

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PRELIMINARY DEFINITION OF TERMS USED IN THIS STUDY

The title of this study is: 'Preacher and Spirituality: A Diaconological Study in the Light of the Pastoral Epistles'. In expectation of the renewal of the church today, this study deals basically with the 'preacher and his spirituality' for effective and powerful preaching in the light of the Pastoral Epistles. In order to understand clearly, it is necessary to explain the essential terms used in this study briefly.

1.1.1 The term 'preaching'

Preaching is the official rendering of *the Word of God* to his congregation (Venter, 1976A: Studiestuk No. 108, Nov.). The Second Helvetic Confession (1566) succinctly sums up the Reformation's view of preaching: *'The preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God.'*

Preaching, therefore, is the very Word of God when a preacher, called by God, preaches the Word of God.

1.1.2 The term 'preacher'

Stott (1983:135 -136) describes the preacher as the herald (I Cor. 1:23; II Cor. 4:5). The herald has been given a message of good news and been told to proclaim it. Lloyd-Jones (1981:61) mentions the preacher as an ambassador for Christ (II Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:20). An ambassador has been commissioned to serve as an envoy in a foreign land. He is not a man who voices his own thoughts, his own opinions or views or his own desires. He speaks with the voice of the person who sent him.

A preacher, therefore, is person who has been called by God in order to proclaim the Word of God.

1.1.3 The term 'spirituality'

Houston (1992:118) points out two things about spirituality: the term 'spirituality' is used in Christian as well as Non-Christian circles, hence it is difficult to define the term. Spirituality used in this study is Christian spirituality, especially spirituality in the Reformed tradition.

It is important to define 'spirituality' correctly because there are some misunderstandings in Christian circles. The most popular definition is to think that it is an opposite conception of body or substance. As a result the life of Christian spirituality and general life is separated, and it is understood as something of the

mystical world (Ann, 1993:38). Spirituality is **not** a kind of mysticism which occurred mostly in the medieval period. It is **not** charisma and passionism as found in the Neo-pentecostal Movement today.

The diversity of opinion on what spirituality entails is easily demonstrated from the random sample of definitions or descriptions supplied by various authors. The aim in this section is both to indicate the variety in what spirituality is said to be, and to define spirituality correctly. Here I would like to introduce several distinctive definitions of Christian spirituality.

Baur (1983:5, 9) states that spirituality is a matter of present relationships to the self, and others, before God. He over-emphasizes an inward motion. Macquarrie (1972:14) says that spirituality is the offering of worship to God, and the impact of God's presence on the self. According to Craghan (1983:1), spirituality is the communitarian response to the Word contained in the Scriptures. For Tiller (1982:4) spirituality is the life of faith, and he overemphasises the deeds in this world. Thayer (1985:13) states that 'Spirituality is not merely inner feelings; it has to do with the integration and coherence of ourselves as an experiencing and acting person'. To him, it is a visible way to integrate inner feelings and deeds.

Cole (1993:60-61) states that '*Christian spirituality refers in particular to that cluster of attitudes, beliefs and conduct that are a response to God's grace in the gospel*'. He goes on to say that 'such a spirituality can be described usefully as *orthodoxy of belief, orthopraxis in conduct and orthokardia in attitude*. For a New Testament perspective, Christian attitudes, beliefs and conduct arise out of response to God's grace in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:1-3; Col. 3:1-17)'.

Christian spirituality is a response spirituality, rather than a form of ladder spirituality. A ladder spirituality sets out the rungs of attitude, belief and conduct which must be climbed to reach God or the ultimate. A response spirituality, on the other hand, lives out the relationship established by the Other (Cole, 1993:50).

Among the above-mentioned, Cole's view has been adopted in this study because it contains more biblical and Reformed thoughts. It is, however, necessary to add more detail to this definition.

Accordingly, Christian spirituality can *firstly* be defined as 'love towards God and love toward man with all one's heart, all one's soul and all one's strength'. In this regard, Waltke (1988:9) points out that: 'Augustine, Calvin and most evangelists agree with this definition'. According to him, this definition of spirituality is grounded in both Testaments (cf. Deut. 6:4-5; Mk. 12:28-30). Here one must note

very carefully that 'love' in this definition involves the whole person, commenting on the phrase "with all your heart (Hebrew *lebab*), soul (*nepes*) and strength (*meod*)".

