in the parish are not caused by the pastor forgetting he is a pastor. Most difficulties pastors face in the parish arise when the pastor forgets that he is a person", Harbaugh (1984:9) says.

Clinical pastoral education and the pastoral care movement have accentuated the significance of the personhood of the pastor as a unique and crucial vehicle through which the ministry of personal care finds expression and achieves effectiveness. While in no way seeking to minimise the importance of the pastoral role, contemporary pastoral care has refocused attention on the central importance of anthropology as understood in a holistic biblical sense. Effective and creative pastoral care and counselling, not only for those who receive pastoral care but also for those who provide it, require an adequate self-understanding involving attention to all the dimensions of personhood – *the physical, mental, emotional and social dimension* – in the context of a centring relationship with God (Harbaugh, 1990:910).

The preacher in his role as a pastor is also a person who has *physical, mental, emotional* and *social* dimensions.

- *Physically* his tiredness may be chronic because he is constantly attempting to fulfil his various roles in the church.
- *Mentally* he may be burnt-out and pressurised because the diverse expectations of the congregation sometimes are out of proportion high.
- *Emotionally* he can sometimes feel depressed because he is constantly exposed to stress, conflict, depression, tension, anxiety and loneliness.
- *Socially* the preacher as person fulfils his role as an ordinary person in the community. This person has been formed and shaped by social interaction, by dialogue with others, in and through communication with others. The preacher is thus involved in diverse interpersonal situations and dimensions.

When the preacher – in the role of pastor – is distressed physically, mentally, emotionally and socially, he is sometimes deprived of a satisfactory relationship with God. In addition his spirituality can be undernourished and without rejuvenating force.

5.4 The preacher and his spirituality confronted by hazards

The preacher in his role as pastor is often confronted by various hazards in his ministering career because he is also human. These hazards may be linked to traits like *self-conceit*, *laziness*, *professionalism* and *sexual misconduct*. These hazards may directly effect the intensity of a preacher's spirituality. A preacher should thus strive to deepen his spirituality and to gain spiritual strength from a deep and lasting relationship with God – thus equipping himself, through God's guidance, to resist these hazards.

6. The preacher and his spirituality: Basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical guidelines for the praxis of spirituality

In the preceding part of the article the main concern has been "the preacher and his spirituality" in the light of basis-theoretical perspectives. The aspect of the preacher and his spirituality in the light of practice-theoretical perspectives has also been discussed. It is, however, necessary to suggest guidelines for the preacher's practice in spirituality in the light of basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical perspectives.

Powerful preaching is, *in a certain sense*, dependent on the preacher himself. His spirituality governs his personality and his whole life, especially when he prepares a sermon and delivers it to the congregation. An effective and powerful

message can thus be closely linked to the preacher's spirituality. The preacher should thus experience his spirituality as a proof of his growing maturity in faith.

In this regard, Whitney (1991:14) maintains that "... the only road to Christian maturity and godliness (spirituality as *eusebeia*) passes through the practice of spiritual disciplines. I will emphasize that godliness is the goal of the spiritual discipline". Whitney (1991:17) continues by saying that "The spiritual disciplines are also channels for God's transforming grace. As we place ourselves in these disciplines to seek communion with Christ, His grace flows through us and we are changed. That is why these disciplines must become a priority for us if we want to be godly". To convey the message of a sermon powerfully, the pastor himself should exercise and experience his spirituality as growing and maturing, thus adding an intensified spiritual dimension to his life.

6.1 Defining the term *practice of spirituality*

The term *practice of spirituality* does not only imply man's positive spiritual activities, but spiritual activities based on the grace of God. The basic and primary concern of the practice of spirituality does not require external and technical training in order to minister efficiently, but rather implies internal training to improve the development of character, to enhance the quality of his spirituality, and to apply this spiritual strength in God's service.

The biblical basis for the practice of spirituality can be found in 1 Timothy 4:7. The preacher's spirituality does not mature automatically, even though he is a minister. Accordingly, the preacher must, like an athlete, train himself spiritually.