Secondly Christian spirituality is to live *before God (Coram Deo)* everyday and in all circumstances in the world. True love in Christianity must become active in this world. Christian spirituality do not only relate to the inward aspect, but also to the outward aspect (Cole, 1993:61). Schwanda (1996:119) says that 'Characteristic of Reformed spirituality is the awareness that God is equally present Tuesday at work, Thursday at home, and Sunday in worship. Because all of life belongs to God, God is always with us'.

In this regard Louw (1988:5) mentions that 'the Reformed spirituality does not mean a mastic union with God. It rather supposes a knowledge of religion from the objectivity of Christ's merit and the grace of God. The danger of this Reformed spirituality lies therein that it can reduce godliness to a purely cognitive matter. Even Calvin warns that godliness is not only an intellectual matter'. *Therefore love alone is not sufficient to define spirituality , at the same time life (conduct) has to be emphasized equally.*

Spirituality, therefore, can preliminary be defined as both '*the great love towards God and men (neighbour) with all one's heart, all one's strength and all one's soul*' and '*to live before God in every moment and situation in the world*'. More details of spirituality will be stated in the chapter 4.

1.1.4 The term 'diaconiology, basis-theory and practice-theory'

The term 'Diaconiology' as a sub-section of theology is sometimes used in the same sense as 'Practical Theology'. However, they differ on closer examination. Venter (1997:6) mentions that Practical Theology came into being because of a crying need in the church for help in a particular situation. It came into being without the reflection of Scriptural revelation. Meanwhile Diaconiology came into being from the desire to reflect on the service in the church primarily from the viewpoint of Scriptural revelation (Kuyper, 1884:470-472).

Diaconiology, therefore, as a sub-section of theology, studies the communicative acts in the Scriptural revelation of God and the normative (Scripture and Church) and concrete ministry of this revelation in the church. (Venter, 1997:15).

A basis-theory systematically, from the Scriptural revelation, describes the essence and the aim, for example, of communicative acts, or the church within which these communicative acts occur. In the other domain of reflection practice-theoretical theory formation occurs. A practice-theory describes how a base-theory is supposed

to function in practice. Both basis-theory and practice-theory, however, have to do with the same reality (Venter, 1997:17).

1.1.5 The term 'Pastoral Epistles'

Pastoral Epistles are probably best understood as letters written to individual co-workers of Paul, Timothy and Titus, for the sake of ministering in the churches of Ephesus and Crete (Towner, 1994:20).

A study of the Pastoral Epistles (I Timothy, II Timothy and Titus), therefore, is useful in order to gain a Scriptural portrait of a preacher.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT OF THIS STUDY

1.2.1 Background of this study

Since the 1960s mainline churches have still 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 has been a decline of the church in various parts of the world. It is happening over the whole 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 represents 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 is declining (Aben, 1996:8). The churches in Korea have been declining since the early 1990s.

Kim (1993:77) mentions that the 'Fossilization Phenomenon' in conservative churches today is like AIDS of the church at the end of 20th century. He goes on to say that "the fossilization phenomenon has distinctive features: the loss of vitality, empty churches, decline of the 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. These Christian evils are now spreading like an epidemic".

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).

1.2.2 Problem statement of this study

1) How should we solve the problem of this decline? In order to solve this problem, we, first of all, have to know what the cause of this decline is. 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 changes into an economic society, people marry late and couples want to have fewer children and divorce is increasing gradually. According to him, the first and the most powerful factor is demographics. Van Wyk (1992:204-206) says that the church has to strengthen education in order to solve the decline. William and Wilson (1987:76-77) state that one factor of the decline is the bureaucratic attitude of the church's leaders. Algera 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' (Jost, 1996:6). He 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 of the Word. Through preaching, the Word again bears the church from fallen mankind (Gassmann, 1968:44). Christianity began with the proclamation of an event (Broadus, 1979:7). Therefore **the decline of the church today may be caused by the decline of preaching** (Lloyd-Jones, 1981:16,34; White, 1973:7; Horne, 1975:15; Stott, 1983:43,338; Van der Walt, 1987:15; Geluk, 1995A:12). Forsyth (1901:1) states that 'it is, perhaps, an overbold beginning, but I will venture to say that with its preaching Christianity stands or falls'. The main cause has its origin in the decline of preaching.

Why has 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* makes people turn away from the Word of God, *post-modernism* makes people not accept the Word of God as the absolute, and the development of communication by *the cybernetics revolution* weakens the one-way preaching method. In spite of various factors, however, the most important one can focus on that which the Pastoral Epistles focuses on and points out. The two factors are: **the congregation and the preacher himself** (see 'they-hearers' and 'thou-preacher').

Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (II Tim. 4:2-5).

Which one is the main factor causing the decline of preaching, the congregation or the preacher? Of course, there are always members of the congregation who do not glorify God in spite of knowing God. They are the people like those 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 do ministry in season, out of season, even though the congregation should shut their ears to the truth. If the preacher is awake and powerful spiritually, his preaching can change the congregation even though they are stubborn and secular. **The decline of the church today, therefore, is fundamentally caused by the preacher**, who may have lost his spiritual power and love toward God and man.

In this regard the preacher and his spirituality should be studied more closely in the light of Scripture.

2) As mentioned above, preaching is very closely related to the life of the church. What a striking irony it is 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 comes naturally to the conclusion that there are some problems in contemporary homiletics. In that case, what is the problem of the contemporary homiletics? Contemporary homiletics focuses mostly on style, method, delivery, skills of preaching and hermeneutical methods of the text (Trotter, 1995:237). **Contemporary homiletics neglected greatly dealing with 'the preacher himself'**. The books on homiletics which were issued in the English-speaking world after 1970 are: *Preaching and Preachers* (Lloyd-Jones, 1971), *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Baumann, 1972), *Biblical Preaching* (Robinson, 1980), *I believe in preaching* (Stott, 1982), *Preaching* (Craddock, 1985), *Homiletic: moves and Structures* (Buttrick, 1987), *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (Greidanus, 1988), *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Long, 1989), *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (MacArthur, 1992), *Calvin's Preaching* (Parker, 1992). Only two books (*Preaching and Preacher; Between Two Worlds*) dealt with the preacher himself, but only partially. Most of them never refer to the preacher as such.

In this regard the preacher himself should be studied in relation to the present situation of the church.

3) Preaching is the communication of truth by man to men. Preaching is the bringing of truth through *personality* (Brooks, 1969:5). Preaching is the proclamation of God's message by a **chosen personality** to meet the needs of humanity (Broadus, 1979:3). The biggest secret of preaching is not technical but theological and *personal* (Stott,

1983:10). Therefore the preacher and his personality, not 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, especially 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.

Furthermore, a Protestant scholar made the following statement to the effect that: '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**' (Lovelace, 1988:25).

In this regard the necessity to study the preacher's spirituality is strongly required in the light of Reformed tradition and Scripture.

4) Paul sent Timothy and Titus *as pastors* to minister the congregations in Ephesus and Crete (I Tim. 3:15, Tit. 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 (1957:53) therefore mentions that 'these Epistles have constantly supplied Christian leaders with sober practical advice in Christian discipline'.

In the Pastoral Epistles much of the material appears to be designed for the communities to which Timothy and Titus were ministering. These Epistles are popularly appropriate as denoting the essentially practical nature of the subject matter as distinguished from the other Epistles attributed to Paul (Guthrie, 1957:9). The Pastoral Epistles also contain material of the praxis for the discipline of the preacher's spirituality.

Unfortunately, however, the preacher and his spirituality have not been studied enough in the light of the Scripture, especially at the hand of the Pastoral Epistles, although **the Epistles may have a lot of important material about the leader, especially the pastor in the church.**

In this regard, it is basically required to study the Pastoral Epistles in relation to the preacher and spirituality.

In conclusion, *What kind of person should the preacher be for the sake of recovering the renewal and vitality of the church today?* This is the main problem which this study will investigate.