6.2 Basis-theoretical and practice-theological guidelines for the preacher's practice in spirituality

The following guidelines for the preacher's practice in spirituality are suggested:

- *The preacher should regularly consult the Word of God* (1 Timothy 4:6, 2 Timothy 4:13): The Word of God and its application must be central in the preacher's ministry and life and should directly add to his spiritual growth. Practical ways by which the preacher can make the Word of God part of his existence include the following dimensions: Hearing God's Word, reading God's Word, studying God's Word, memorising God's Word and meditating on God's Word.
- *The preacher should ceaselessly pray to God* (1 Timothy 2:1; 2 Timothy 1:3): Prayer in Scripture is not primarily portrayed as a human quest, but rather as a response to God's gracious Word. Accordingly, prayer is a very important channel to establish a lasting relationship between God and man. To establish a deep and lasting spiritual fellowship with God, it is an essential

requirement that the preacher should pray constantly – day and night. The question, however, arises how he should pray. The preacher must pray personally, he must pray with and for others, he must pray persistently. As to the question when he should pray, the following guidelines are relevant: The preacher must pray before making important decisions, when concerned about others, when tempted, and when in pain.

- *The preacher must rely fully upon the Holy Spirit* (1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 2:6; 2 Timothy 2:7): The Holy Spirit is the true preacher, a dispenser of spiritual talents, a provider of spiritual power, and an originator of spiritual renewal. The Holy Spirit provides both the preacher and his congregation with an understanding of the God-breathed word, and helps the preacher to pray. Without relying on the Holy Spirit, the preacher can do nothing. The preacher must completely rely upon the Holy Spirit for guidance in fulfilling his general public roles, in handling his multiple relationships, in forming his personality, and in counteracting hazards.

7. Final statements

- Because the church is basically born from the seed of the Word of God the main reason for the decline of the churches may be caused by the decline of the impact and influence of preaching the Word.
- What then is the reason that the impact of preaching has been in decline today? A possible answer can be that the diminishing power of preaching is caused by the decline of the preacher's role – the phenomenon of the powerless preacher.
- The preacher's spirituality governs his personality and his whole life, not only when he prepares the sermon and delivers it, but also when he visits and counsels members of his congregations. Immature spirituality can contribute to the powerlessness of the preacher.
- Spirituality, expressed as *eusebeia* in the Pastoral Epistles, can be defined as "operational faith" or "faith in action", which means that the "truth" of the gospel and "conduct (lifestyle)" are – according to the gospel – very closely in harmony. The preacher's spirituality relating to *the truth of the gospel* should specifically contain the following elements: the proclamation of the glory of God, the spreading of the gospel as being Christ-centred, a burning heart for the gospel, bold proclamation and faithfulness to the Word of truth. The preacher's spirituality relating to a life according to the gospel should be an example of true love, self-sacrifice, humility and a holy life.

- The preacher in his role as pastor plays various roles: as preacher, teacher, counsellor, visitor and administrator. He is also engaged in multiple relationships (family, colleagues, congregation and society). Because the preacher is a person, he can be distressed physically, mentally, emotionally and socially: tiredness, burnout, pressure, stress, conflict, depression, tension, anxiety and loneliness are negative factors impacting on his quality of life. The preacher can also be confronted by various destructive forces: pride, laziness, sexual misconduct and professionalism. In order to overcome these problems, the constant development of the preacher's spirituality is of utmost importance.
- *Practice of spirituality* does not mean man's positive spiritual activities, but spiritual activities based on the grace of God. Guidelines for the preacher's practice in spirituality include the following: The preacher must take in the Word of God regularly, he must pray to God ceaselessly, and he must completely rely upon the Holy Spirit.
- The preacher and proclaimer of God's Word must strive to obtain an intense and mature quality of spirituality. Mature spirituality can definitely renew and revitalise him spiritually. If the preacher's preaching is rejuvenating and powerful, surely his congregation will be renewed and spiritually revitalised, and then the church of God will also be renewed and revived in the process. The congregation which is inactive will become active again; formalism and superficialism in the church will disappear; those who had left the church will return; there will be a striking increase of conversion in this broken world.

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