The questions which arise from this problem, are:

- * *What is true preaching in the light of the Pastoral Epistles?*
Because preaching is very closely related to the decline of the church, therefore, first of all, we should investigate what true preaching is in the light of the Pastoral Epistles.
- * *Who is a true preacher in the light of the Pastoral Epistles?*
Because the decline of preaching is very closely related to the loss of spiritual power of the preacher, we should investigate who the true preacher is in the light of the Pastoral Epistles.
- * *What is the preacher's true spirituality in the light of the Pastoral Epistles?*
The loss of power of the preacher is very closely related to the preacher's spirituality. We should investigate what the preacher's true spirituality is, in the light of the Pastoral Epistles.
- * *What are the preacher's personality and spirituality in the light of practice-theoretical perspectives?*
It is necessary to study more closely the preacher's personality and spirituality because he is a person who lives in the world.
- * *What are the guidelines for exercising of the preacher's spirituality in the light of the basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical perspectives?*
In order to equip the preacher spiritually we should study what the praxis for the preacher's spirituality is in the light of basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical perspectives.

In short, equipping a preacher with a deep and mature spirituality is the best way to recover the renewal and vitality of the church today.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

1.3.1 Aim of this study

The main aim of the suggested research is to investigate the Scriptural foundation of the preacher and his spirituality in the light of the Pastoral Epistles, and to suggest some basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical guidelines of the praxis of the preacher's spirituality in order to equip the preacher spiritually.

1.3.2 Objectives of this study

For this aim, the following objectives will have to be attained;

- * to study and define more closely ‘preaching’ in regard to the Pastoral Epistles
- * to study and define more closely ‘the preacher’ by way of the Pastoral Epistles;
- * to study and define more closely ‘spirituality’ in the light of the Pastoral Epistles, especially spirituality in relation to the preacher;
- * to study and define more closely the ‘*preacher’s personality and spirituality*’ in the light of practice-theoretical perspectives; and
- * to study and suggest ‘some guidelines for the praxis of exercising the preacher’s spirituality’ in the Pastoral Epistles.

1.4 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that a main reason for the decline of the church today is basically to be found in the decline of preaching. The decline of preaching today is caused fundamentally by preachers. The best way to encourage, therefore, the renewal and vitality of the church today is to re-equip the preacher spiritually. In other words, the preacher has to recover the image which is portrayed in Scripture, more especially in the Pastoral Epistles.

1.5 METHOD OF THIS STUDY

This diaconological study is undertaken from within the Reformed tradition. To identify, study, define and suggest more closely applicable material in the Pastoral Epistles, exegesis will be done mainly according to grammatical-historical method. This research will primarily be a study of Scripture, homiletical literature, and other relevant data on the preacher as a person, as well as commentaries on the pastoral Epistles by means of analysis, interpretation, synthesis.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

A general study of the ‘Preacher and Spirituality’ would be too broad a field of study for our purpose. It would be difficult to achieve a satisfying scientific result in the study. Some delimitation, therefore, is necessary.

- 1) This is **not** a general study of the preacher encompassing all fields of theology. This is a study of the preacher in relation to his preaching ministry.
- 2) This is **not** a general study of spirituality encompassing all fields of theology. This is a study of the preacher’s spirituality in relation to his preaching ministry.

3) This is **not** a dogmatic and church-historical study of the preacher's spirituality. This is a diaconiological study of that in relation to his preaching ministry.

4) This study does **not** research the essential ideas of the preacher and his spirituality in the light of all the Scriptures. This study seeks the essential ideas in the light of the Pastoral Epistles.

1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION

This study will be divided as follows:

- Chapter 1 'Introduction' will cover the background and problem statement, aim and objectives, central theoretical argument, method and delimitation of the study.
- Chapter 2 will focus on 'basis-theoretical perspectives from the Pastoral Epistles on preaching'.
- Chapter 3 will focus on 'basis-theoretical perspectives from the Pastoral Epistles on the preacher'.
- Chapter 4 will focus on 'perspectives from the Pastoral Epistles on the preacher's spirituality'.
- Chapter 5 will focus on 'practice-theoretical perspectives on the preacher and his spirituality'.
- Chapter 6 will focus on 'the preacher and spirituality - basis-theoretical and practice-theoretical guidelines for the praxis'.
- Chapter 7 will contain the final results of this study and offer the consequences in a final conclusion.